



What's Amiss with Today's Primary School Students' Positive Character?: A Systematic Literature Review based on Guidance and Counseling Service Recommendations

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Abstract

Various phenomena reflect the still low level of positive character possessed by primary school students. The objectives of the research include (1) uncovering various positive characters that need to be instilled in primary school students; (2) analyzing relevant parties that can assist in enhancing positive character among primary school students; (3) analyzing alternative Guidance and Counseling services in the development of positive character among primary school students. The method used was Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with 12 articles that passed the PRISMA selection stages. The research findings indicate that positive student characters include creativity, environmental concern, cooperation, religiousness, discipline, empathy, responsibility, and literacy. Several challenges faced by schools in enhancing positive student character include encouraging teachers to actively participate in activities, handling difficult-to-condition students, and utilizing innovative learning models. The Guidance and Counseling teacher has a role to provide basic services, develop AI-based media, and conduct counseling with parents. The results of this research can serve as a basis for the development of guidance and counseling service models that focus on strengthening positive character in primary schools through collaboration between teachers, parents, and school principals. The research results are sourced from previous studies, thus future empirical studies are still needed regarding the development of guidance and counseling services for strengthening positive character among primary school students.

Keywords: Positive Characters, Guidance and Counseling Services, School Students

1. INTRODUCTION

Character education has become an increasingly urgent concern in the modern era, where moral values and ethics serve as the primary foundation for shaping empowered and ethical individuals [1]. Alongside rapid technological advancements, instilling positive character traits in elementary school students has become crucial in developing resilient personalities. According Sinta et al. [2] cultivating positive character traits also impacts students' academic success and social well-being. The dynamics of child development at the elementary education level underscore the

importance of establishing a solid character foundation to support their future. Educators employ various strategies to ensure that values such as integrity, cooperation, and responsibility are integral parts of primary students' educational experiences [3].

The cultivation of positive character in primary school students represents a significant challenge in the world of education, especially in the face of ongoing dynamics of development and progress [4], [5]. Although it is a primary focus, achieving success in efforts to instill positive character traits is not always easy and is often met with various challenges [6]. The 2020 Indonesian Children's Character Survey, conducted by the Ministry of Education (Kemendikbud) in collaboration with UNICEF, provides a striking overview of the character levels among Indonesian children. Out of the 3,000 primary school students surveyed, only 38.5% were found to have good character, 54.5% exhibited moderate character, and 7% were recorded as having poor character. These findings highlight the complexity and urgency of the challenge in instilling positive character traits at the primary education level, underscoring the need for a holistic approach to enhance the positive character of future generations [7], [8].

The evaluation of the 2013 curriculum in 2018 revealed that the challenge of instilling positive character in students remains a critical issue in the Indonesian education sector. The evaluation data showed that only 47.06% of students succeeded in meeting the competency standards related to character education [9]. This fact presents a challenge for the government and education policymakers to find effective solutions to address the gap. In 2019, the Ministry of Education and Culture launched the Character Education Strengthening Program aimed at enhancing the effectiveness of character education at the primary school level. However, the evaluation results in 2020 indicated that the implementation of this program had not yet reached the expected level of optimality. This signifies the need for deep reflection and continuous improvement in the strategy and execution of the program to ensure success in instilling positive character in primary school students in Indonesia [10], [11].

Guidance and Counseling plays a central role in shaping positive character in children, especially in the primary school environment [12], [13]. According to Cahyono (2022) a comprehensive understanding of strategies and methods that can be optimized within the context of Guidance and Counseling (BK) services is needed to effectively facilitate the development of positive character in primary school students. This deep understanding forms an important foundation for designing effective guidance and counseling programs aimed at instilling and developing positive values in children at the primary education level [15]. The implementation in Indonesia faces challenges as not all primary schools are equipped with counselors. This creates its own challenges in the effort to instill positive character in children at the primary education level [16].

Based on various phenomena and literature presented, a more in-depth literature review is needed to (1) identify the various positive character traits that need to be instilled in primary school students; (2) analyze the stakeholders who can help

enhance the positive character of primary school students; (3) examine alternative Guidance and Counseling services for the development of positive character in primary school students. This research will not only strengthen the understanding of the role of BK in the development of children's character but is also expected to provide valuable contributions to the development of more effective school policies and practices in shaping children's positive character.

2. METHODS

The research employs the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method using various sources such as books and journal articles as primary references. According to Creswell & Creswell (2017), literature research can be defined as writing that combines articles, books, journals, or other documents to explain a research topic from a theoretical perspective. The literature review process follows the steps outlined by Hsieh & Shannon (2005), involving: (1) literature collection; (2) literature selection; (3) evaluation of literature sources by analyzing their content, referring to the findings and recommendations of the selected literature; (4) drawing conclusions from the literature research; and (5) discussing the research findings.

