

# **Implementation of Environmental Care Character Education in Children Aged 5-6 Years**

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### Abstract

Providing education is a process of acculturating and empowering students that lasts throughout life. In this process, educators who are able and willing to be role models, build abilities, and develop students' potential and creativity are needed. The type of research used is a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. This research aims to provide an overview of the Implementation of Character Development. Based on the research results on implementing environmentally caring character education at Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten, Surabaya, implementing environmentally caring character education was carried out by integrating environmentally caring character education into learning activities. This is indicated by the curriculum content used at the Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten, Surabaya, which refers to candy. The scientific approach in the Merdeka 2020 PAUD Curriculum learning tools for character education already contains character values, starting from CP (learning outcomes) and TP (learning objectives), in addition to the semester program and weekly activity plans, which already contain character values. Based on the analysis and discussion results, the author can draw conclusions regarding the process of developing environmentally caring character in children through the habituation method used by teachers at the Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten, Surabaya.

Keywords: character education, environmental care, early childhood

#### Introduction

Providing education is a process of acculturating and empowering students throughout life (Sujana, 2019; Warlizasusi, 2017). In this process, the role of educators who are able and willing to be role models, build abilities, and develop the potential and creativity of students is needed. This principle causes a paradigm shift in the educational process from a teaching paradigm to a learning paradigm. This implies that students occupy a central position and need educational services and facilities to develop their potential and creative powers optimally. The function of national education based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution is to develop abilities and shape the nation's character and civilization, which is helpful in order to educate the nation's life, aiming to develop the potential of students to become people who are faithful and devout, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative. Independent and become democratic and responsible citizens (Rahman et al., 2021). To carry out this function, the government organizes a national education system, as stated in Law No. 20 of 2003, concerning the National Education System (Depdiknas, 2003).

Republic of Indonesia Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (NPC) Article 3, namely that national education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to make the nation's life more intelligent. Apart from that, it aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and are devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. Republic of Indonesia Government Regulation Number 32 of 2013, namely Amendments to Government Regulation Number 19 of 2005 concerning National Education Standards, is the basis for implementing the Education Unit Level Curriculum (KTSP).

The science of adab or ethics is a science that studies all matters of good (and bad) in human life in general, especially regarding the movements of thoughts and feelings contained therein, considerations and feelings, as well as regarding the goal, which is an action (Almuzani et al., 2021; Atmaja et al., 2020). In simple terms, character education is all efforts that can be made to influence students' character. However, to know the correct meaning, we can state the definition of character education presented by Thomas Lickona. Lickona states that the definition of character education is a deliberate effort to help someone so that he can understand, pay attention to, and implement core ethical values (Sudrajat, 2011; Suyadi, 2011). Character education is a form of human activity in which some actions are educated and are intended for the next generation (Suyitno, 2017). Character education aims to continuously improve individual self-improvement and train one's abilities to lead a better life (Natalia Kezia, 2021).

Character education should bring students to cognitive recognition of values, affective appreciation of values, and actual values implementation. This is the character (moral) education plan that Lickona (1991) calls moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. For this reason, all subjects studied at school must contain character education that can lead them to become human beings with character, as emphasized by Lickona. The character education process itself requires continuity and a never-ending process as an integrated part of preparing for the future, rooted in philosophy and the religious and cultural values of the Indonesian nation (Mulyasa, 2022). Character education is an effort to help the development of children's souls, both physically and mentally, from their natural nature towards a humane and better civilization (Hadisi, 2015). By emphasizing and empowering the implementation of character education in various educational institutions, both informal, formal, and non-formal, it is hoped that they will be able to answer various challenges and complex problems experienced by the Indonesian people (Anisyah et al., 2023). Character education must include and take place at every level of education. One level of education that is part of implementing character education is early childhood education (Cahyaningrum et al., 2017). Even though every human being has the potential to have character according to the circumstances when he was born, in the course of his life, every human being requires a long process of character formation that starts from an early age. This research shows that the early age range is the right time to carry out character education because the brain's ability to absorb values develops well and makes these values become habits when adults.

