

## **Building a Generation of Character: Strategies and Challenges of Character Education at the Elementary School Level in Indonesia**

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**Abstract:** Character education at the elementary school level plays a crucial role in shaping a generation with strong moral values, which serve as the foundation for both individual and societal development. This article reviews various strategies implemented to integrate character education in Indonesian elementary schools, as well as the challenges faced during its implementation. The approach used in this research is a literature review, where the authors analyze and evaluate various academic sources, journals, and related articles discussing the implementation of character education at the elementary school level in Indonesia. One of the main strategies identified is the integration of character values into the national curriculum, such as the 2013 Curriculum and the Merdeka Curriculum. Values such as mutual cooperation, integrity, independence, and responsibility are taught through a project-based approach that allows students to practice these values in real-life situations. Furthermore, habituation and role models provided by teachers are key strategies in educating students, with various routine activities such as flag ceremonies and group prayers helping students develop discipline and cooperation. Strengthening school culture, including norms, customs, and traditions that support character education, is also a crucial pillar in creating an environment conducive to student character development. Although these strategies have shown positive results, challenges such as disparities in educational resources, a lack of teacher training, and the influence of social media remain obstacles to the equitable implementation of character education across Indonesia. This article emphasizes the importance of collaboration between the government, schools, and the community to overcome these challenges and realize effective character education at the elementary school level.

**Keywords:** Character Education, Shaping Generation, Strategies and Challenges

### **A. Introduction**

Character education is a crucial issue in Indonesia's education system. Various social issues, such as the declining morality of the younger generation, the rise in bullying, and low tolerance among individuals, demonstrate the importance of character

development from an early age. Basic education is considered a strategic foundation for instilling character values. This aligns with the national education goals set out in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, namely, developing the potential of students to become individuals who are faithful, pious, possess noble character, are healthy, capable, and responsible (Mulyani, 2012).

Character education in Indonesia is becoming increasingly relevant to the challenges facing modern society, especially in the context of globalization, digitalization, and rapid social change (Susilo, 2019). Today, the world of education in Indonesia is not only tasked with producing a generation that excels academically but also with building a generation that has character, resilience, and strong morals. Recent phenomena, such as the rise in intolerant behavior, misuse of technology, and low social empathy, highlight the urgent need to instill character values from an early age.

One of the key issues in education is the shift in values among the younger generation. Digital technology has brought positive impacts in the form of widespread access to information, accelerated learning processes, and encouragement of innovation in education (Fadillah et al., 2025). However, technology has also triggered new challenges that cannot be ignored, such as gadget addiction, cyberbullying, the spread of unverified information, and reduced direct social interaction. In the primary education environment, these phenomena have a significant impact on children's social and emotional development. This makes the role of character education increasingly crucial in equipping the younger generation with strong moral and ethical values to face the digital era.

The Indonesian government has recognized the importance of character education and integrated it into the national curriculum through programs such as the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum (Azmi et al., 2023). One of the program's key elements is the development of a Pancasila-based student profile, emphasizing values such as mutual cooperation, independence, global diversity, and integrity. This approach aims to create a young generation that is not only academically intelligent but also possesses character consistent with Indonesian cultural and national values (Damanik et al., 2024).

However, the implementation of character education in the field still faces various obstacles. A lack of teacher training and competence in delivering character education materials is a major challenge. Furthermore, limited facilities and infrastructure in many schools, particularly in remote areas, reduce the effectiveness of program implementation. Disparities in education quality across Indonesia also exacerbate this problem, creating a gap between schools in large cities and those in remote areas.

These challenges have been further complicated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has forced the education system to shift to distance learning. Under these conditions, character education becomes increasingly difficult to implement optimally due to the limited direct interaction between teachers and students (Sutrisno & Wahyunisyukur, 2023). As a result, strengthening moral values and developing children's character becomes less effective. Therefore, collaborative efforts between the government, schools, and the community are needed to overcome this obstacle, including wisely utilizing technology to support character education without sacrificing children's social and emotional development.

Furthermore, the educational orientation that still focuses on academic achievement is a barrier to prioritizing character education (Ulfan et al., 2023). Many schools and parents focus more on test scores than on children's moral and ethical development. As a result, efforts to instill character values are often neglected. Yet, character education not only shapes individual behavior but also has a long-term impact on social cohesion and national stability.

