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The Influence of School Culture on the Formation of Students' Character and Social Care

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the role of school culture in shaping students' character and social concern through literature review. The research uses a qualitative approach with a narrative literature review method that discusses school culture, school climate, character education, and prosocial behavior. The results of the synthesis show that a positive school culture can support the development of responsibility, discipline, empathy, cooperation, and concern for others. These developments can be supported through teacher examples, habituation of positive behavior, collaborative learning, and social activities that actively involve students. However, its success depends on the consistency of the application of values, the quality of social relationships, the involvement of school residents, and family support. Therefore, school culture needs to be developed as an integrated part of the educational process, not just through discipline or ceremonial activities. This study provides a conceptual foundation for schools to create an educational environment that supports the development of students' character and social concerns.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a process that not only aims to improve students' academic knowledge and abilities, but also develops the character, attitudes, and social skills necessary in social life. Schools have a responsibility to create an environment that supports the development of students as a whole. Therefore, the success of education is not enough to be assessed based on academic achievements, but it is also necessary to pay attention to the ability of students to show responsibility, respect others, cooperate and participate positively in social life.

One of the aspects that plays a role in this process is school culture. School culture includes values, norms, beliefs, habits, and interaction patterns that develop and are practiced by school residents. This culture can be seen through the way teachers interact with students, the application of rules, hygiene habits, conflict resolution, and respect for differences. Thus, school culture is not only reflected in written rules, but also in daily behavior that becomes a habit in the educational environment (Cohen et al., 2009; Thapa et al., 2013).

School culture is closely related to the school climate, although the two are different concepts. School culture emphasizes shared values and habits, while school climate is concerned with school residents' experiences and perceptions of safety, social relationships, learning activities, and the institutional environment. A positive school environment can support learners' development because it provides a safe, fair, and rewarding learning experience for each individual (Wang & Degol, 2016).

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In the context of character education, school culture can be a means to apply moral values into concrete behavior. Values such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and social concern will be difficult to develop optimally if they are only conveyed through theoretical explanations. Students need the opportunity to understand and practice these values in various situations. Character education integrated with learning activities and school habits can provide a more meaningful experience than the delivery of values that are only conceptual (Rosyad & Zuchdi, 2018; Setiyono & Al Fawzia, 2021).

Teacher role models are also an important part of shaping students' character. Teachers are not only tasked with delivering lesson materials, but also providing examples of behavior through communication, enforcing rules, resolving disputes, and treating students fairly. Teachers' social-emotional competencies are related to the quality of classroom relationships, learning management, and students' social and emotional development (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

In addition to personal character, social care also needs to be paid attention to in the educational process. Social care can be understood as the willingness to pay attention to the needs of others, show empathy, provide help, appreciate differences, and participate in activities that are beneficial to the common environment. This character is important because learners live in a social environment that involves diverse backgrounds, interests, and needs. Social concern is related to prosocial behavior, which is behavior that is aimed at providing benefits to others, such as helping, sharing, cooperating, and providing support. A supportive school environment can be related to the development of adolescents' prosocial behavior, including through perceived social support and the ability to cope with difficulties (Luo et al., 2023).

Therefore, schools need to provide opportunities for students to practice social care through collaborative activities and daily interactions. School cultures that support social care also need to create a safe and inclusive environment. Students need to feel valued and treated fairly in order to participate in school activities without fear of humiliation or exclusion. A positive school climate is related to the quality of interpersonal relationships, safety, and student involvement in school life (Cohen et al., 2009; Thapa et al., 2013).

However, the implementation of school culture does not always result in the development of the same character in every student. Schools can have good discipline, but their implementation is not necessarily consistent. Gotong Royong activities, for example, do not automatically form social concern if students only participate in activities for fear of punishment. Similarly, the enforcement of discipline that overemphasizes punishment without dialogue does not necessarily help students understand the moral reasons behind the rules. Therefore, character building requires a consistent, dialogical approach and provides space for participation to students.

Research on school culture-based character education has shown the importance of integrating values into the learning process and school life. Strengthening responsibility, for example, can be done through self-development programs, learning activities, and habituation of positive behavior involving all school residents (Rosyad & Zuchdi, 2018; Setiyono & Al Fawzia, 2021). This shows that school culture needs to be understood as part of the overall education process.

On the other hand, studies on school climate and noncognitive skills show that the educational environment is also relevant for the development of students' social and emotional skills. These skills help students interact, manage emotions, and deal with various social situations in school life (Zynuddin et al., 2023). Thus, character education and social care need to be developed in an integrated manner.