Strengthening character education is very important to implement in schools because students will have good thoughts, hearts, and behavior according to the Pancasila values, which are the nation's life guidelines (Meilani et al., 2021). The formation of a child's character must start from an early age. From an early age, the aim of character building is to shape a child's good personality so that when they are adults, they will become good individuals with noble character who can benefit fellow humans and their environment (Perdana, 2018). Character education is implemented in early childhood through programmed activities and habituation (Kahfi, 2022). Programmed activities, for example, explore children's understanding of each character's value. This activity is carried out through First, storytelling, and dialogue guided by the teacher. The environment plays a very important role in forming a child's character. Three environments can shape a child's character. This includes the family environment, the school environment, and the community environment. The components of a school include, among others, the principal and educators who are role models in the process of implementing character education, who must behave and act in a way that reflects behavior that is conditional on character values within themselves, apart from that, the culture of the school is conditioned on the requirements of those values. Characters that are both room settings and objects that support implementing character education itself. For example, a clean and healthy living culture can be achieved by getting used to living a clean and healthy life. They were creating a healthy and environmentally friendly environment.

The methods used in implementing/implementing character development that care about the environment, both in the school environment, playhouse, and surrounding environment, play an essential role in the implementation of character education, where the method becomes a tool for conveying character values to students. Understanding and selecting appropriate methods is one of the essential things in the process of implementing character education for children. Apart from that, implementing character education in the school environment requires the participation of the family or parents of students because, in the process of implementing character education, continuity of the process of instilling character values is needed both from the school environment to the family environment and vice versa, so, in this case, good communication between parents of students and the school. TK Islam Bakti IV Bubutan Surabaya is one of the Driving Schools that uses the Independent Curriculum in Learning, which emphasizes student character formation. TK Islam Bakti IV Bubutan Surabaya is aware of the importance of instilling character education starting from an early age by better preparing the quality of output and quality of students through habituation, learning, conditioning, clean and healthy school culture, methods, and media that will be used in the process of implementing environmental care character development itself.

This research aims to determine the implementation of environmentally caring character education in children aged 5-6 years. The benefit of this research is to understand the importance of applying character education to caring for the environment.

### **Literature Review**

This research is in line with research entitled Implementing Environmental Care Character Education at SDN 1 Cijoho. The aim of the research conducted by Atik Rosanti and Nina Alviyani was to discuss character education that cares about the environment. Even though they are still on the same theme, there are differences between them. In the research conducted by Atik Rosanti and Nina Alviyani, the subjects used were elementary school children, which is different from what was done by researchers; namely, the research subjects were early childhood. The results of research from Atik Rosanti and Nina Alviyani show data that the process of implementing character education carried out by teachers at SDN 1 Cijoho through learning activities, Friday study activities, and school programs is supported by facilities and infrastructure that support environmental care, teachers provide understanding, directing and being a role model to students.

Character education teaches ways of thinking and behaving that are characteristic of each individual in society and the country (Romdloni, 2021). Hamzah also explained that raising awareness about the importance of maintaining good environmental sustainability can be done by providing knowledge and instilling character through education (Hamzah & Nurdin, 2011). This opinion can be interpreted as saying that in overcoming environmental problems, one of the efforts that can be made is building a character who cares about the environment from an early age. Schools need to provide an understanding of the importance of protecting the environment because, at this age, children tend to be more sensitive to what is around them and encourage children to understand and act on their environment. Character education is instilled from an early age, especially in elementary schools, where education is the basis for forming children's character towards caring for the surrounding environment (Akhwani, 2019; Akhwani & Nurizka, 2021). The formation of environmentally caring character is instilled through education in schools during the learning and habituation process carried out by the teacher as the main driver. Wiyani explains four ways to implement environmentally caring character education in elementary schools: routine habituation activities, spontaneous habituation activities, exemplary habituation activities, and conditioning (Wiyani, 2014).

Developing character education in children who care about the environment is essential. Someone who has the character of caring about their environment will also care about their environment (Naim, 2012). The character of caring for the environment is developed to form individuals who have the awareness to preserve their environment.