In the context of primary education, this period is a critical time for forming the foundation of children's character. Children at this age are at a stage of cognitive, emotional, and social development that is highly responsive to the learning of positive values. Schools, as formal learning environments, play a key role in integrating character education through the curriculum, school culture, and teacher role models. However, the success of character education also depends heavily on collaboration with families and communities, which are the primary supporting environments.

This research aims to explore how character education is implemented in primary education in Indonesia through a literature review approach. This review provides a comprehensive overview of the strategies implemented, the obstacles encountered, and the impacts on efforts to build a generation with character. The approach also allows for the identification of opportunities to improve the effectiveness of character education in the future. Through a holistic approach and support from various stakeholders, effective character education can be realized. With a deep understanding of the challenges and solutions, it is hoped that the implementation of character education in basic education will not only shape individuals with morals and integrity but also strengthen the social and cultural resilience of the Indonesian nation.

## **B. Methods**

This study uses a literature review approach to analyze various relevant sources, such as books, journal articles, research reports, government policies, and other documents related to the strategies and challenges of character education at the primary education level in Indonesia. The database used in this study includes peer-

reviewed articles selected using strict inclusion and exclusion criteria. The selected articles date from 2010 to 2024, ensuring relevance and up-to-date information. These sources were chosen based on their quality, credibility, and relevance to the topic of character education, thus providing a comprehensive overview of the issues discussed.

The study procedure covers a number of stages, according to (Zed, 2004). This research follows structured steps based on the systematic review framework, as described in PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). The first stage is data identification, which involves searching and collecting relevant literature sources from various academic databases, libraries, and official government websites. This process ensures that the collected literature covers a wide range of sources that can support the analysis. In the second stage, literature selection is carried out based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. These criteria include topic relevance, focus on character education, implementation in primary education, and the educational context in Indonesia. Articles that meet these criteria then proceed to the next stage: data analysis, which aims to explore key themes in the literature, such as strategy implementation, challenges faced, and the results of character education implementation in Indonesia.

### **C. Results and Discussion**

Character education at the elementary education level in Indonesia is a strategic effort to form a generation with integrity, noble morals, and strong national values. The strategy for implementing character education in schools involves various integrated approaches in the learning process and daily school life.

#### **Integrated Education in Learning**

The integrated approach in learning is a strategy that incorporates character values into various lessons and school activities, creating a comprehensive learning experience. This approach allows students not only to acquire academic knowledge but also to develop their personality and moral values. John Dewey's holistic learning theory supports this approach by emphasizing the importance of connecting learning to real-life experiences. Integrating character values into various school subjects and activities creates a holistic learning experience. This approach brings students closer to the real world, where they not only gain academic knowledge but also build character through direct application in everyday life. This approach aligns with John Dewey's educational theory, which emphasizes the importance of hands-on experience in the learning process (Dewey, 2004). Dewey argued that effective education is not solely based on formal classroom instruction but also involves students in real-life experiences. In the context of character education, Dewey believed that moral and ethical values should be taught through hands-on practice, not just theory.

Dewey also emphasized that education should be active and interactive, requiring students to engage in problem-solving and real-life situations. This aligns with the project-based learning method implemented in character education in Indonesia, where students are given opportunities to collaborate and apply values such as responsibility, cooperation, and discipline in practical contexts (Dewey, 1961). Dewey viewed learning as a continuous process in which students interact with their environment; thus, effective learning fully engages students in their social lives. This experiential character education creates more relevant and meaningful learning for students.

Research by (Malik, 2020) Studies have shown that thematic learning for elementary school students is effective in integrating character values into learning activities. This approach allows students to learn character values such as responsibility, respect, and tolerance directly through the subjects they study. For example, science lessons can incorporate the value of environmental responsibility, encouraging students to care more about environmental sustainability. Similarly, in language learning, respect and tolerance can be instilled through relevant stories or texts, which introduce students to diverse perspectives and cultures.

Similar approaches are also being implemented in other countries, emphasizing character development through thematic learning. In Finland, for example, project-based and thematic learning have proven effective in teaching social values and character. A study conducted by (Niemi, 2015) in Finland showed that combining academic learning with character development helps students connect lessons to important ethical and social values, such as cooperation, empathy, and diversity. This thematic approach engages students in activities that encourage them to actively participate and contribute to their communities, both inside and outside of school.

Empirical evidence from this global study supports findings that thematic learning is not only beneficial in improving students' academic outcomes but also in shaping their character. When character values are taught in real-life and relevant contexts, students not only learn these values theoretically but also apply them in their daily lives. Research by (Niemi, 2015) shows that integrating thematic learning with character values is an effective and relevant educational practice globally.

