



The Role of Teachers in Shaping the Character of Fourth Grade Students at SDN Ululere Elementary School, Bungku Timur Subdistrict, Morowali Regency

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ABSTRACT

Character education plays an important role in shaping the personalities of elementary school students. This study aims to analyze the role of teachers in shaping the character of fourth-grade students at SDN Ululere. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with data collection through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that teachers play the role of educators, teachers, and coaches in shaping students' character. As educators, teachers instill religious values and responsibility through habitual prayer, exemplary behavior, and routine activities such as class duty. As teachers, teachers integrate character values into learning through group discussions and differentiated learning, emphasizing honesty, cooperation, and responsibility. As coaches, teachers provide personal guidance, routine religious activities, and training in student independence. From this character-building process, four main characters are strengthened, namely religious, honest, independent, and responsible. This study confirms that character building in students requires a collaborative approach between teachers, schools, and parents in a consistent and sustainable manner.

1. Introduction

Education is an important aspect of life because it develops potential and determines an individual's future. Technological developments in the digital age bring their own challenges to the world of education, especially in maintaining and fostering student discipline (Samiha, 2025). Ki Hajar Dewantara stated that

education is an effort to advance character, mind, and body in harmony with nature and society. The success of education is influenced by various factors, including school personnel, which includes educational and administrative staff (Nisa, 2019). Teachers have the role of educating, teaching, guiding, and training with a different focus on morals, knowledge, norms, and skills (Sopian, 2016). Teachers also serve as role models, so they must have a responsible, disciplined, independent, and authoritative personality (Munawir et al., 2022). Based on Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers, teachers are professional educators whose duties range from educating to evaluating students. In elementary schools, classroom teachers play an important role in guiding students to help them develop (Devianti, 2020; Nurhasanah et al., 2021).

Character is the embodiment of moral, ethical, religious, and cultural values in everyday behavior (Baginda, 2018). Character education instills values toward God, others, the environment, and oneself through a process that is integrated with the culture of society (Setiawan et al., 2021). The goal is to shape noble character and improve the quality of education in a holistic and balanced manner (Tira, 2024). Observations show that the character of some students has not been optimally formed due to the influence of their family, school, and social environment. Therefore, teachers play an important role in shaping character from an early age. The decline in manners in the educational environment, such as the low level of respect students have for teachers and a lack of discipline, is a fundamental problem that requires a strategic solution (Marsyeli, 2025).

Professionalism in education is a form of attitude and commitment demonstrated by individuals in carrying out their duties responsibly, in accordance with established standards and regulations (Ayuningtyas, 2025). Teachers are professional educators whose duties include educating, teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students in formal education in accordance with Law Number 14 of 2005 concerning Teachers and Lecturers. Karwati (2014) refers to teachers as the main facilitators in exploring and optimizing students' potential to become ethical individuals. Teachers not only transfer knowledge, but also instill values and life skills. Teachers are the spearhead of education and the key to the success of students (Manizar, 2015). Therefore, teachers are required to be professional, master the material, methods, and basics of education (Sopian, 2016; Sulistiani, 2023).

Teachers play an important role in shaping students' personalities through a comprehensive understanding of student characteristics (Nisa, 2019). In addition to being academic teachers, teachers are also moral and cultural educators and role models for students (Fuad, 2018). The role of teachers includes being educators who integrate character values into learning, teachers who design effective learning and assess cognitive and character aspects, and coaches who instill attitudes and skills through consistent practice (Wally, 2021). The synergy between teachers and parents plays a key role in optimizing the formation of responsible learning character in students in the school environment (Hasibuan, 2025). Thus, teachers become central figures in shaping student character at school.

Character is the nature, personality, and morals reflected in daily behavior. According to Thomas Lickona, character is an inner disposition to respond morally in a good way, including moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior (Rosyad, 2019). Character education is not a momentary process, but rather lifelong learning that instills values through deep internalization (Judrah et al., 2024). This process includes knowledge transfer, value transformation, and attitude formation to shape unique and moral individuals.

Character education is important to overcome the moral decadence of the younger generation (Devianti et al., 2020). The Ministry of National Education has formulated 18 character values, including religious, honest, tolerant, disciplined, hardworking, creative, independent, democratic, curious, patriotic, communicative, peace-loving, fond of reading, environmentally conscious, and socially conscious. These values aim to shape individuals with integrity and responsibility. Thus, education becomes a strategic platform in building the character and potential of the nation's children, highlighting the importance of shaping students' religious character amid modernization and the moral challenges faced by teenagers (Mahfi, 2025).

Character education is the process of instilling and shaping values by teachers to students as the foundation for national development (Patmawati, 2018). Ki Hajar Dewantara stated that character is formed from a combination of biological potential and environmental interactions. Education is the most effective means of shaping character, intelligence, and self-awareness. Through the creation of an ethical and responsible school environment, religious values can be instilled consistently (Santika, 2020). The functions of character education include developing the potential of students, improving moral quality, and filtering values to suit the character of the Indonesian nation. Based on Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System Article 3, national education aims to shape people who are faithful, pious, noble, capable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible. According to E. Mulyasa, character education improves the quality of the educational process and outcomes in a holistic and balanced manner (Hamdi et al., 2023).