Literature collection and selection followed the PRISMA model with three stages: (1) identification, (2) screening, and (3) inclusion [19]. Literature was gathered through various search engines such as Sciencedirect, Springerlink, Sage Journals, Google Scholar, ProQuest, Taylor & Francis Group, and Emerald Insight. Keywords used included positive character, guidance and counseling services, and primary school students. The selection of research literature was limited to the years 2018 to 2024 and encompassed both Indonesian and English languages. Data analysis involved content analysis of the selected literature. This literature review process generated secondary data to address the research objectives.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the initial search, 60 articles were retrieved. After further review and selection efforts, 12 articles relevant to the concept of positive character in primary school children and alternative guidance and counseling services were identified. The stages of literature selection can be seen in Figure 1.

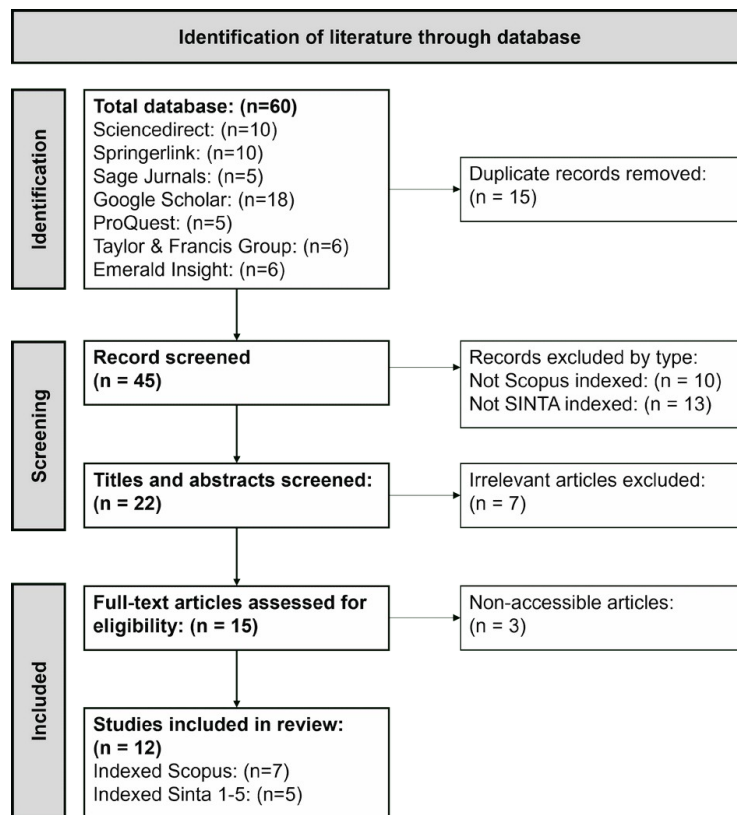


Figure 1. Literature selection process based on PRISMA

The literature review then focused on addressing the research objectives: (1) identifying various positive character traits that need to be instilled in primary school students; (2) analyzing relevant stakeholders who can help enhance the positive character of primary school students; (3) analyzing alternative Guidance and Counseling services in the development of positive character in primary school students. The study yielded findings from a number of articles as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of Literature Selection

N o	Authors and Year	Titles	Results and Research	Journal Index
1	Feng & Wang (2023)	A comparative study on the development of Chinese and English abilities of Chinese primary school	One of the positive characteristics of primary school children is literacy skills. Reading with the assistance of AI can enhance children's knowledge more comprehensively. Combining classroom learning guided by teachers with self-learning using AI offers an effective way to facilitate children in mastering	Q2

No	Authors and Year	Titles	Results and Research	Journal Index
		students through two bilingual reading modes: human-AI robot interaction and paper books	knowledge and foreign language proficiency.	
2	Ichsan et al. (2023)	Efforts to build nationalism values to vocational high school students with the implementation of character education	Optimizing the organization, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up related to character education policies can be achieved through integration across intra-curricular, co-curricular, extra-curricular activities, and school culture.	S5
3	Zulela et al., (2022)	How is the education character implemented? The case study in Indonesian primary school	Character education needed by primary school children includes religious education, discipline, responsibility, leadership, tolerance, cooperation, cleanliness, tidiness, manners, perseverance, courage, self-confidence, thriftiness, independence, honesty, acceptance of diversity, nationalism, justice, creativity, and recognition of achievement..	Q4
4	Sinta et al. (2022)	Implementasi penguatan pendidikan karakter pada siswa kelas rendah di	The process of strengthening character education requires collaboration between teachers and parents. Teachers prepare learning models that strengthen students' characters in the	S2