### **Habits and Exemplary Behavior**

Habituation and role modeling are two important strategies in character education, focusing on developing positive behavior through daily activities. Albert Bandura, in his social learning theory, explains that individuals learn not only from direct experience but also through observing the behavior of others, known as observational learning or modeling. In the context of character education, this means

that students learn much about expected behavior by observing teachers and the adults around them (Bandura, 1977). Teachers who serve as role models by demonstrating values such as discipline, responsibility, and empathy will shape students' behavioral patterns, leading to the internalization of these values. Therefore, the role models provided by teachers are not merely theoretical examples but also a crucial part of the process of character formation in students.

Bandura emphasizes that this observation process is more effective when students can see the positive consequences of the observed behavior. In the context of character education, teacher role modeling is not limited to positive behavior displayed but also includes how teachers respond to certain situations. For example, when a teacher demonstrates discipline in carrying out school routines and respecting time, students indirectly learn to value time and become more disciplined in their daily lives. According to Bandura, the role of adult role models is crucial because they exemplify how these values are applied in real-life situations. In this regard, the role models of teachers and other adults play a crucial role in motivating and encouraging students to emulate positive behavior.

Habituation, which is the process of shaping behavior through routine activities, aligns closely with Bandura's theory of reinforcement. In this theory, positive reinforcement plays a significant role in reinforcing desired behavior. Habitual activities such as praying before and after class, flag ceremonies, or maintaining a clean school environment are concrete examples of positive reinforcement, which not only introduce character values but also reinforce them through repetition and active student participation. Bandura stated that behaviors that are frequently practiced and rewarded or positively reinforced are more likely to be maintained and strengthened. Habituation in character education, therefore, not only teaches values but also builds positive habits that will be internalized throughout students' lives.

Research by (Wahendra, 2022) shows that the internalization of religious and nationalist character through the habituation method and exemplary behavior based on school culture is effective in shaping students' character. The teacher's exemplary behavior strengthens this habituation by providing real-life examples of how values are applied in everyday life. When students see the teacher behave fairly, patiently, and honestly, they are likely to copy this behavior. This strategy builds an emotional connection between students and the values they teach, making character education more effective and impactful.

### **Strengthening Culture School**

A conducive school environment plays an important role in character education. Strengthening Character Education (PPK), a program initiated by the Ministry of Education and Culture, emphasizes the importance of building a supportive school

culture for the formation of students' character. A safe, comfortable, and respectful environment that embraces diversity becomes key to the successful implementation of character values. Research by (Muttaqin, 2020) shows that the implementation of character education based on school culture plays a significant role in shaping students' character. Activities such as group prayers, flag ceremonies, and celebrating cultural diversity within the school environment help strengthen character values, such as religiosity, love for the homeland, and tolerance among students. A positive school culture can support the achievement of more holistic and integrated character education goals.

### **Collaboration School with Parents and Society**

Effective collaboration between schools, parents, and society plays a crucial role in the success of character education. Active involvement of parents in school activities and consistency between the school environment and home helps ensure that students receive character education in a holistic way. According to Bronfenbrenner's ecological development theory, interactions between individuals and various environmental systems (such as family, school, and community) significantly influence a child's character development. Research by (Fachruddin, 2025) shows that the synergy between parents and the school at Muhammadiyah 2 Elementary School, Tulangan, is effective in shaping the Islamic character of students. Through communication forums, mutual understanding, and active parental involvement in school activities, moral values can be instilled consistently. This study emphasizes the importance of structured and sustainable collaboration between parents and schools in creating a strong character culture in the educational environment.

In addition, research by (Wuryandani, 2024) reveals that parental and community involvement in character education at the school level can enhance students' moral development. Through active participation of parents in school activities and community support through mentors and local resources, a supportive environment for instilling positive values can be created. However, challenges such as differences in values, time limitations, and communication gaps need to be overcome to realize effective collaboration.

Thus, harmonious collaboration between schools, parents, and society is essential in creating a supportive environment for students' character education. This synergy ensures that character values are not only taught in schools but also applied and reinforced in students' daily lives, both at home and in the community.

### **Character Education Challenges at Elementary School Level in Indonesia**

Character education at the school level in Indonesia faces various complex challenges, reflecting the social, cultural, and economic diversity in the country.