Character building strategies include role modeling, spontaneous activities, reprimands, environmental conditioning, and routine activities (Widodo, 2018). Teacher role modeling is a major factor because students tend to imitate the behavior of educators. A disciplined, clean, and religious school environment also supports the internalization of values. In addition, family and social circles are external factors that greatly influence the development of student character. Observations show that students still lack discipline, ethics, and responsibility in learning. Teachers have a strategic role as educators, mentors, and behavior controllers to ensure that students comply with applicable norms. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering material, but also for shaping character through habituation, supervision, and motivation so that educational goals can be optimally achieved. In accordance with the problem formulation that has been determined, the objective to be achieved in this study is how a teacher shapes a student's character to be better.

2. Methodology

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach that produces data in the form of written or spoken words from the subjects observed. Qualitative research aims to understand phenomena such as behavior, perceptions, and actions in depth in their natural context. Research subjects are usually limited and not randomly selected, with an emphasis on meaning and process. The research was conducted at SDN Ululere because problems with student discipline were found based on observations and dialogues with fourth-grade teachers. The research was conducted in the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year in Bungku Timur District, Morowali Regency, Central Sulawesi Province.

The research subjects were teachers and fourth-grade students at SDN Ululere in the 2025/2026 academic year. The fourth grade was chosen because it showed relatively low character compared to other grades, making it relevant to the focus of the study. This study was a case study with a descriptive qualitative approach that focused on analyzing the role of teachers in shaping the character of fourth-grade students. Data collection was carried out through observation, interviews, and documentation to obtain an in-depth picture of the character-building process.

Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was carried out by directly observing behavior and situations in the field, accompanied by systematic recording to obtain accurate data (Hasibuan et al., 2023). In addition, interviews were conducted through direct interaction between researchers and teachers and students to explore information in depth using interview guidelines and recording devices as support (Rosyid, 2022). Documentation was used to supplement observation and interview data, in the form of photos, videos, and other supporting documents relevant to the study (Marzuki, 2022). Data analysis was conducted inductively, which is drawing general conclusions from specific facts. The analysis technique refers to the model of Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which includes: (1) data reduction, (2) presentation of data in narrative form, and (3) drawing and verifying conclusions to ensure the validity of the findings.

3. Result and Discussion

Result

This research was conducted at SDN Ululere, located in Ululere Village, Bungku Timur Subdistrict, Morowali Regency, Central Sulawesi Province. The school was established in 2000 and currently implements the Merdeka Curriculum in its learning process. SDN Ululere is led by Principal Suparman B. Nawer, S.Pd., with a total of 10 teachers, 1 operator staff, and 1 school guard. The total number of students is 104. The school's vision is: "To create students who are intelligent, have good character, noble morals, are independent, care for the environment, and have good manners." Its mission includes: creating active, creative, innovative, and enjoyable learning; designing quality learning that improves literacy and numeracy;

shaping the profile of Pancasila Students; and instilling values of politeness and culture in everyday life. The guidelines for interviewing teachers of fourth-grade students at SDN Ululere can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Teacher Interview Guidelines

No	Indicators of the Role of Teachers in Shaping Student Character	Sub Indicator	Questions
1.	Teachers as educators	Educating students according to the subject matter taught	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do you relate learning materials to character education values? 2. What character values do you emphasize most to students, and why? 3. What strategies or approaches do you use to instill character values in students? 4. What challenges do you face in shaping students' character, and how do you overcome them?
2.	Teachers as educators	Selecting a learning model appropriate to the material being taught	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do teachers choose learning models that can shape students' character? 2. What strategies do you use in learning related to shaping students' character? 3. How do you integrate character values into the daily learning process?
3.	Teachers as coaches	Acting as a coach in intellectual, attitudinal, and motor skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do you guide students in character building? 2. What activities or programs do you conduct outside of class to train students' character? 3. What is the biggest challenge you face when nurturing and training students' character, and how do you overcome it?

Based on observations and interviews on October 7, 2025, with the fourth-grade homeroom teacher, Mrs. Nurma, S.Pd.SD, as shown in Figure 1, it can be seen that teachers play the role of educators, teachers, and trainers in shaping students' characters. As educators, teachers instill religious values and responsibility through the habit of praying, mutual respect, and exemplary behavior. She stated, "The way I foster character is by getting the children used to praying before and after class, respecting their friends, and setting an example through my daily behavior." Teachers also encourage class duty and cooperation to train discipline and responsibility. "First, we take an approach that involves observing the personalities of the children in the classroom. From their personalities, we can already see the nature and character of these children, and from this we can see whether or not they do their work."