No	Authors and Year	Titles	Results and Research	Journal Index
		sekolah dasar	classroom, while in extracurricular activities, students are encouraged to adhere to all norms and rules that have been collectively agreed upon. Parents play a crucial role in supporting their children's development.	
5	Zuković & Slijepčević (2022)	Counselling primary school students-experiences of school counsellors from serbia	The services provided by primary school counselors related to school rule violations and learning difficulties need to be systematically integrated with school policies. The role of counselors in primary schools should be conducted systematically and integrated with school environment policies.	Q2
6	Birhan et al. (2021)	Exploring the context of teaching character education to children in preprimary and primary schools	Among the six categories of character (caring, honesty, emotional intelligence, responsibility, and respect), advising is the most commonly used general approach by parents and teachers. Additionally, using animal character fables and songs is also a frequently used approach to teach children about right and wrong behavior in character education.	Q1
7	Shoshani &	From character	Positive child characteristics	Q2

No	Authors and Year	Titles	Results and Research	Journal Index
	Shwartz, (2018)	strengths to children's well-being: Development and validation of the character strengths inventory for primary school children	encompass interpersonal strength, transcendence, intellectuality, and simplicity. Research findings indicate that children's interpersonal strength and simplicity are negatively associated with mental health difficulties, while simplicity and transcendence are positively related to well-being	
8	Amala & Kaltsum, (2021)	Peran guru sebagai pelaksana layanan bimbingan dan konseling dalam menanamkan kedisiplinan bagi peserta didik di sekolah dasar	Guidance and counseling services that incorporate daily journal writing strategies can enhance discipline among primary school students. Improved collaboration with homeroom teachers is crucial for enhancing the management of guidance and counseling in schools	S5
9	Hayati & Susatya (2020)	Strengthening of religious character education based on school culture in the Indonesian secondary school.	The enhancement of religious character is necessary for the moral development of primary school students. Implementing religious character can increase self-awareness of beliefs and enhance tolerance among students. Various efforts are needed to enhance religious character among primary school students.	Q3
10	Sumiyati & Pamungkas	Peran guru dalam	Guidance and counseling teachers can provide services	S5

No	Authors and Year	Titles	Results and Research	Journal Index
11	Murti (2020)	mengembangkan kemandirian siswa melalui layanan bimbingan dan konseling di sekolah dasar Development of Educational Comic with Local Wisdom to Foster Morality of primary School Students: A Need Analysis	outside of classroom hours. Psychosocial education services are used by guidance and counseling teachers to enhance the independence of primary school students. Role-playing methods such as sociodrama and simulation games are generally preferred by primary school students. There is a need for comic materials set against a backdrop of national culture that contain local wisdom, presenting stories with illustrations depicting nationalism and social awareness.	Q3

No	Authors and Year	Titles	Results and Research	Journal Index
12	Muttaqin et al. (2018)	The implementation of main values of character education reinforcement in primary school	Positive character traits in primary school students include religiousness, nationalism, discipline, hard work, and cooperation. Solutions to enhance these positive traits among students include school collaboration with parents, provision of additional worship tools, playing the national anthem before classes, imposing sanctions for rule violations, giving awards for exemplary behavior, and monitoring student activities through parental participation.	S4

Source: Researcher's Compilation 2024

Karakter Positive character traits developed by schools for primary school students include (1) creativity, (2) environmental awareness, (3) cooperation, (4) teamwork, (5) religiousness, (6) discipline, (7) empathy, (8) responsibility, and (9) literacy. These positive character traits are crucial aspects of education that form the foundation for balanced personal development. Schools focus on developing various values and positive traits in students, encompassing several essential aspects.

The First, creativity is emphasized as a positive character trait, inspiring students to think creatively, innovate, and engage in learning in unique ways [11]. Environmental awareness is also a significant focus, teaching students to understand and care for their surroundings. Encouraging cooperation and teamwork in school activities builds solidarity and fundamental social skills [30]. Religiousness promotes spiritual values, helping students develop strong beliefs and ethics. Discipline forms a crucial foundation in developing positive character, helping students recognize the importance of responsibility and consistent actions (Susilawati et al., 2022). Meanwhile, empathy teaches students to understand and appreciate others' feelings, which is a crucial quality in interpersonal relationships [32]. According to Menurut Hidayah et al. (2023), responsibility as a character trait trains students to take responsibility for their actions and their consequences.