Although the government has integrated character education into the national curriculum, such as the 2013 Curriculum and the Independent Curriculum, its implementation often faces significant obstacles, especially in isolated and underdeveloped areas. This curriculum emphasizes the formation of the Pancasila Student Profile, which includes values such as mutual cooperation, integrity, and independence. However, its implementation is often uneven (Islam, 2017).

One of the main challenges is the inequality of educational resources. Schools in urban areas usually have better access to teacher training and facilities, while many schools in rural and remote areas still lack basic resources, such as character education guides and access to technology. Additionally, many teachers in remote areas have not received adequate training to effectively apply character values in their teaching, so the approaches used tend to be less than optimal.

On the other hand, external influences, including social media and technological developments, further complicate the situation. Children at the elementary school level are increasingly prone to negative impacts, such as cyberbullying and the spread of inappropriate content, which can undermine the character values taught in schools (Amaruddin, 2020). In the middle challenge this, synergy between government, schools and society become crucial to ensure education character can implemented in a way consistent and relevant with needs of the times.

### **Lack of Teacher Training**

Teachers play a central role in character education because they are responsible not only as academic educators but also as moral role models for students. However, the reality on the ground shows that many teachers in Indonesia, especially in remote areas, have not received adequate training to effectively integrate character values into the learning process. This lack of training means the approach used is often inconsistent and depends on each teacher's interpretation of character education. This is in line with the findings of (Wahendra, 2022), which states that low-quality teacher training contributes to the ineffectiveness of character value implementation in the classroom.

According to the Teacher Professional Development theory by (R.Guskey, 2002), changes in teaching practice occur through a systematic process, starting with changes in knowledge and skills, which then influence teachers' attitudes and beliefs. This process emphasizes the importance of ongoing and relevant training to increase teacher competence in teaching character values. This training must cover mastery of innovative teaching methods, a deep understanding of the values being taught, as well as strategies to face social challenges, such as the influence of digital media. Therefore, effective training can drive positive changes in teaching practices and, in turn, in students' character development.

In Indonesia, the challenges in implementing character education are often related to unequal access to training in various areas. Teachers in remote areas often do not have access to training provided by the government or non-governmental organizations. This can hinder efforts to improve the quality of character education evenly across the country. Therefore, collaboration between the government, educational institutions, and non-governmental organizations is required to ensure that every teacher, regardless of location, receives the support they need to effectively implement character education.

As example, report UNICEF Indonesia Annual Report (United Nations, 2021) highlights the importance of providing ongoing teacher training as part of efforts to improve the quality of character education in Indonesia. The report notes that although the COVID-19 pandemic caused significant disruptions in education, efforts to improve the quality of learning continued, including through distance learning and skill development. This shows a commitment to improving education quality, including the aspect of character education, through relevant and ongoing training.

### **Inequality of Facilities and Infrastructure**

Inequality in educational facilities between urban and rural areas remains a significant challenge in efforts to improve the quality of character education in Indonesia. Schools in remote areas often face limitations in facilities and infrastructure, such as a lack of access to guidebooks, relevant teaching materials, learning technology, and adequate classroom space. On the other hand, schools in urban areas tend to have better access to these resources, which allows them to carry out character education more optimally. This inequality creates significant differences in students' learning experiences, ultimately affecting the success of character education.

According to the theory of justice as fairness by (Rawls, 1971) , every individual is entitled to equal access to resources and opportunities, including in education. Rawls emphasizes two main principles: first, everyone has equal rights to the broadest possible freedom, as long as it can be accepted by others; second, social and economic inequalities are only acceptable if they benefit the most disadvantaged party (the difference principle). In the context of education, this supports efforts to ensure that students in remote or underdeveloped areas receive equal access to adequate educational facilities.

However, the reality in Indonesia, especially in rural and remote areas, is that this principle of educational equality has not yet been fully realized. Many schools in these areas still lack basic facilities such as decent classrooms, libraries, and access to educational technology. For example, a report by (Susanti, 2020) mentions that in some remote areas of Indonesia, access to electricity and the internet is very limited,

which hinders the effective learning process. In addition, the quality of education in these regions is also hampered by the lack of teacher training and low teacher attendance at schools.

To overcome this gap, intervention from the government and private parties is required to ensure more even distribution of educational facilities. This approach can include developing basic infrastructure, distributing inclusive learning materials, and providing teacher training in remote regions to optimize the use of available facilities. By doing so, the principle of educational equality, according to Rawls, can be better realized, giving every student an equal opportunity to grow and achieve their full potential.

