

The Role of Character Education in Improving Student Discipline at Gadingmangu 1 Elementary School

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Article history

Submitted: 2026/02/01; Revised: 2026/03/11; Accepted: 2026/05/31

Abstract

Character education is an important component in the educational process that aims to shape the personality of students as a whole, including in terms of discipline which is the foundation of successful learning. This study aims to describe the role of character education in improving student discipline at SDN Gadingmangu 1. The method used is a qualitative case study with data collection techniques in the form of observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. The research subjects consisted of the principal, class teachers, and students of grades III, IV, and V as well as two parents as supporting data sources. Data were analyzed through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of character education at SDN Gadingmangu 1 is carried out through daily routine habits, teacher role models, the application of school rules, and the integration of disciplinary values in learning activities. It has been proven that routine activities such as morning ceremonies, class responsibilities (class duty), and awards for high-achieving students are able to form disciplined habits gradually. Punctual attendance, adherence to school policies, and accountability in completing assignments all indicate improved student discipline. This study concludes that character education, if implemented consistently and systematically and supported by various parties, will significantly contribute to the development of disciplined character in elementary school students.

Keywords

Student Discipline, Role Models, Habits, Character Education In Elementary Schools



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INTRODUCTION

Essentially, education is a process of character development that forms the foundation of a person's life, beyond simply imparting knowledge from teachers to

students. The key to overcoming life's obstacles, whether at home, at school, or in society, is having a strong and noble character. This is where character education becomes crucial to Indonesia's national education system.

Character education, according to Ryan and Bohlin in Ridwan Abdullah, is an effort to cultivate good habits and enthusiasm in order to help students become responsible and mature individuals (Sani, 2011). To help students become perfect human beings (*insan kamil*) in accordance with their nature, character education is a deliberate, planned, and systematic effort to help them understand, feel, love, desire, and do good towards God Almighty, themselves, their families, society, and the country as a whole. The goal of disciplinary character education is to cultivate noble character in students that they can use in their daily lives (Salsabilah et al., 2021). Everyone needs disciplinary character education as their personality develops. While those with poor character may exhibit less than perfect behavior, those with good character are capable of good deeds in various contexts.

In order to educate the nation, Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System clearly stipulates that national education aims to develop skills and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation. Discipline is one of the character traits emphasized in educational development. A person's attitude of obedience and adherence to relevant rules, including those originating from within themselves and those from their surroundings, is known as discipline. Behaving in an orderly manner and following rules are examples of discipline. The Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language defines discipline as following rules (order). The term "discipline" can refer to training, punishment, or helping a child learn self-control.

Recent events show that many elementary schools in Indonesia are still struggling with student discipline issues. Rules are frequently violated, including arriving late to class, not submitting assignments, dressing inappropriately, and being disrespectful to teachers. This situation illustrates how students' character development is failing. Because elementary school is a time when children form their personalities, which are heavily influenced by their surroundings, this is a crucial developmental stage that is strategic for building character traits, including discipline. In this context, several previous studies have examined the relationship between student discipline and character education. According to research by Rahayu and Supriatna (2022), student discipline improves when character education is implemented in an organized manner in elementary schools. Similarly, Hidayat et al. (2021) emphasize the importance of teachers in improving student discipline

through regular rule enforcement, habituation, and role modeling. Meanwhile, Mulyadi (2023) concluded that character education integrated into thematic learning activities is proven to be more effective than partial strategies in fostering student discipline.

Gadingmangu 1 Public Elementary School has attempted to integrate character education into its school culture. The school is located in Perak District, Jombang Regency. A number of character-building initiatives have been developed and implemented, but further research is needed to determine the extent to which these programs have improved student discipline. Researchers found that a number of students continued to demonstrate inconsistent discipline in their daily interactions at school based on initial observations. This prompted researchers to investigate the contribution of character education to improving school discipline in more detail. This study aims to describe and analyze in depth: (1) the character education implementation methods used at Gadingmangu 1 Public Elementary School; (2) the impact of character education implementation on student discipline levels; and (3) factors that support or hinder the ability of character education to improve student discipline.