#### Methods

This research uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. This research aims to provide a descriptive explanation regarding the implementation of character development in group B at TK Islam Bakti IV Bubutan Surabaya. In line with what Arikunto said, descriptive research is intended to collect information regarding the status of an existing symptom (Tanzeh & Arikunto, 2014). The population recorded in this study included school principals, kindergarten teachers, and students at Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten, Surabaya. The

data collection techniques used are observation, interviews, and documentation. This method was chosen because the data obtained was flexible and relevant according to conditions (Sugiyono, 2018). The observations carried out were participatory observations where the researcher played a direct role in the research to observe the ongoing learning process. Next, in the interview, the researcher conducted interviews with the Principal, Teachers, and Employees of Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten, Surabaya. The interviews the researchers conducted were structured according to the interview guidelines that the researchers had prepared previously. Interviews took place verbally and face-to-face between the researcher and the resource person. Then, for documentation in this research, the researcher took source materials and documentation of research activities, daily activity plans, institutional facilities, and administration within the school. The documentation method, although the primary method used in this research, is essential because it adds clarity in terms of data interpretation.

Data analysis techniques are carried out by organizing the data obtained into categories, describing the data into units, analyzing important data, compiling or presenting data appropriate to the research problem in the form of a report, and then making conclusions so that it is easy to understand. In short, the data analysis technique in this research uses the Miles and Huberman model (Sugiyono, 2015). Data taken from the field is carried out continuously so that it has saturated data. The final step in qualitative data analysis using interactive models is concluding and verifying. Based on the data obtained, reduced, and presented, the researcher makes conclusions supported by solid evidence at the data collection stage.

An inspection test is required to determine the validity of the data. The examination is based on several specific criteria. Four criteria are used: degree of trust, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Moleong, 2006). In this research, data validity testing is only emphasized on validity and reliability tests because, in qualitative research, the main criteria for data are valid, reliable, and objective. (Lexy J, 2005) explains that data validity checking techniques are (a) extended participation, (b) diligent observation, (c) triangulation, (d) peer checking, (e) reference adequacy, (e) member checking, and (f) negative case study. This research uses data validity checks through extended participation, diligent observation, and triangulation.

#### Result

In this section, the researcher breaks down the discussion into two points. Namely, the first applies environmentally caring character at the Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten, Surabaya. It was second, supporting and inhibiting factors for implementing the development of character education that cares about the environment at the Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten, Surabaya.

Implementation of the Environmental Care Character in the Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten, Surabaya

The character of caring for the environment is a manifestation of human attitudes towards the environment in the form of actions in daily life, which are an effort to prevent damage to the natural environment around them, as well as trying to repair all-natural damage that has occurred, lest the environment is ignored. Everyone must show concern for the environment. This must be done to maintain the survival of humans, animals, and plants. If it is not cared for properly, there will be damage to nature, and it can threaten every living creature. Everyone who adopts a caring attitude towards the environment will enjoy it continuously without destroying the natural surroundings. Apart from that, someone concerned for the environment helps protect and preserve it. That way, this will bring sustainable benefits. Helping each other, respecting religious differences, and developing solidarity between friends are ways to foster a sense of caring within the Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten school environment in Surabaya and the surrounding community. The application of character to children at the Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten in Surabaya can be implemented through several strategies and approaches as follows:

- Throw garbage in its place.
- Clean the classroom and school regularly to keep it clean and healthy.
- Separate rotting wet waste from recycled waste such as plastic.
- Learn to recycle waste and not be embarrassed about using waste products

The application of character to children can be integrated into all activities carried out at school. There are learning activities, acculturation activities, and familiarization. In the learning process, there are standards for learning activities, including planning, organizing, the methods to be used, equipment, and learning resources. As in research conducted by (Megawangi, 2010), implementing character education can be done through "knowing the good, feeling the good, and acting the good" using steps, namely:

- Incorporate environmental care character education in all lessons at school.

- Create slogans or chants that can foster the habit of all school members to behave well, and

- Carry out continuous monitoring of student behavior.

Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten Surabaya itself, apart from learning activities, is the process of implementing character education that cares about the environment. It is carried out through acculturation activities and habituation to healthy living. These activities include getting used to routine activities, being spontaneous, being exemplary, and not being embarrassed about using waste products, conditioning, school culture, and environmental health.

a. Routine activities

Routine activity habits include praying before and after activities, cleaning the environment and class, washing hands before and after eating, throwing rubbish in its place, and sorting when throwing rubbish (wet and dry rubbish).

b. Spontaneous activities

Habituation spontaneous activities are carried out spontaneously by students and educators, contain good or bad values and behavior, and are visible to educators.

c. Exemplary Activities

Exemplary is also an activity that is part of implementing character education that cares about the environment. In contrast, exemplary is a method used by educators to quickly provide

understanding to students about which behavior is good, which is not good, and which should not be carried out.