### **Influence Technology and Social Media**

Technology and social media have made positive contributions to the world of education, such as expanding access to learning, improving student creativity, and introducing various interactive learning methods. However, the impact is not always positive, especially for children at the primary school level. At this age, children's ability to filter information and understand the consequences of online activities is still very limited, making them more prone to negative impacts such as gadget addiction, cyberbullying, the spread of inappropriate content, and social isolation.

Research by (Amaruddin, 2020) shows that the use of digital media without supervision can hinder the formation of character values, such as empathy, responsibility, and cooperation. This is reinforced by UNICEF Indonesia (2021), which reported that many children in Indonesia spend more than four hours per day in front of a screen without adequate supervision, exposing them to content that is inappropriate or even leading to negative behaviors such as cyberbullying.

A report from the Ministry of Education and Culture (2020) also identified that digital literacy among primary school children is still low, with only a few schools providing digital literacy programs as part of the curriculum. According to (Livingstone et al., 2017), low digital literacy worsens the risk of exposure to harmful content and hinders the development of critical thinking skills needed to navigate the digital world safely.

In addition, the lack of supervision from parents and educators regarding the use of technology increases the risk of addictive behavior related to gadgets. This reduces the time for essential social interactions that are necessary for children to build character traits such as tolerance and honesty. To overcome this challenge, an integrated approach between schools, families, and the government is required. Schools need to incorporate digital literacy programs into the character education curriculum, while families must play an active role in supervising their children's

online activities. The government, on the other hand, can implement policies that ensure safe and compliant digital content for children.

### **Challenge Social Cultural**

Indonesia, with more than 300 ethnic groups and diverse cultures, has an extraordinary cultural richness. However, this diversity also raises challenges in applying uniform character education in schools. The character values taught in the national curriculum, such as mutual cooperation, integrity, and diversity, are not always in harmony with the local norms or traditions applicable in each community. This creates the potential for conflicts between formal education and the culture inherited in the family or community environment.

According to cultural congruence (Gay, 2010), effective character education must be relevant to the local cultural context. In other words, the character education approach needs to consider the cultural values present in the community to create harmony between school education and students' daily lives. Character education based on local wisdom has great potential in shaping students' moral values. For example, research by (Syamsijulianto et al., 2022) shows that integrating local Malay border traditions into learning at the primary school level is effective in instilling character values such as mutual cooperation, honesty, and responsibility. This approach not only enriches teaching materials but also strengthens students' cultural identity.

However, the challenge appears when teachers in various areas do not understand or value local cultural values. A report from UNICEF Indonesia (Krisnamurti, 2020) highlights that the lack of teacher training related to the implementation of culture-based education is a major obstacle in bridging the gap between national and local values. Additionally, research by (Sulkipani, et al 2022) shows that the development of educational textbooks on character based on local wisdom can increase students' understanding of the material being studied. The textbooks are not only valid in terms of content but also practical for use in the learning process, thus supporting the effective implementation of character education.

To overcome this challenge, support policies from the government are required to ensure that the curriculum implemented in schools can adapt to local needs without losing the essence of national character. An approach that is relevant to overcome this challenge is to develop a curriculum based on local culture in line with national values. The government, teachers, and the community must work together to identify values that can be integrated into character education, so that a generation is created that not only has strong morals but also respects the diversity of Indonesian culture.

## **Character Education Strategies and Challenges at Elementary School Level in Indonesia**

Strategies and challenges in character education in Indonesia show that its successful implementation cannot be achieved without a holistic and adaptive approach. Character education is not only about instilling moral values in the classroom, but also includes various aspects, such as curriculum, learning methods, school culture, and involvement from the surrounding environment. The strategies that have been applied, such as integrating values into the curriculum, habituating positive behavior, and reinforcing school culture, have shown their effectiveness in shaping students' character. However, complex challenges, such as lack of teacher training, inequality in educational facilities, and the impact of modern technology, require special attention to ensure the success of this program.

One of the strategies that has been applied in character education in Indonesia is the integration of character values into the national curriculum, as reflected in the 2013 Curriculum and Independent Curriculum. This approach aims to teach values such as mutual cooperation, integrity, independence, and responsibility, not only as lesson material but also as part of students' daily learning experiences. Based on research by (Mentari & Rosiyanti, 2024), the project-based learning approach used in this curriculum allows students to practice character values in real-life contexts, making learning more relevant and meaningful. With this approach, students not only understand the theory behind these values but also internalize them in their lives, forming important social skills for daily interactions.

