

Implementation of Early Childhood Character Education at TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu

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Abstract: This study aims to describe the implementation of early childhood character education in TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu. This research uses qualitative methods with a descriptive approach. Data collection techniques through observation, interviews, and documentation. The research subjects were the principal, teachers, and parents of students. The results of this study indicate that the implementation of early childhood character education at TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu in implementing character education uses programmed activities with the center method which is equipped with other complementary methods, namely stories, singing, fairy tales, direct practice, teacher exemplary and discussion, as well as rewards, seduction and punishment for children. Constraints in implementing character education are the competence of educators in terms of making assessment tools and RKH, the atmosphere of the school environment among educators, and the lack of assertiveness of the principal in educators not to use RKH in the learning process. Supporting factors identified include support from the community and students' parents.

Keywords: Character Education, Early Childhood, Kindergarten

A. Introduction

For students to actively develop their potential, intelligence, high morals, and skills needed by themselves, society, the nation, and the state, education is an intentional and planned effort to create a learning environment and learning process (Mulyasa, 2012). A country's character determines how far it may advance. Character is a crucial and fundamental concept. Character is the wonder of life that sets humans apart from other species. People who lack character are referred to as having crossed the line. individuals with good morals, values, and character are individuals who are good both individually and socially (Zubaedi, 2011).

The National Education System aims to develop students' potential to become human beings who believe in and are devoted to God Almighty, have noble

character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and democratic, and responsible citizens, according to the UU No. 20 of 2003, Chapter 2 Article 3. National education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation to educate the life of the nation.

The intelligence and personalities of youngsters are seen to improve with education. What happens if children's character development is neglected in favor of cerebral intelligence in education? Moral degradation and a breach of values are the outcomes. The eventual effect of this type of education will only create intelligent machines devoid of personality. To develop better students, the educational process needs to be assessed and improved. The concept of character education becoming more prevalent in Indonesian education is one endeavor to raise the standard of instruction. This idea was born out of the perception that Indonesians had not yet fully benefited from the educational process in terms of character development.

Character education is implemented throughout Indonesia, not just in formal education settings like schools and universities but also in informal settings like family education and non-formal early childhood programs. Early life is a potential time for character development because children's growth and development between the ages of 0 and 5 are at their peak. This is a time when children's development will lay the groundwork for their future, but each child is different. Children will mature and change according to regular patterns, with varying rates and styles of learning. Therefore, for a child to learn new skills and knowledge, parents must be able to recognize when their child is ready to be stimulated.

Character education aims to alter human nature, character, personality, and inner condition in line with values that are seen as noble and desirable rather than merely explaining what is good or bad. Through character education, it is hoped that people will be born who are free to make their own decisions without being forced to do so and who are fully responsible, i.e. people who are free, dynamic, creative, innovative, and responsible, both towards God, people, society, and themselves (Nata, 2013).

The goals of character education are to strengthen and cultivate important and necessary life values so that they become ingrained in students' personalities or sense of ownership, to discipline students who act in ways that are inconsistent with the school's developed values, and to foster relationships in harmony with family and community as they jointly fulfill the duty of character education. A process of shaping the child's behavior will certainly take place every minute and second of their interaction with their environment (Kesuma et al., 2013). Children are taught character values through a system called character education that encompasses knowledge, comprehension, care, and a strong commitment to living up to those principles toward God Almighty, oneself, others, the environment, society, and the

country as a whole. so that he is complete and conforms to his nature as the ideal human being.

A child's education, especially in the early years, is crucial to their development and ultimately determines both their survival and the survival of their entire country. Early character education can take the form of regular, disciplined, and standard behavior by standards (Sudaryati, 2012). According to Law Number 20 of 2003, article 1 verse 14 (Depdiknas, 2003), early childhood education is a coaching effort directed at children from birth to age six that involves giving educational stimulation to support physical and spiritual growth and development so that children are prepared to pursue higher education.

Early Childhood Education serves as the cornerstone for a child's personality, it plays a crucial and defining role in the history of children's later growth. The physical and mental health and well-being of children who receive supervision from a young age will improve, which will affect academic success, work ethic, and productivity. Children will ultimately be better able to be independent and reach their full potential (Hibana, 2002).