Families play a vital role in character education not only in schools but also in schools. Students' primary teachers are their parents. Character education will be more successful and long-lasting if families and schools work together effectively. A generation with high morals and constructive contributions to society will emerge from sound character education. It is hoped that the results of this study will be very helpful in creating more successful character education in Elementary Schools, especially related to the development of students' disciplined behavior.

METHODS

This research employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. Because it aimed to comprehensively understand and describe the phenomenon of character education's role in improving student discipline at SDN Gadingmangu 1 as it occurs in the field, without variable manipulation, qualitative techniques were employed. With this method, researchers were able to collect extensive, detailed, and contextual data that accurately reflected the actual conditions at the research location. Gadingmangu 1 Elementary School in Perak District, Jombang Regency, was chosen as the research location. The school's implementation of various character education programs and the availability of sufficient data to support the research were the reasons for selecting this location. The investigation was conducted from January to June 2026, over a six-month period.

This research employed a case study design and qualitative methodology. Because this research aimed to fully understand, describe, and explain phenomena related to the impact of character education on improving student discipline as they emerge in the field, a qualitative approach was chosen. According to Creswell (2014), This study employed a qualitative research approach to investigate and understand the meaning embedded in social and educational phenomena related to the implementation of character education in schools. Qualitative research is considered appropriate because it allows researchers to explore participants' experiences, perspectives, and behaviors in a natural setting. The research used a case study design focusing on SDN Gadingmangu 1 as the primary research site. A case study approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of the implementation of character education programs and their influence on students' learning discipline within a specific educational context. Through this approach, the researcher was able to comprehensively analyze the interaction between school policies, teacher practices, student behavior, and parental support in strengthening student discipline.

This research was conducted at SDN Gadingmangu 1, located in Perak District, Jombang Regency, East Java, during the even semester of the 2026 academic year. The study was carried out over a six-month period to allow sufficient time for observation and data collection related to students' disciplinary behavior and character education activities. The research participants consisted of the school principal as the policymaker responsible for character education implementation, three classroom teachers from grades III, IV, and V, twelve students selected

proportionally from those grade levels, and two parents who served as supporting informants. The selection of participants was conducted purposively to ensure that the collected data represented various perspectives regarding the implementation of character education in the school environment.

Data collection in this study employed three main techniques: participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Participant observation was conducted directly in classrooms and school environments to observe students' learning behavior, participation in habituation programs, and disciplinary practices in daily school activities. Observations were carried out continuously using predetermined observation guidelines to ensure systematic data collection. In-depth interviews were conducted with the principal, classroom teachers, students, and parents to obtain detailed information regarding the implementation of character education programs and their impact on student discipline. These interviews allowed participants to share their experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to character education practices in the school. In addition, documentation techniques were used to collect supporting data such as school program documents, student attendance records, discipline books, reports on student behavior development, and other relevant administrative documents.

The data analysis process in this study referred to the interactive analysis model developed by Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña. The analysis consisted of four interconnected stages: data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification. Data collection involved gathering information from observations, interviews, and documentation. Data reduction was conducted by selecting, focusing, simplifying, and organizing the collected data according to the research objectives. The reduced data were then presented systematically in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate interpretation and understanding of the findings. Finally, conclusions were drawn and continuously verified throughout the research process to ensure the validity and consistency of the findings. Through this analytical procedure, the researcher was able to formulate comprehensive conclusions regarding the role of character education in improving student discipline at SDN Gadingmangu 1.



Figure 1. Interview of 3rd grade students



Figure 2. Interview of 4th grade students



Figure 3. Interview of 5th grade students



Figure 4. Interview with grade 3 teacher



Figure 5. Interview data of grade 4 teachers



Figure 6. Interview data of grade 5 teachers

This study uses triangulation techniques, namely, comparing data from multiple sources (observation, interviews, and documentation) and checking with informants to ensure the accuracy of the data obtained to guarantee data validity. According to Ismeiranti & Ferdiansyah (2022), source triangulation is a data validity technique that compares data from observation, interviews, and documentation.