## d. Conditioning

Coding is a form of action that creates conditions that support the implementation of an environmentally caring character. Based on the research results, the conditioning carried out by the school is to meet the needs of students regarding environmental needs. In this condition, schools provide facilities for implementing environmentally caring character education. The facilities provided by the school include cleaning tools, trash cans, and gardens in front of each classroom. The school provides gardens and flower pots so that students can plant, care for, and maintain the beauty of the school garden. The school also plants vegetables and fruit to introduce plants. The implementation of character education that cares about the environment is very influential on the conditioning carried out by schools to fulfill each program.

## e. School Culture

The school culture in implementing environmentally caring character education at the Bakti IV Islamic Kindergarten in Surabaya City is implementing Clean Friday, the 5 S program culture, namely smile, greet, salute, be polite, polite. The school provides adequate facilities to support implementing environmentally caring character education. In the learning process, the teacher is the main spearhead who motivates students to increase their sensitivity to their environment. This culture will also be used in everyday life. The motivation is to punish students who make mistakes, break the rules, and do not maintain cleanliness by giving reprimands, advice, and warnings. Giving punishment also looks at the mistake. If the mistake results in damage to facilities, sanctions will be given in the form of a fine. Apart from giving punishments for violations, the school also provides appreciation in the form of praise and prizes during class cleanliness and park cleanliness competitions related to environmental cleanliness held by schools.

# f. Environmental Health

School environmental health includes maintaining buildings, ventilation, and lighting, keeping them free from mosquito larvae and cigarette smoke, and encouraging cleanliness. Based on the research results, the school building is in good condition. School building maintenance is carried out every day with the involvement of students. The school principal and teachers take part in maintaining and supervising the maintenance of the building. School residents participate in optimal building maintenance to maintain a school conducive to learning activities. Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that schools free from mosquito larvae get students used to throwing away rubbish in the right place and constantly cleaning places that quickly become mosquito nests.

# g. Utilization of used/recycled goods

The learning principle uses principles oriented towards children's needs, and children learn through playing activities. By selecting learning principles oriented towards children's needs, it is hoped that the process of implementing character education that cares about the environment can run optimally because the subject of implementing character education itself is the formation of students with noble character who love a clean and healthy environment. The approach used by TK Islam Bakti IV Bubutan Surabaya in the environmental care character education process is an active, classical, group, and individual learning approach. Implementation of the Environmental Care Character is shown in Figure 1 below.



Fig 1. Implementation of the Environmental Care Character

# Supporting Factors and Inhibiting Factors for Implementing Environmental Care Character Education Development at Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten, Surabaya

The supporting factors in implementing environmentally caring character development include: a) Environmentally caring character development is content in the curriculum; in the curriculum, there are already existing character values that are integrated into learning outcomes and learning objectives. Apart from that, the Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten in Surabaya has used a scientific approach in the government's newest instrument, the 2020 Merdeka Curriculum, which is one of the supporting factors in implementing the character of caring for the environment. b) There is motivation from the school to produce quality output with character; this can be seen in the vision and mission of TK Islam Bakti IV Bubutan Surabaya, where the formulation of the school's vision and mission is a form of school commitment, in this case, the school principal and kindergarten educators Islam Bakti IV Bubutan Surabaya produces students with character. c) TK Islam Bakti IV Bubutan Surabaya is a kindergarten based on character education included in the Driving School, with a school principal and two educators who take part in the technical guidance of the driving school. d) There are facilities and infrastructure that support the development of environmentally caring character, such as hand washing facilities that train children to be patient in queuing, trash cans placed in various places with two types of trash (dry & wet), no shoes and sandal racks placed in front of the class as well as stickers or Cleanliness slogans that can build students' environmentally caring character.