Children in their early years have unique traits in terms of attitude, focus, interest, and capacity for learning. The child's personality will develop and solidify as a result of all he experiences. The experiences he has can never be undone; they can only be covered by new ones. As more and more experiences are accumulated, a unique personality structure emerges (Hibana, 2002).

Early childhood, which lasts from the time a baby is born until the age of six, is crucial for the formation and development of a child's character and is significantly influenced by a child's education, care, upbringing, access to health care, and dietary intake. Because the family is the primary and first vehicle for the success of children's character education, early childhood (character) education begins in the family context. fostering children's responsibility is one aspect of early character education.

Sometimes being responsible means having to act, and other times it means being willing to live with the results of your choices. Children must be taught responsibility from a young age through regular daily activities. Children must be able to care for themselves in addition to being pushed to achieve academically. You should consider the child's capacity for responsibility before granting responsibility. The child's age, maturity, and personality all play a role in this capacity. Children can demonstrate that they are capable and in control of themselves by learning to be responsible. If a child accomplishes a task well, their self-confidence will increase. Children will also discover that their actions have an impact on society, their families, and themselves. If people work together and are responsible, society and

the globe will run smoothly (Hidayat & Setia, 2012). According to Law Number 20 of 2003, article 1 verse 14, early childhood education is a coaching effort directed at children from birth to age six that involves giving educational stimulation to support physical and spiritual growth and development so that children are prepared to pursue higher education.

Character development cannot be isolated from the strategy employed since young children who succeed in the process of character development will accomplish the desired aim. The effective teaching and learning tactics employed by educators/teachers continue to be crucial (Kristiawan & Rahmat, 2018); (Lian et al., 2018); (Hasanah & Kristiawan, 2019) in selecting and deciding on approaches that are suitable and appropriate for the early childhood environment. Early childhood character development strategies can be thought of as broad categories of activities that parents or teachers engage in to help young children develop their personalities to meet predetermined objectives (Mansur, 2011). Character traits including independence, self-reliance, self-control, creativity, good buddy cooperation, and a stronger sense of direction can be evident in a child's behavior when they are in school. youngsters who have an independent spirit, for instance, always want to attempt doing things on their own without relying on others, and youngsters are aware of when it is appropriate to seek others for assistance.

TK Pembina 4 OKU was one of three kindergartens selected as model schools by the Ogan Komering Ulu District Education Office in 2020. An outstanding and role-model school, Model Kindergarten offers pupils a high-quality education supported by suitable facilities. The South Sumatra Early Childhood Education criteria were used to select this kindergarten model. It is vital to understand how to execute character education management at TK Pembina 4 OKU to support the quality of TK Pembina 4. One of the educational settings that creates a generation with character is kindergarten. Several issues with its implementation were discovered, according to the findings of observations made at the TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu, including 1) The implementation of character education in TK Pembina 4 OKU is not yet optimal; 2). The implementation of learning and playing activities is not yet fully related to the implementation of character education; 3) A strategy is needed in implementing character education in early childhood, specifically at TK Pembina 4 OKU; 4) Child discipline is still lacking; and 5) The student's character is influenced by a family environment that does not provide enough attention. So the child's character is still not optimal and controlled. Based on the problems above, the author wishes to conduct research with the title "Implementation of Early Childhood Character Education in TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu".

B. Methods

The place or location of the research is TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu, which is located at Jln. Baturaja-Prabumulih Banuayu Village, District. Lubuk Batang, Ogan Komering Ulu Regency, South Sumatra. This research activity was carried out in September-December 2020. This study was conducted utilizing a qualitative descriptive technique, which views the subject of study as a system made up of interconnected components and describes current phenomenology (Arikunto, 2016).

The principal and instructor of TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu served as the study's subjects. Teachers and parents of children at TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu served as informants in this study. Primary data sources and secondary data sources make up the two categories of data sources used in this study. This study can be facilitated by the following techniques; 1) The process of focusing attention on an item while using all five senses is known as observation or simply observing (Arikunto, 2016); 2) One-sided questions and answers are used in interviews to gather data in a methodical and research-based manner; often, two or more people are physically present during the question-and-answer phase; 3) Documentation is the process of gathering data from written sources, such as archives and books regarding beliefs, postulates, hypotheses, or laws about study issues.