Documentation sheets, interview rules, and observation guidelines are among the study tools used. Source and technical triangulation are used to ensure data validity. Data from the principal, class teachers, and students are compared to conduct source triangulation. Data from observations, interviews, and documents on the same subject are compared to conduct technical triangulation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Character Education at SDN Gadingmangu 1

SDN Gadingmangu 1 has implemented character education through various structured and ongoing programs and activities based on observations, interviews, and documentation. The implementation of character education at this school is not limited to classroom learning activities but encompasses all aspects of school life, fostering an atmosphere and culture that supports student character development. One of the key components of SDN Gadingmangu 1's character education program is the routine habituation program. Routine activities at SDN Gadingmangu 1 are: Monday Flag Ceremony, Tuesday-Thursday Healthy Indonesian Gymnastics, Friday Murojaah (Quran reading) and also singing the Indonesian national anthem, Pancasila, and congregational prayer in their respective classes, these are part of the routine activities that students must follow every morning before learning activities begin. In addition to teaching students to arrive on time, this activity aims to foster a sense of love for the homeland. In addition to the morning ceremony and routine activities, the school also has a class assignment program that requires each student to take turns maintaining the cleanliness and tidiness of the classroom (class picket). This approach has been successful in encouraging environmental discipline and a sense of responsibility.

In implementing character education, teachers as role models are a crucial component that cannot be overlooked. According to an interview with the principal, all teachers at SDN Gadingmangu 1 must arrive at school by 7:00 a.m. WIB (Western Indonesian Time) to ensure students arrive on time. This is intended to provide teachers with concrete examples of time management for students. Because students are more likely to imitate what they see than what they hear, role modeling is the best approach to teaching discipline, according to a fifth-grade teacher who participated in the interview. SDN Gadingmangu 1 implemented several strategies to strengthen student discipline through daily habituation and positive teacher involvement. One of the main strategies was the routine activity in which teachers welcomed students every morning at the school gate in turns. This activity aimed to

build positive relationships between teachers and students while fostering punctuality, courtesy, and discipline from the beginning of the school day. In addition, teachers regularly greeted students in the classroom and asked about their assignments and learning readiness. Through this approach, teachers were able to monitor students' responsibilities and encourage them to complete academic tasks consistently.

Furthermore, teachers continuously reminded students about classroom rules and the importance of maintaining disciplined behavior during learning activities. Reinforcement was also provided through praise and appreciation for students who demonstrated discipline and responsibility in completing tasks, following regulations, and participating actively in classroom activities. Teachers also served as role models by demonstrating disciplined attitudes and behaviors in their daily interactions with students. Besides emphasizing discipline, teachers provided motivation and encouragement to students who faced academic or personal challenges both inside and outside the classroom. Through these consistent strategies, the school sought to create a supportive learning environment that encouraged the development of positive character values and improved students' disciplinary behavior.

Character values are regularly integrated into classroom teaching and learning. Teachers incorporate moral lessons and disciplinary principles relevant to the subject matter in each subject. Teachers have ample opportunities to connect character values with academic subjects in a natural and contextual way, thanks to the integrated thematic learning approach used in elementary schools. This aligns with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's belief that character education should be internalized and implemented in all aspects of school life, not as a separate subject.



Figure 7. Morning Exercise



Figure 8. Morning ceremony



Figure 9. Welcoming students by the teacher



Figure 10. Muroja'ah Activities

Character Education Helps Students Become More Disciplined

The research results show that when character education programs are implemented consistently, student discipline improves significantly. Time management, neat dress, discipline in participating in learning activities, and discipline in completing assignments are some of the discipline indicators used in this study that showed improvement. Regarding time management, student attendance data from the even semester of the 2026 academic year shows a significant decrease in the proportion of tardy students. According to a fourth-grade teacher, many students continued to arrive late without a valid excuse during the previous semester. However, student awareness of the importance of punctuality continued to increase after the implementation of a strict morning ceremony program and the addition of educational consequences, such as having to pray alone in front of the class before being allowed to enter. This suggests that instructional punishment is more effective in improving student discipline than punctual punishment.