Figure 1. Interview Process

As teachers, they use group discussions and differentiated learning to assess students' processes and attitudes. They explain: "Teachers don't just assess whether the answers are right or wrong, but also look at the process, whether students are responsible and understand the material." "Most students try to do their work independently, but sometimes there are still those who need guidance or reminders so they don't rely on their friends. She also always motivates students to be more confident and responsible for their work." The value of honesty is emphasized by prohibiting cheating and encouraging students to admit their mistakes. "The teacher always says that if a student is caught cheating, she will gently reprimand them and remind them of the importance of honesty. After that, the student is advised to study harder and not repeat their actions." The Character Values banner posted on the classroom wall can be seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Character Values Banner

As coaches, teachers provide personal guidance and routine activities such as reading Asmaul Husna and community service to foster religiosity, creativity, and

independence. Teachers also express challenges in the form of low motivation due to the influence of gadgets and family environment, so cooperation with parents is needed to support character building in students. “The main challenge for teachers in shaping students' character is low motivation and interest in learning due to the influence of gadgets, games, and a family environment that is not supportive of education. Since most learning takes place at home, the role of parents is very important. Teachers need to understand the family background of their students, create a supportive learning environment in the classroom, provide additional motivation, and work together with parents through communication and collaboration to ensure that educational and character-building goals are achieved.”

Discussion

Based on observations and interviews conducted at SDN Ululere, it was found that the role of teachers in shaping the character of fourth-grade students is manifested through three main functions, namely teachers as educators, instructors, and coaches. These three roles show that character building is not only done through the delivery of learning materials, but also through exemplary behavior, habituation, and continuous guidance. The role of teachers as educators is dominant in instilling religious values and responsibility. The habit of praying before and after learning and routine religious activities show that teachers apply a habituation approach in shaping students' religious character. This is in line with the concept of character education, which emphasizes the importance of internalizing values through repeated practice in everyday life at school. Teachers not only give instructions but also set an example through their attitudes and behavior. This exemplary behavior reinforces the process of imitation in elementary school students who are still in the concrete stage of psychological development, where they tend to imitate figures they consider to have authority.

Thus, religious values, manners, and mutual respect are not only understood cognitively but also lived out in daily practice. The cultivation of responsibility through classroom duty and cleanliness activities shows that teachers integrate character values into routine activities. This indicates that character building is carried out contextually and practically, not merely through lectures. This approach helps students understand the meaning of responsibility as part of their social obligations in the school environment. As educators, teachers are not only oriented towards academic achievement but also towards character building through the learning process. The group discussion and differentiated learning models show that teachers strive to adapt strategies to students' needs and abilities. This reflects a humanistic pedagogical approach, in which each student is seen as having different potential. The emphasis on the process, not just the end result, shows that teachers understand the importance of learning as a means of attitude formation.

When teachers assess cooperation, honesty, and responsibility in completing assignments, learning becomes a vehicle for internalizing character values. Instilling honest character traits, such as prohibiting cheating and encouraging the courage to admit mistakes, shows that teachers are trying to build students' integrity from an early age. In the context of basic education, the formation of honesty is

very important because it is the foundation for moral development in later stages. This strategy also shows that character values are explicitly integrated into teaching and learning activities.

The role of teachers as coaches is evident through individual guidance and student self-development activities. Teachers take a personal approach to students who experience learning difficulties and explore the root causes of problems that may be influenced by family or environmental factors. This shows that character building cannot be separated from an understanding of the students' backgrounds. Routine activities such as reading *Asmaul Husna* and community service every Friday show that teachers consistently train students in religious and social values.

This activity is not merely ceremonial, but serves as a means of forming positive habits. Instilling independence through the habit of tidying up, maintaining cleanliness, and preparing learning materials independently shows that teachers are striving to develop self-regulation in students. This independence is important for building self-confidence and personal responsibility. Challenges faced, such as low motivation to learn due to the use of gadgets and lack of parental attention, show that character building is a shared responsibility between schools and families. Teachers' efforts to establish communication with parents demonstrate a collaborative approach to character building.

4. Conclusion

Based on observations and interviews at SDN Ululere, it can be concluded that the role of teachers in shaping the character of fourth-grade students is realized through three main functions, namely as educators, teachers, and trainers. Character building is not only carried out through the delivery of material, but also through exemplary behavior, habituation, and continuous and contextual guidance. As educators, teachers instill religious values, manners, and responsibility through the habit of praying, religious activities, and routine activities such as class duty and maintaining cleanliness. The approach of habituation and role modeling ensures that character values are not only understood cognitively but also internalized in students' daily lives. As educators, teachers integrate character values into the learning process through group discussions and differentiated learning. The emphasis on process, cooperation, honesty, and responsibility shows that learning is used as a means of internalizing moral values and integrity from an early age. As coaches, teachers provide personal guidance, carry out routine activities such as reading *Asmaul Husna* and community service, and train students to be independent. Despite challenges such as low motivation to learn due to the influence of gadgets and lack of parental attention, teachers strive to establish cooperation with families. Thus, character building in students is a collaborative process between schools and parents that is carried out consistently and purposefully. It can be concluded that teachers instill various types of character in their students, but in the school environment, there are four characters that are emphasized more, namely Religious, Honest, Independent, and Responsible.

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