C. Results and Discussion

Implementation of Character Education in TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu

a. Programmed Activities

The values taught at TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu are programmed and based on the Curriculum, a schedule of yearly activities, a schedule of weekly activities, a schedule of daily activities, learning techniques, learning media, incentives, and punishments, teachers' examples, resources, class management, and evaluation. a schedule of yearly activities, a schedule of weekly activities, and a schedule of daily activities are not designed by educators. This contradicts the assertion that the implementation of social and emotional development through planned activities is a planned activity (Wibowo, 2012). Programmed activities are those that are planned and included in the teacher's lesson plan for durations of one day, one week, one month, or even longer. Examples include developing a schedule of daily activities, a schedule of weekly activities, etc.

To facilitate learning, TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu employs a center-based approach that includes preparation, art, role-playing, block, liquid natural materials, and scientific centers. According to Sanan & Yamin (2010), the central learning model is one in which children learn through play centers and circles. Before and

after playing, teachers often gather their students in a circle to sit to offer the younger ones a foothold. A play center is a children's play area or arena that is furnished with a variety of playthings that serve as a circular platform essential to the balanced development of students' fundamental potential in all areas of development. According to Wibowo (2012), play areas include:

- 1) A natural materials and science center, which gives kids numerous opportunities to explore natural materials and develop the fine motor skills necessary for writing readiness, sports skills, and stimulating the developing brain's working system;
- 2) block center, where kids can use or arrange blocks to learn a variety of abilities, including logic, math, basic numeracy, problem-solving, and thinking;
- 3) an arts center that helps kids broaden their experience in turning their concepts, ideas, and experiences into actual works (work results) using the project method;
- 4) a role-playing area where kids can act out various roles to better understand the world around them;
- 5) The activities at the center for preparation include learning the basics of reading, writing, and math.
- 6) Religious center, instilling the principles of religious life, faith, and devotion to God Almighty. Encourage children's intellectual talents, fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination, and acquiring social skills (sharing, negotiating, and problem-solving). In addition, educators use various techniques that are tailored to the development of students' qualities, such as storytelling, direct practice, debate, and guesswork.

One measure of educator competency is the use of play-based learning techniques tailored to the child's traits and the selection of media that is appropriate for the child's activities and environment. A schedule of daily activities contains four steps, according to Muslich (2011), including environmental steps, playing, and cleaning up after playing. The following stages of children's play activities:

- 1) Play environment: a) manage the initial play environment with enough materials (three play areas for each child); b) plan the intensity and density of experiences; c) has a variety of materials that support three types of play: sensorimotor, developmental, and role-playing; d) has a variety of materials that support literacy experiences; e) organizes play opportunities to support positive social relationships;
- 2) Experience-based learning before playing: a) read *My Mother Related to Experience* or bring in Sources, b) incorporate new vocabulary and demonstrate concepts that support the acquisition of work skills (performance standards), c) give suggestions on how to use the materials, d) discuss the rules and expectations for the gaming experience, e) explain the playing time series, f) managing kids for successful social relationships, g) design and implement play transition sequence

- 3) The basis for each child's playing experience is to: a) give them time to manage and expand their play, b) model appropriate communication, c) strengthen and expand the child's language, d) increase opportunities for socialization by supporting peer relationships, e) observe and record the development and progress of children's play;
- 4) experience base after playing:
 - a) support children to recall their playing experiences and tell each other about their playing experiences,
 - b) use cleaning time as a positive learning experience through grouping, sequencing, and structuring the play environment appropriately

b. Preparation for Learning

Teachers set up all of the necessary materials before students ever begin learning. In this instance, teachers convey it through a Daily Activity Plan that is created by student growth. The learning objectives of the institution will be attempted to be attained through the use of the activities that are described in the learning plan. Before the actual activity is conducted, the overall activity is described in the learning plan. A well-crafted learning plan ensures that at least half of the activities have been carried out satisfactorily. On the other hand, failing to plan is the same as intending to fail in education. The learning plan is created by outlining the developmental elements included in either the Level of Development Achievement in the National PAUD Standards or the Generic Learning Menu. The development requirements that kids should reach at a specific age are listed on the Generic Learning Menu. These areas of growth include physical, cognitive, linguistic, social-emotional, religious and moral values, and artistic. The development and growth of children in the age categories of 0 to 1 year, 1 to 2 years, 2 to 3 years, 4 to 5 years, and 5 to 6 years is the foundation for the creation of accomplishment indicators (Priska, 2020).