Based on this description, this article aims to analyze the role of school culture in the formation of students' character and social concern through a literature review. The discussion focuses on the form of school culture that supports character development, the relationship between school climate and prosocial behavior, the role of teachers and peers, and challenges in implementing school culture. This study is expected to provide a conceptual foundation for schools in creating an educational environment that supports positive character and social concern of students.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with the narrative literature review method. This method was chosen because the research aims to understand and synthesize scientific findings regarding the role of school culture in shaping students' character and social concerns, rather than examining the influence between variables through field data collection.

The data source is in the form of scientific journal articles that discuss school culture, school climate, character education, teacher-student relationships, social-emotional skills, and prosocial behavior. Literature search was directed using the keywords school culture, school climate, character education, social care, prosocial behavior, and student responsibility. Articles were selected based on relevance to the research focus, clarity of the publication's identity, and its contribution to understanding school culture and student character development.

The analysis was carried out by identifying the main concepts, findings, and limitations of the relevant literature. The findings were then grouped into several themes, namely teacher examples, value habituation, a safe and inclusive school climate, peer interaction, development of prosocial behaviors, and challenges of school culture implementation. Each theme was compared and synthesized to produce an explanation of the relationship between school culture and character formation and social concern.

In the process of analysis, the findings of previous research are distinguished from the author's interpretation. The relationship found in a study is indirectly considered to apply to the entire school because the characteristics of the students, social context, and research methods can be different. This study has limitations because it does not apply a complete systematic review procedure, such as recording the number of articles at each stage of selection and assessing the risk of bias. Therefore, the results of the study are positioned as a narrative synthesis, not as evidence that all available literature has been reviewed.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

School culture is a system of values, norms, habits, and relationship patterns that direct the behavior of school residents. This culture develops through interaction between principals, teachers, education staff, students, and the family environment. A positive school culture is not only seen from the existence of written rules, but also from the consistency of the application of values in daily activities (Cohen et al., 2009).

A positive school climate is related to a sense of security, interpersonal relationships, the learning process, and the quality of the educational environment. These dimensions show that character formation does not take place in isolation from the environmental conditions in which students learn. A supportive environment can provide opportunities for students to practice an attitude of respect, responsibility, and cooperation (Thapa et al., 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016).

The relationship between school culture and character can be explained through the process of social learning. Students observe the behavior of teachers and peers, understand the consequences of actions, and then adjust their behavior to the applicable norms. When teachers show honesty and fairness in solving problems, students get real examples of the application of these values. Conversely, the mismatch between the values taught and the behaviors exemplified can cause confusion about the expected behavior.

School culture-based character education can be applied through learning, self-development activities, and habits that involve all school residents. This approach helps to connect the values taught with the real experiences of students (Rosyad & Zuchdi, 2018; Setiyono & Al Fawzia, 2021).

However, a positive school culture cannot be judged solely on the number of activities or the strictness of regulations. Assessments also need to pay attention to whether learners understand the reasons behind the rules, receive fair treatment, and have the opportunity to improve their behavior. Discipline that relies solely on punishment does not necessarily form moral awareness because apparent obedience does not always reflect an understanding of the underlying values.

Habituation is one way to integrate character values into daily life. Activities such as arriving on time, maintaining cleanliness, completing tasks, respecting opinions, and helping friends can be practical experiences in learning discipline and responsibility. Habituation will be more meaningful if students understand the purpose of the behavior and are able to apply it without always having to be supervised.

Responsibility can be developed through the assignment of clear tasks, decision-making opportunities, and the obligation to complete work independently. This approach gives learners the opportunity to demonstrate responsibility through concrete actions, not just memorizing the meaning of responsibility (Setiyono & Al Fawzia, 2021).

Teacher role models also play an important role in character building. Teachers who are able to manage emotions, listen to complaints, and handle conflicts fairly can help create an environment that supports students' social and emotional development. Teachers' social-emotional competence is related to the quality of relationships in the classroom and students' developmental outcomes (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

In its implementation, exemplary needs to be supported by the harmony of school policies. If teachers exemplify respect for differences, but bullying is allowed, the value of tolerance does not receive adequate support. Similarly, the habit of mutual cooperation will lose its meaning if the activity only becomes a routine without real participation. School culture also needs to provide space for reflection. After carrying out social activities, students can be invited to discuss the benefits of the activity, the difficulties that arise, and how to improve the next activity. Reflection helps students understand the value behind actions so that character formation does not stop at adherence to habits.

