

Implementation of Character Education in the Family to Stimulate Early Childhood Social Development in Tanjung Batu Seberang Village

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the implementation of character education in families in stimulating the social development of early childhood in Tanjung Batu Seberang Village. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. Data collection techniques are carried out through interviews, observations, and documentation of parents of children aged 3-6 years. The results of the study indicate that families have an important role in instilling character values such as religious, honesty, tolerance, communicative, and social care. However, the implementation of these values is still not optimal, especially in the values of honesty, tolerance, and social care. In addition, six main methods were found in character education, namely role models, habituation, storytelling, advice, attention, and rewards and punishments. The role model and habituation methods are quite dominant methods, but have not been fully carried out consistently by parents. Based on these findings, it is recommended that parents increase their involvement and consistency in children's character education, as well as support from the village government through parenting counseling and training programs. Strengthening these efforts can enhance the social and moral development of early childhood, ultimately contributing to the creation of a more harmonious and morally upright community. The implications of this research highlight the need for collaborative efforts between families and local authorities to optimize character education at the early childhood stage, ensuring that the foundational values essential for social cohesion are effectively cultivated from an early age.

Keywords: Early Childhood, Character Education, Family Education, Social Development

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood social development is an important phase in shaping a child's personality and interaction skills. During this time, children begin to learn to communicate, understand emotions, and establish relationships with others. Berk (2020) states that the family as the first environment plays a big role in this process. Positive parenting such as emotional support, security, and involvement in activities can strengthen children's social skills. On the other hand, a less than optimal family role can cause children to have difficulty socializing.

Law Number 20 of 2003 emphasizes that education aims to form a person who has faith, piety, and responsibility, which is not only the task of the school, but also parents as the main educator. However, in Tanjung Batu Seberang Village, many parents are more focused on work, so the time to accompany their children is limited. In fact, according to Law No. 35 of 2014 concerning Child Protection, every child has the right to receive support for optimal growth and development, including socially. Lack of time and understanding causes parents to prefer digital media as a substitute for their presence in accompanying their children.

Mazdalifah & Moulita (2021) reminded that the use of digital media without supervision can hinder the development of children's social skills. Children tend to be passive, have difficulty understanding social situations, and rarely establish direct interpersonal relationships. Preliminary findings in the field show that children in the village play more alone, rarely interact with peers, and have minimal involvement in group social activities. Parents admit that they often feel tired after work, then give their children access to YouTube or television to stay calm at home.

Siregar and Subiyantoro (2021) mentioned that parents should be the main educators and playmates for children. A lack of direct interaction can hinder children from learning social values such as sharing, taking turns, and recognizing emotions. Therefore, this study aims to examine how character education is applied in the family as an effort to stimulate early childhood social development in Tanjung Batu Seberang Village. The results are expected to increase parents' awareness of the importance of active involvement in children's social development.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because it is suitable to describe in depth the phenomenon of the implementation of character education in the family, especially in relation to the stimulation of early childhood social development. According to Sugiyono (2023), the descriptive qualitative method aims to understand the meaning behind the subject's actions, behaviors, and experiences in the context of daily life. The main focus of this study is to explore the role and practice of parents in instilling character values in children in the family environment.

The subjects of the study were ten parents who had early childhood in Tanjung Batu Seberang Village. The technique of taking subjects uses *purposive sampling*, which is to select informants who are considered to be the most understanding and relevant to the focus of the research. Subject criteria include parents with children aged 3–6 years who are actively involved in day-to-day care.

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews are conducted in person using a flexible open-ended question guide, so that informants can convey their experiences freely and in detail. Observations were made on the interaction between parents and children at home as well as children's social activities with peers. Meanwhile, documentation in the form of diaries, photos, or other supporting data is used to complete the information on the results of interviews and observations. Triangulation is used as a data validation technique to ensure the validity and accuracy of information from various sources.

Data analysis is carried out qualitatively with steps of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. Data reduction is carried out by sorting out important and relevant information from the results of interviews and observations. Then the data is presented in the form of a thematic narrative that refers to character values and character education methods. Conclusions are drawn by considering the patterns of findings that emerge consistently and in depth. With this method, the research is expected to be able to provide an accurate and comprehensive picture of how families in Tanjung Batu Seberang Village implement character education in supporting early childhood social growth and development.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to Musyadad, et al. (2022) character education is a pedagogical approach that aims to enable each individual to appreciate their uniqueness, achieve their freedom, and grow both as a person and as a responsible citizen. Furthermore, character education serves to form a comprehensive moral responsibility in living life with others in this world.

Social development is a condition of a person's ability to behave in accordance with social demands. Social development in children is intended as the development of children's behavior in adjusting to the rules that apply in the society where they live. Development takes place slowly through time after time. Sometimes a person experiences a period of crisis in childhood and puberty. Development is a process towards a more perfect and irreversible direction. "Development is a series of progressive changes that occur as a result of the process of maturity and experience." (Suhada, 2022).

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Character Values in Improving Early Childhood Social Development
Values of Religious Character

Religious values reflect an attitude of obedience in carrying out religious teachings and showing behavior that is in accordance with spiritual values. In this study, it was found that most parents have begun to instill religious values in their children, such as getting them used to respecting their parents, kissing hands when they meet, and speaking politely.

However, based on the theory of Musyadad, et al. (2022), character education must be carried out systematically and continuously. In fact, many parents are not consistent in instilling religious values, so children still often forget to show respect for older people. This shows that the application of religious values in the family still needs to be improved so that it can become a habit that is firmly embedded in children's lives.