c. Teaching Materials

The National Education Association defines media as a type of written and visual communication as well as equipment. The ability to manipulate, view, hear, and read media is essential (Sadiman, 2012). A variety of learning tools are used at TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu, including videos, easy games, the voices of teachers, images, electronic items, and objects that complement the day's activities. For instance, during role-playing center activities with the topic of communication tools, students will select the toys they will use with the help of the instructors, such as the kentongan, telephone, and other items. Graphic, audio, and silent projection media are the types of educational media employed in Indonesia (Saleh, 2017).

d. Learning Approaches

TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu uses play approaches in addition to central, scientific, and holistic integrative methods. Using play as a technique to keep the level of balance where it should be. Playing, on the other hand, is a singular action that is thrilling, exciting, and leads to enjoyment. Children who play benefit greatly since it develops their potential and character in the shape of noble values.

Suparno (2022) mentioned the following advantages of playing in light of this:

- 1) Physical and health benefits, if we consider that children's usage of their physical and motor skills while playing is highly beneficial for the development of their physical abilities.
- 2) Significant educational and instructive value; playing has both.
- 3) A child's ideas and thoughts are developed when they play actively and creatively, according to the creativity value.
- 4) Socialization Value: Playing allows kids to engage with their surroundings and their friends, which improves their social skills.
- 5) Children will express their feelings while playing, which is a value of emotional intelligence.
- 6) Language Value: Children play with their peers and engage in conversation, song, discussion, and other language-based activities.
- 7) Moral Values. It's crucial to pay attention to children's moral values.
- 8) A good playing environment will support the development of physical motor, language, artistic, moral and religious, cognitive, and social-emotional skills by combining three types of play by the central approach, namely sensorimotor play, role play, and constructive play. Playing can also have therapeutic value for children because when they play they are relaxed, happy, and unstressed.

Apart from that, educators also use lecture methods, discussions before and after playing, questions and answers, watching films, and walking healthily. In addition, lecturing techniques, conversations before and after games, questions and answers, watching movies, and healthy walking are all used by educators. This is consistent with the assertion that lectures, questions and answers, group discussions, and other activities (such as watching movies and studying cases from the media) will be used to communicate the subject to be learned (Djamarah, 2005).

e. How to Cultivate an Atmosphere

The learning process will be influenced by a nice environment. Teachers establish a positive learning environment that can encourage engaged pupils. Teachers at TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu have a unique method for establishing a positive

classroom environment, which includes singing, guessing, telling stories, and laughing. In addition, teachers provide students with rewards and penalties.

According to a study Billah (2016), the learning environment for young children needs to be made to be enjoyable, joyful, happy, and full of delight. Children who connect successfully with parents, teachers, and their peers are a sign of a positive learning environment.

f. Student Mutuality

When students provide feedback, the teaching and learning process is successful. By asking questions of other children, TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu students demonstrate their reciprocity for teachers. According to Lokas, the teacher plays the primary role in the teaching and learning process, which is at the center of the entire educational process. The reason is that to accomplish particular objectives, the teaching and learning process involves several acts by educators/teachers and students based on reciprocal connections.

The key prerequisite for the teaching and learning process is the interaction or reciprocal relationship between teachers and pupils. The term "interactions" about teaching and learning activities encompasses more than just the interactions between teachers and students. In this instance, teaching pupils attitudes and values rather than just messages in the form of learning material is the goal.

g. Learning materials

The subject matter of learning is known as learning material. All early character education content for TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu students focuses on developing students' moral character. According to Prabandari's research (Prabandari, 2020), character education for children should at the very least teach them to love God and all of His creation, be independent, disciplined, responsible, honest, trust and speak wisely, respect and polite, generous, helpful and cooperative, confident, creative, never give up, lead with justice, be kind and humble, tolerate others, and promote peace and unity.

h. Community and Parental Involvement

Families and the community are somewhat and indirectly involved in character education at TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu. Planning for schooling involves families. One of them is deciding whether snacks will be provided by parents with funds from the school or provided by the school with parents paying Rp. 2000 per day. Other decisions include those regarding co-curricular activities, student development difficulties, and other supporting activities. The neighborhood isn't

doing much in the meantime. The only school that is actively involved in community affairs is TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu.