Based on observations, almost every student at SDN Gadingmangu 1 follows the dress code, which requires complete attire. They wear the uniform, which is appropriate for the day. Teachers who actively monitor uniforms at the school gate each morning are largely responsible for this. Students' understanding that neat appearance demonstrates discipline and respect for general rules is indirectly fostered through this activity. According to research, discipline is a person's ability to act morally and legally as a result of severe punishment. One of the most effective tools for developing character is discipline. Enforcing discipline will lead to great success. On the other hand, a lack of discipline leads to the failure of many efforts to build something. Among the methods used at SDN Gadingmangu 1 to enforce discipline are:

1. Increase motivation
2. Training and education
3. Guidance
4. Implementing the rules
5. Giving rewards and punishments

Teachers noted a decrease in the number of students failing to submit assignments on time, after the morning activity program was strictly implemented and accompanied by sanctions. This proves that sanctions that are educational, rather than punitive, are more effective in developing students' discipline. Furthermore, rewarding students who consistently complete assignments effectively with achievement stars is proven to be a powerful incentive. This approach is consistent with the positive reinforcement principle of behaviorism theory, which states that behavior that is rewarded is more likely to be repeated. These results support the claim that discipline can be fostered more successfully with a pleasant and grateful approach than with an approach that focuses solely on punishment and sanctions.

Factors that Encourage and Inhibit the Implementation of Character Education

The implementation of character education at SDN Gadingmangu 1 has shown positive results in improving student discipline through the support of several important factors within the school environment. One of the most influential factors is the strong commitment of the school principal in continuously supporting, supervising, and developing character education programs. The principal's visionary and communicative leadership has contributed significantly to creating a school culture that encourages positive character development and disciplined behavior among students. In addition, the cooperation and consistency of teachers in implementing character values and discipline standards have become major strengths in the success of the program. When all members of the school community share the same understanding and commitment toward character education, the implementation process becomes more structured, effective, and sustainable.

Support from parents and guardians also plays an essential role in strengthening the success of character education programs. Regular communication between teachers and parents through meetings and consultations helps reinforce disciplinary values taught at school so that they can also be practiced consistently at home. This collaboration between families and schools contributes positively to students' character formation both academically and socially. Nevertheless, several challenges were still identified during the implementation process. Differences in parenting styles and students' social backgrounds sometimes make it difficult for

certain students to adapt to school discipline regulations. In addition, limited facilities such as character literacy corners and counseling rooms remain obstacles in supporting character-building activities optimally. Teachers also face difficulties in providing intensive supervision for students requiring special attention due to their relatively heavy workloads. The findings of this study are consistent with the study conducted by Pratiwi (2022), which emphasized that strong collaboration between schools and families, teacher commitment, and consistent program implementation are important factors in improving student discipline through character education. These findings indicate that character education should be viewed as a collaborative effort involving schools, families, and the wider community in creating a supportive educational environment.

CONCLUSION

The results of the research and discussion that have been explained previously allow us to draw the following conclusions: Character education is implemented at SDN Gadingmangu 1 through various integrated and sustainable programs, such as routine habituation programs such as morning ceremonies every Monday flag ceremony, Tuesday-Thursday healthy Indonesian gymnastics, Friday Murojaah (Quran reading) and also singing the Indonesian national anthem, Pancasila, and congregational prayer in each class, and class assignments, teachers as role models, consistent enforcement of discipline, integration of character values into learning, and a reward system that motivates students. It has been proven that the continuous and systematic implementation of character education at SDN Gadingmangu 1 has improved student discipline. A decrease in tardiness, increased adherence to dress codes, and increased student accountability in completing their academic obligations all demonstrate progress. Strong principal leadership, good teacher teamwork, and active parental support all play a major role in the successful implementation of character education.

Based on the conclusions obtained, the researchers offer several recommendations that are expected to improve the ability of character education to influence student behavior. By creating more comprehensive and measurable implementation instructions and providing more appropriate facilities and equipment to support student character-building activities, principals are encouraged to continuously improve character education programs. In addition to maintaining and improving consistency in setting good examples for students, teachers are also encouraged to continuously hone their skills in integrating character values into the educational process. To support school programs, parents and

guardians are encouraged to become more involved in the school's character education program and to reinforce discipline habits at home.

To create a more complete picture of the effectiveness of character education in improving student discipline in Elementary Schools, it is recommended that future researchers use a mixed strategy between a quantitative approach using questionnaires, scores or percentages to determine the level of student discipline before and after the implementation of character education and a qualitative approach through interviews with teachers, students and parents or observations of student behavior to find out how character education can be implemented and how it affects daily life. Thus, the research results obtained will also be more complete because they include numerical data that show the general level of success, as well as interview and observation data explaining the reasons or processes that occur in student behavior changes.

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