Literacy is a fundamental aspect of education, encompassing the abilities to read, write, and think critically. Developing positive character traits in primary school students across these various aspects is a primary goal of schools, forming the foundation for educated, responsible individuals who care about their environment [34]. Through collaborative efforts among schools, teachers, and parents, these characters can be instilled in students, helping to create a better society in the future. Developing positive character traits in primary school students, including literacy, is a primary goal of schools in shaping educated and integrity-driven individuals. Literacy not only provides practical tools to tackle academic challenges but also plays a key role in the development of students' character [35]. Creating a foundation for students to become responsible individuals who care about their environment and can actively participate in society [36].

Positive character traits developed by schools for primary school students involve various essential aspects, including creativity, environmental care, spirit of cooperation, teamwork skills, religious values, discipline, empathy towards others, responsibility for actions, and literacy skills. These strategies create a strong foundation for the balanced and integrity-driven personal development of students. Schools can play a key role in shaping students' character by integrating these values into the curriculum and through the role modeling provided by teachers and the school environment [37]. By developing positive character traits, students will be better prepared to face challenges in the future, become responsible members of society, and contribute positively to building a better environment [10], [21], [38].

Stakeholders Involved in Enhancing Positive Character Traits of Primary School Students

The challenges faced by schools in enhancing the positive character traits of primary school students include (1) encouraging teacher participation in activities, (2) dealing with students who are difficult to condition, and (3) developing effective teaching models. One of the challenges is making teacher participation in activities that support the development of students' positive character traits a routine. Teachers who actively engage in extracurricular or social activities can serve as positive role models for students [39], [40]. Another challenge is addressing students who are difficult to condition, whether in terms of behavior or motivation. These students may struggle to accept positive values or adhere to school rules [41]. Developing effective teaching models that promote students' positive character traits is another challenge that needs to be addressed. These teaching models may involve integrating positive values into the curriculum or teaching methods that allow students to experience practical applications of these values [42], [43].

Based on efforts to foster positive character traits among students in primary school environments, various supportive factors play crucial roles in the process. Teachers hold a primary role in shaping students' characters by serving as positive role models, teaching positive values, and providing moral guidance. Additionally, students themselves cannot be overlooked; individuals have the responsibility to develop their own personal and moral character [44]. Furthermore, school

committees and parents act as vital partners in supporting the development of students' characters by endorsing school programs and engaging in educating students about positive values [45], [46].

Not only that, peers also play a role in shaping students' character; the presence of peers can influence social interactions and moral development [45], [47]. Lastly, the surrounding community also plays a significant role, as the values upheld by the community can impact students within the school environment [29]. Overall, all these supportive factors interact and influence each other in shaping positive character traits among students in primary school, creating a comprehensive educational ecosystem in the development of moral values and positive character.

Alternative Guidance and Counseling Services in Developing Positive Character Traits of Primary School Students.

Alternative guidance and counseling services play a crucial role in efforts to develop positive character traits among primary school students [12]. Faced with the complexity of personality formation challenges at the primary education level, various innovative approaches and methods of BK services are essential. These alternative services may involve school counselors, mentoring programs, character-oriented extracurricular activities, and the integration of positive values into the curriculum [48]. This approach provides diversity in strategies to achieve character development goals, considering the needs and uniqueness of each student [23].

Not all primary schools have guidance and counseling teachers (BK), yet the role of BK teachers is crucial in the primary education level. The roles of BK teachers include (1) modeling good behavior for students, (2) conducting talent and interest tests upon enrollment, (3) providing basic services, (4) using AI-based media, and (5) counseling both parents and students [49]–[51]. The role of BK teachers plays a vital part in shaping students' positive character and helping them navigate social and emotional challenges. Despite not all schools having BK teachers, their role in providing moral guidance and supporting children's development is a significant contribution at the primary level [25], [52].

4. CONCLUSION

The positive character traits developed by schools for primary school students involve various aspects such as creativity, environmental care, cooperation, religiousness, discipline, empathy, responsibility, and literacy. However, schools face several challenges in enhancing these traits. Some key challenges include difficulties in encouraging teachers to actively participate in activities, managing students who are hard to condition, and expanding learning models that support character development. Interestingly, one emerging challenge is how to make teacher participation in activities that support the development of students' positive character traits a routine. To address these challenges, the role of Guidance and Counseling teachers emerges as crucial. BK teachers have responsibilities including providing positive examples through exemplary behavior, conducting talent and interest

assessments for new students, offering basic services, developing AI-based media, and counseling both parents and students. This research serves as a foundation for developing guidance and counseling service models to strengthen positive character traits in primary school education. Overall, the findings are based on previous research, highlighting the need for future empirical studies on the development of guidance and counseling services for enhancing positive character traits among primary school students.

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