The Value of Honesty

The character value of honesty is one of the character values that is very important in forming healthy social relationships. Children who are used to being honest from a young age will find it easier to build good relationships with their peers and their environment. Effective character education must involve moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. However, in this study, it was found that many children still have difficulty in understanding the importance of telling the truth. Some children still tend to hide mistakes or take things that don't belong to them without permission.

This shows that most parents in Tanjung Batu Seberang Village still have not implemented character education in its entirety. Many parents only give advice about honesty (moral knowing), but do not accustom children to really apply this value in daily life (moral action).

Character Values of Tolerance

The value of tolerance is a reference to building a harmonious society. Children who have a tolerant attitude will be more easily adapted to a diverse environment and have an appreciation for differences. Based on the theory of Musyadad, et al. (2022), good character education must include the process of internalizing values through social interaction. However, in this study, it was found that some children still show less tolerant attitudes, such as having difficulty sharing with friends or not wanting to play with children who are different from them.

This shows that there are still shortcomings in the process of internalizing the value of tolerance in the family environment. Parents are expected to be more active in teaching children about the importance of respecting differences, for example by getting them used to playing with friends from different backgrounds or cultures.

Communicative Character Values

The value of communicative character is that good communication skills are very important in children's social development. Children who have good communication skills will find it easier to establish relationships with peers and the surrounding environment. Character education must emphasize experiential learning so that moral values can be deeply understood by children. However, in this study, it was found that some children still have difficulty in communicating actively, mainly due to a lack of interaction with parents and peers.

This shows that character education in the aspect of communication is still not optimally applied in the family. Parents need to involve their children more in everyday conversations and provide opportunities for them to express their opinions freely.

Social Care Character Values

The value of social care is an attitude that reflects concern for others and the surrounding environment. Children who have this character value will have an easier time interacting with peers and have sensitivity to the needs of others. Character formation does not only depend on verbal teaching, but it must also be through real examples and direct experience. However, in this study, it was found that there are still many children who do not show social concern in daily life.

This shows that most parents have not given their children direct experience about the importance of social care. Parents can increase this value by involving children in social activities, such as helping neighbors or sharing food with friends.

Character Education Methods in Improving Early Childhood Social Development

Exemplary Method

The exemplary method is one of the most effective ways in character education, where children will imitate the behavior of their parents and the surrounding environment. Children learn through observation and imitation, so parents should be good role models in daily behavior. However, in this study, it was found that many parents in Tanjung Batu Seberang Village have not consistently set a good example for their children. Some parents still often speak rudely in front of their children or show impatience, which children end up imitating in their social interactions.

Habituation Method

The habituation method is a habit that is carried out repeatedly that will shape the character of the child in the long run. In this study, it was found that some parents have begun to get their children used to saying greetings, sharing with friends, and maintaining personal and environmental hygiene. However, many children still have difficulty building these good habits because of habits that are not done consistently by parents.

Storytelling Method

The storytelling method is where stories can help children understand moral values in a more interesting and memorable way. However, this study shows that this method is still rarely used by most parents in Tanjung Batu Seberang Village. Many parents often give direct advice rather than using inspirational stories to convey moral values to their children.

Advice Method

The advice method is one of the most commonly used methods by parents in educating their children. Advice given in the right way can help children understand moral concepts in their social lives. However, the study found that many parents give advice in a one-way and less interactive way, so children often feel forced to follow rules without understanding their meaning.

Mindfulness Method

The method of attention is very important in shaping the social character of children, as children tend to imitate and adapt their behavior to the surrounding environment. Good attention helps children develop self-discipline and understand social boundaries. However, in this study, it was found that many parents do not supervise their children's social interactions, especially in the use of digital media, so that children interact more with gadgets than with peers.

Award and Punishment Methods

The reward and punishment methods are used to motivate children in carrying out the values taught. Proper rewards can reinforce positive behaviors, while educational punishments can help children understand the consequences of their actions. However, in this study it was found that some parents still use inappropriate punishments, such as corporal punishment or harsh reprimands, which can negatively impact a child's emotional development.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research on the implementation of character education in the family to stimulate early childhood social development in Tanjung Batu Seberang Village, it can be concluded that the social development of children aged 3–6 years is greatly influenced by the parenting style and character education methods applied in the family. The five main character values that play a role in children's social development are religious, honesty, tolerance, communicative, and social care. Of the five values, religious and communicative have begun to be instilled by most parents, although they are not optimal. Meanwhile, the values of honesty, tolerance, and social care are still not paid attention to, so children have not fully implemented these values in their daily lives. In addition, the six methods of character

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education used by parents in shaping children's social development are example, habituation, storytelling, advice, attention, and appreciation and punishment. However, the method of example and habituation is still not effective, because many parents are not consistent in setting a good example and accustoming their children to positive behavior. Likewise, the method of stories or stories as well as rewards and punishments, which are still not applied in an optimal way. Therefore, it can be concluded that the implementation of character education in the family to stimulate early childhood social development still needs to be improved, both in instilling character values and in the application of more effective character education methods. The practical implication of this study is the need to increase parental awareness and involvement in implementing character education consistently and sustainably. In addition, it is important for the village government and related institutions to provide training and mentoring programs for parents on effective character education methods that are appropriate to the needs of early childhood. A follow-up research suggestion is that a quantitative study be conducted to measure more broadly the influence of parenting and character education methods on children's social development. In addition, the research can also deepen the analysis of factors that affect the consistency of parents in implementing character education and evaluate the effectiveness of the training and mentoring programs that have been carried out.

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