Obstacles to implementing environmentally caring character education at Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten in Surabaya include the terrible habits of students who need to care about personal hygiene. Many students are indifferent to their cleanliness, such as forgetting to wash their hands when eating and throwing rubbish carelessly. Low knowledge and concern for scattered rubbish are evidenced by students who still need to pay attention to the rubbish around them. Other obstacles include the influence of the home environment and a need for more cooperation between parents and teachers. The solution to overcoming obstacles to implementing environmental care character education at the Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten, Surabaya, is to provide more knowledge or education to students about maintaining personal health, such as always getting into the habit of washing their hands before and after eating, giving directions to always protect the environment by throwing away rubbish. Rubbish bin. Apart from that, by instilling environmental care values from outside the school, such as providing a good home environment and increasing interaction between parents and teachers in educating students about the importance of protecting the environment, teachers and parents can work together to educate students. Educate them to get used to caring about their environment.

### Discussion

The application of character education that cares about the environment, apart from being integrated into all learning, can also be developed through students' self-development activities, which are a potential medium for character development and improving academic quality (Muslich, 2022; Rosyad & Zuchdi, 2018). The opinion of (Naziyah et al., 2021) explains that in this research, the supporting factor for implementing cultural and character education in schools is through conditioning in the school environment. Achieving conditioning is supported by the existence of adequate facilities and infrastructure as well as a healthy school environment. The school enforces a school culture of caring for the environment, which aims to make students sensitive to their environment (Kurniawan, 2018; Naziyah et al., 2021). School is a place of education where students spend a long time interacting with teachers, principals, and friends—social interactions such as rules, ethics, and norms that apply at school (Lestari, 2020).

The culture in schools must be developed. Research (Shinta & Ain, 2021) explains that schools should build a culture of character by organizing activities related to character education in schools as habitual behavior, providing space and opportunities for school members to apply good character behaviors, teachers always provide motivation to have good character, provide appropriate punishment or rewards, and be a role model for students. From this theory, the school culture developed in schools is supported by all school members to create a character that cares about the environment. School culture also encourages the achievement of character education that cares about the environment. In conclusion (Adiyono, 2022), assessment is the entire activity of measuring, processing, interpreting, and considering to make decisions about the level of results achieved by students after carrying out activities to achieve predetermined goals. Assessment of learning outcomes but is more of an observational or non-test assessment. In conclusion (Adiyono, 2022), assessment is the entire activity of measuring to make decisions about the level of results achieved by students about the level of results achieved by students after carrying out activity of measuring, processing, interpreting, and considering, processing, interpreting, and considering to make decisions about the environment is not carried out as in the assessment of learning outcomes but is more of an observational or non-test assessment. In conclusion (Adiyono, 2022), assessment is the entire activity of measuring, processing, interpreting, and considering to make decisions about the level of results achieved by students after carrying out activities to achieve predetermined goals.

Inhibiting factors in the implementation of environmentally caring character education. Implementing environmentally caring character education is realized through actions to protect the surrounding natural environment. In character education, caring for the environment is a significant value to develop because people with character care about the environment, both the physical and the social environment (Silvia & Tirtoni, 2023). The character of caring for the environment is developed to form individuals who have the awareness to preserve their environment. Apart from that, some obstacles occur in implementing character education that cares about the environment, so its implementation could be better. Obstacles to character education that care about the environment can be overcome by creating a conducive school environment, forming students who have emotional intelligence and spiritual intelligence, strengthening behavior in the learning process and habits at school, correcting lousy behavior carried out by students, and providing knowledge about kindness and caring, in the school environment and home environment. It is necessary to provide an effective solution according to the existing conditions to resolve an obstacle.

## Conclusion

Based on the results of the previous analysis and discussion, the researcher can conclude about the process of developing children's environmentally caring character through the habituation method that teachers use at Bakti IV Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten, Surabaya, namely: 1) Teachers train and guide children until they understand and can do it without difficulties in environmental care habits, 2) The teacher gives appreciation or praise to every child who carries out positive environmental care habits, 3) The teacher does not criticize or speak harshly to children who carry out wrong environmental care habits, 4) Teachers evaluate the development of children's environmentally caring character through the habituation method. The process of developing children's environmentally caring character at the Bakti 4 Bubutan Islamic Kindergarten in Surabaya can be seen in the teacher habituation steps above. However, there is still one step that the teacher still needs to take. Namely, the teacher must remind children who have forgotten to carry out environmental care habits. Suggestions for further research include adding the age levels studied. If this research is only limited to ages 5-6 years, further research could involve ages 4-5. This research is still limited to the objects studied so that researchers can add other objects as comparisons to the results of their research.

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