Social care is an important part of a learner's character because it relates to the ability to recognize the needs of others and respond accordingly. Caring can be seen through a willingness to help friends, share learning resources, respect differences, and participate in activities for the common good. Prosocial behavior can thrive in an environment that provides social support and positive interpersonal relationships. The relationship between school climate and adolescents' prosocial behavior has also been discussed through the role of perceived social support and resilience (Luo et al., 2023).

Social care can be developed through collaborative activities that provide students with a common goal. Group work, for example, can be designed so that each member has

clear roles and responsibilities. In these activities, students learn to listen to opinions, divide tasks, help members who are struggling, and resolve differences constructively.

However, group work does not automatically foster social concern. If only some students do the assignment, these activities can actually reinforce injustice. Therefore, teachers need to manage a balanced division of roles and evaluate the cooperation process, not just the final result. Social and emotional skills are also relevant to the formation of social care because they help students understand emotions, recognize other people's perspectives, and adjust behaviors in social relationships. The school environment is one of the contexts that can support the development of these skills (Zynuddin et al., 2023).

In practice, social care requires a school culture that does not allow discrimination and bullying. Schools need to provide safe reporting mechanisms, facilitate dialogue, and ensure that every student is treated with dignity. An inclusive environment sends the message that care is not only directed at people close to you, but also at every member of the school community. School culture is closely related to the school climate, but the two concepts need to be differentiated in the analysis. School culture refers to the values and habits that develop in the community, while school climate is concerned with perceptions of the quality of the environment and the relationships within it. The value of mutual respect, for example, can be reflected in a safe school climate if students are truly treated fairly.

School climate has several interrelated dimensions, including safety, social relationships, learning activities, and the institutional environment. Therefore, it is not enough to assess the school climate based solely on discipline or physical facilities, but also needs to pay attention to the students' experiences and the quality of interpersonal relationships (Thapa et al., 2013; Wang & Degol, 2016).

A sense of security allows learners to express opinions, admit mistakes, and repair relationships without excessive fear. A supportive environment can also be related to the development of prosocial behaviors and noncognitive skills of learners (Luo et al., 2023; Zynuddin et al., 2023).

A sense of security is also influenced by the way schools handle conflicts. Conflicts between students can be an educational experience if resolved through dialogue, explanations of the impact of behavior, and responsibility to improve relationships. On the other hand, unfair treatment or shaming of certain parties can weaken students' trust in the school.

Therefore, schools need to establish clear conflict handling procedures. Students should know who they can report to and how reports are handled. The policy is not only related to safety, but also provides concrete examples of justice, respect, and social responsibility. Peers are an important part of school life because students learn social norms through relationships with friends. Group acceptance, cooperation, support, and experiences of dealing with differences can influence the way students perceive themselves and others. Social relationships with teachers, parents, and peers are also relevant to students' motivation and adjustment at school (Wentzel, 1998).

When schools encourage cooperation and respect for differences, learners gain opportunities to practice social skills in real life. Conversely, an environment that allows ridicule, exclusion, or domination of certain groups can weaken a sense of security and hinder the development of social concern.

Student participation in the preparation of class agreements can be one way to strengthen a sense of responsibility. When students are involved in the discussion of rules, they get the opportunity to understand the reasons behind the rules and convey relevant

experiences. Such participation still needs to pay attention to the safety, rights, and responsibilities of all school residents. Participation can also be realized through student organizations, volunteer activities, cleaning programs, peer mentoring, and social projects. These activities can provide an experience that individual actions have an impact on the group. However, participation should not only be an administrative obligation, but need to be designed so that students understand its purpose and benefits.

Schools also need to ensure that opportunities for participation are not only enjoyed by active or outstanding students. Students who are quiet or need certain support still need to have the opportunity to contribute. An inclusive participatory culture can help students understand that everyone has values and roles in life together. While school culture has the potential to support character building, its implementation faces several challenges.

The first challenge is the inconsistency between the stated values and the behaviors that occur. Schools can include the values of honesty, tolerance, and responsibility in their vision and discipline, but these values are difficult to embed if their application varies according to the situation or status of the students.

The second challenge is the tendency to measure character education based on apparent compliance. Learners who always follow the rules do not necessarily understand the moral reasons behind their actions. Therefore, character evaluations should not only rely on a record of offenses, but also pay attention to the ability to work together, resolve conflicts, show empathy, and take responsibility for decisions.