This is by the Department of Education's review of documentation in the form of a permit for the establishment of Early Childhood Education, provisions that must be carried out by schools and foundations, specifically the duty to coordinate between educators, managers, or administrators, with parents/families of students, the surrounding community, and the sector.

i. Habituation Activities

At TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu, early childhood character education is implemented in addition to activities that are incorporated into scheduled activities through habituation. There are various actions associated with this habit, including normal activities, unplanned activities, examples, and conditioning. The development of a mother's character must go through a constant process of learning and habituation because the character is not entirely genetic or hereditary. According to (Susanti et al., 2020), habituation is implemented in schools through modeling, rote behavior, irrational behavior, and conditioning.

The PAUD activity program's structure contains sections on acquiring basic skills through play and habituation exercises as well as sections on forming behaviors. The following areas are covered under the definition of development: (1) religious and moral values, (2) physical, (3) cognitive, (4) language, (5) arts, and (6) social-emotional. Using a thematic approach, development activities for one element are carried out in conjunction with those for other aspects (Usman, 2002).

The following is an explanation of habituation activities: 1) Routine Activities, are activities that students carry out continuously and consistently at all times; 2) Spontaneous Activities, are activities that are carried out spontaneously at that very moment. This activity is carried out when educators find bad behavior from students, which must be corrected that day; 3) Exemplary, is the attitude and behavior of all school components in providing examples of good actions, so that they are expected to become role models for students; 4) Conditioning, to facilitate the execution of student character education, classes, and schools must be properly conditioned. The conditioning practiced by schools involves maintaining clean restrooms, orderly classrooms, cleansed trash cans, organized shoe, and sandal racks, organized student backpacks and helmets, and organized student drinking stations.

According to Hapsari & Iftayani (2016), habituation in children can take the following forms and can be seen in the following ways: a) Routine activities are those that take place every day at school, such as marching and praying before and

after activities. b) Spontaneous activities are those that happen on their own, such as visiting a sick friend or graciously asking for or offering assistance. c) Setting an example involves acting as a positive role model or example for youngsters, such as clearing up trash around the school and using good manners when speaking. d) Programmed activities are those that are planned into learning activities (semester, SKM, and SKH programs), such as eating meals together and maintaining a tidy school. While TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu has done its best to meet the needs of its children, there is still space for improvement in the caliber and expertise of teachers who instruct pupils both within and outside of the classroom. To obtain the best outcomes, parents and the community's involvement in imparting high moral values must be more active.

Obstacle Factors and Supporting Factors

When implementing character education in young children, there are numerous challenges and supportive elements that must be taken into consideration. Early childhood is a golden phase that requires stimulation or stimulation to develop to its full age-appropriate potential. There are several issues with TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu, including the fact that teachers don't use RKH in the learning process, they don't make daily assessment tools, the principal isn't as firm in handling problems with teachers, there isn't much community and parental involvement, teachers aren't aware of ways to improve the quality, there isn't enough communication between teachers so that miscommunications frequently happen, and learning doesn't take age ranges into account. The environment at school is filled with challenges.

Support from the community and family have been identified as contributing elements. Internal and external supporting elements are the two available. Learning activities, student interests, facilities and infrastructure, tactics, materials, media, funding, game tools, and instructional techniques are all internal elements. In addition to internal elements, relationships between the school, community, and family are important external factors in character education implementation. In implementing early children's character education requires collaboration between the family, community, and school environment.

D. Conclusion

According to the current issues, the following conclusion can be drawn:

1. The implementation of character education for young children at TK Pembina 4 Ogan Komering Ulu uses programmed activities with a central method that is equipped with other complementary methods, such as stories, singing, fairy tales, hands-on practice, teacher modeling, and discussions as well as rewards, seduction, and punishment for the kids.

2. The ability of educators to create RKH and assessment tools, the environment of the school among educators, the principal's lack of sternness in enforcing RKH in the learning process, educators' failure to create daily assessment tools, the community's and parents' lack of involvement, the educators' lack of awareness of how to improve quality, and the fact that learning does not occur are obstacles to the implementation of character education. Support from the community and family have been identified as contributing elements. Internal and external supporting elements are the two available. Learning activities, student interests, facilities and infrastructure, tactics, materials, media, funding, game tools, and instructional techniques are all internal elements. In addition to internal elements, relationships between the school, community, and family are important external factors in character education implementation. In implementing early children's character education requires collaboration between the family, community, and school environment.

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