Next, strengthening school culture is also a strategic pillar in character education. A positive school culture, including norms, habits, and traditions that support the formation of students' character, plays a very important role in creating a conducive environment for the development of moral values. The Character Education Strengthening Program (PPK) initiated by the government emphasizes the importance of building an inclusive, safe, and comfortable school environment to support the development of students' moral values. Research by (Judiani, 2010) emphasizes that the implementation of character education in schools through strengthening the curriculum can enhance students' character by creating a conducive learning atmosphere. This program can build a sense of community among students, improve their self-trust, and strengthen mutual appreciation in the school environment. Thus, strengthening school culture not only strengthens character learning but also creates a positive climate for the comprehensive development of students.

In addition, habituation and role modeling are also important strategies in character education. Habituating positive behavior through routine activities such as flag ceremonies, group prayers, and environmental cleanliness programs helps students develop values like discipline, responsibility, and teamwork. Teachers, as key role

models, play an important role in providing real-life examples of character values in everyday life. Research by (Septiningrum et al., 2024) shows that teacher role models and habituation programs in schools have a significant influence on the development of students' self-leadership character. Parental involvement in supporting these activities is also very important to ensure that character values are not only taught in schools but also applied at home.

However, even though various strategies have been applied, challenges in implementing character education in Indonesia are still significant. One of the main challenges is the lack of teacher training. Teachers are the spearhead of character education, but many of them have not received adequate training to implement character education programs effectively. Ongoing and relevant training is essential to increase teachers' understanding of innovative methods and responsive teaching techniques to meet students' needs. This training must also be customized to the local context, considering the cultural diversity in Indonesia.

Inequality in educational facilities also becomes a major constraint, especially in remote areas. Many schools in rural areas lack basic resources such as textbooks, technology, and adequate classroom space. This inequality creates a gap in the implementation of character education between urban and rural areas. Efforts to reduce educational facility inequality must become a priority for the government. Providing adequate infrastructure and distributing resources more evenly will support the consistent implementation of character education programs across Indonesia.

The influence of technology also presents challenges that cannot be ignored. Technology has great potential to support character education through interactive and innovative learning media. However, without adequate supervision, technology can also have negative impacts, such as gadget addiction, cyberbullying, and exposure to inappropriate content. Therefore, digital literacy must become an integral part of the character education curriculum. Students need to be taught how to use technology wisely, understand digital ethics, and utilize technology to support the development of positive values.

Collaboration between schools, families, and communities is also an important element in character education. Successful character education does not only depend on the school but also requires active involvement from families and society. Parents can support character education by setting positive behavior examples at home, while the community can contribute through community-based programs that strengthen social values. The synergy between schools, families, and communities ensures that character values are applied consistently across all environments, creating a comprehensive learning experience for students.

In facing these challenges, the government needs to take strategic steps to strengthen character education at the elementary school level. In addition to improving teacher training and reducing facility inequalities, the government also needs to encourage innovation in using technology to support character education. Policies that support collaboration between schools, families, and communities must also be reinforced to create a supportive environment for the development of students' character. With a holistic and synergistic approach, character education at the elementary school level can become a strong foundation for the formation of a young generation of Indonesians who are moral, have integrity, and are ready to face future challenges. These strategies not only build qualified individuals but also support the formation of a fairer, more harmonious, and sustainable society.

#### **D. Conclusions**

Character education at the elementary school level in Indonesia is a strategic step in forming a young generation who are moral, have integrity, and are competent. The strategies implemented include the integration of values in the curriculum, habituation of positive behavior, reinforcement of school culture, and collaboration between schools, families, and the community. This approach has proven effective in creating a supportive learning environment for character formation, as seen in the implementation of the 2013 Curriculum, the Independent Curriculum, and the Character Education Strengthening Program (PPK). However, the implementation of these strategies faces a number of significant challenges. The lack of ongoing and relevant teacher training has become a major obstacle, in addition to the inequality of educational facilities, especially in remote areas. Other challenges include the influence of technology and social media, which, without supervision, can weaken the formation of moral values in students. Furthermore, the cultural diversity in Indonesia demands an adaptive approach so that the character values taught in schools are in harmony with local norms. To overcome these challenges, strategic steps involving various parties are required. The government needs to improve teacher training programs, ensure the equalization of educational facilities, and integrate digital literacy into the curriculum. Collaboration between schools, families, and communities must also be reinforced to ensure the consistent implementation of character values in various environments. With a holistic and adaptive approach, character education in elementary schools can become a strong foundation for the formation of young Indonesians who are moral and have integrity.

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