The third challenge is the difference in family background and social environment. Students bring diverse experiences and habits to school. This situation requires good communication between school and family so that character formation can receive appropriate support.

The fourth challenge is the limited time, resources, and capacity of teachers. Character formation requires consistency, observation, communication, and handling social problems that are not always easy to do in the midst of academic demands. Therefore, the development of school culture needs to be a shared responsibility, not just imposed on counseling guidance teachers or teachers of certain subjects. Improving the school climate requires a planned strategy and institutional support. It is not enough to develop the school environment through momentary activities, but it needs to be accompanied by an evaluation of the experiences of school residents and the changes that occur in daily life (Voight & Nation, 2016).

Strengthening school culture can begin by formulating clear core values and translating them into observable behaviors. The value of responsibility, for example, can be realized through task completion, maintenance of shared facilities, acknowledgment of mistakes, and willingness to improve the impact of actions. The formulation of concrete behaviors helps all school residents understand how values are applied in everyday situations. Role models need to be part of institutional policies and practices. Teachers and school leaders must demonstrate behavior that is in accordance with the values conveyed. If schools teach appreciation, communication and enforcement of rules also need to be done with respect for the dignity of students. Example will be stronger if it is supported by an evaluation mechanism that allows school residents to provide feedback safely and constructively (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

Schools also need to integrate character values in learning. Group assignments, discussions, environmental projects, and problem-solving can be designed to train cooperation, empathy, and responsibility. Well-designed social-emotional learning can

support the development of social and emotional skills as well as a number of positive educational outcomes (Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017).

Activities that provide hands-on experience in social care also need to be developed. Friend-help programs, cleaning activities, community awareness gatherings, or community service projects can be a means of learning. These activities should be accompanied by clear goals, role sharing, reflection, and evaluation so that students understand the benefits and challenges of the social actions taken.

Schools need to involve students in creating a safe and inclusive environment. Class agreements, discussion forums, and easily accessible reporting mechanisms can help students express their opinions and experiences. Participation needs to be accompanied by protection for students who are vulnerable to bullying or exclusion. A positive school environment requires attention to safety, social relationships, and the involvement of all school residents (Cohen et al., 2009; Thapa et al., 2013).

School culture evaluations need to be conducted periodically by combining behavioral observations, student reflections, teacher and parent input, and information on conflict and social participation. The use of multiple sources of information can help schools understand whether the program really affects the student experience or is only administratively implemented. School climate measurement also needs to pay attention to its various dimensions so that the evaluation results do not only reflect one aspect of the educational environment (Wang & Degol, 2016).

Cooperation between schools and families needs to be strengthened so that students receive ongoing support. Open communication can help both parties understand the needs of students and agree on how to provide support. Family involvement should not only be done when violations occur, but also when students show positive progress or face social difficulties.

Overall, an effective school culture is not one that simply demands obedience, but one that helps students understand moral reasons, practice responsibility, respect differences, and develop concern for others. The results of the study provide a conceptual framework for linking values, examples, social interactions, and evaluation in the ongoing educational process. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these strategies in a particular school still needs to be tested through empirical research that considers the context and characteristics of the students.

4. CONCLUSION

School culture has an important role in supporting the formation of students' character and social concern. A positive school culture is reflected in the application of values, norms, habits, teacher examples, and social relationships that respect every member of the school community. This environment can provide opportunities for students to practice responsibility, discipline, empathy, cooperation, and prosocial behavior in daily life.

Character building is not enough to be done through the delivery of material or the application of discipline. The process needs to be supported by consistent example, meaningful habituation, collaborative learning, and student involvement in social activities. A safe, fair, and inclusive school climate is also important so that students can develop concern for others without fear of discrimination or exclusion.

The success of school culture is influenced by the consistency of the application of values, the quality of teacher-student relationships, family involvement, and institutional support. Therefore, the development of school culture needs to be planned and evaluated

periodically. Evaluations should focus not only on adherence to rules, but also on behavior change, conflict resolution skills, social involvement, and willingness to help others.

This study has not been able to determine the magnitude of the influence of school culture on social character and concern because it does not use field data or quantitative analysis. Further research is needed to test this relationship at different levels and educational contexts. Research can use quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods approaches in order to explain the relationship between variables while understanding students' experiences in the school environment.

Thus, school culture needs to be seen as an integral part of the educational process. The ultimate goal is not only to form students who obey the rules, but also individuals who have moral awareness, are able to take responsibility, respect others, and are willing to contribute positively to community life.

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