

# IMPLEMENTATION OF IPS LEARNING ON STUDENT CHARACTER FORMATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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**Abstract.** *Social Studies plays a vital role in developing students' character and preparing them to participate responsibly in society. However, the integration of character formation into Social Studies learning at the elementary level remains insufficiently explored in local educational contexts. This study investigates how Social Studies learning contributes to character formation among elementary school students at UPT SPF SDN Gaddong II, Rokan Hulu Regency. Employing a descriptive qualitative design, data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation involving elementary school teachers as key participants. The findings indicate that Social Studies learning contributes to character development by fostering critical, creative, logical, and socially responsive thinking. It also encourages students to understand social phenomena, develop initiative, and demonstrate positive attitudes and responsible behavior. The study contributes contextual evidence that Social Studies can function not only as a source of social knowledge but also as a strategic pedagogical means of strengthening students' character and preparing them for constructive participation in society.*

**Keywords:** *Social Studies learning, Character Building, Students*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the most important things in a person's life. Education determines and guides a person's future and direction. Although not everyone shares this view, education remains a paramount human need (Mahmud, 2017). A person's talents and skills are developed and honed through education. Education is also generally used to measure the quality of each person. In Latin, education means *educatum*, derived from the words "E" and "Duco." "E" means external development or development from little to many, while "Duco" means developing (Istiq'faroh, 2020). From this, education can also be defined as an effort to develop one's abilities (Mursyidi, 2020).

According to the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), education is the process of changing the attitudes and behavior of an individual or group of people in an effort to mature humans through teaching and training (Sudaryanto, 2020). According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, he stated that the definition of education is the demands of a child's growth and development (Sugiarta et al., 2019). This means that education is an effort to guide the natural strengths of each child so that they can grow and develop as human beings and as members of society who can achieve safety and happiness in their lives.

The National Education Goals as stated in Law No. 20 of 2003 state that the goal of education is to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students can actively develop their potential to have spiritual religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and skills needed by themselves, society, nation and state (National Education System Law, 2003). In connection with these educational goals, the government strives to improve the quality of education in order to produce intelligent, qualified, character-based and cultured human resources. Improving the quality of human resources can be achieved through improvements to the education system that lead to the formation of student character from pre-school to tertiary levels. Character formation as an effort to improve student behavior is carried out continuously involving aspects of knowledge, feeling, and acting (Soetari, 2014).

Social Studies (IPS) is a subject that has an important role in forming good citizens, so learning social studies is very important at the elementary level of education where basic education is the basic laying/foundation of understanding and knowledge about how to live socially because at school students come from different environments, the other side of it is also that concern for the social environment or having knowledge and understanding of social values rather than the values of national character education. As explained above, of course the introduction and strengthening of social sciences continues to be developed as deeply as possible to shape the character of school students. There are three objectives of

learning IPS to students, namely so that each student becomes a good citizen, train students to have the ability to think maturely to face and solve social problems, and so that students can inherit and continue the culture and ideals of the Indonesian nation.

The National Council for Social Studies (NSCC) defines Social Sciences as follows: "Social studies as "the integrated study of the social sciences and humanities to promote civic competence". Within the school program, social studies provides coordinated, systematic, study drawing upon such disciplines as anthropology, archeology, economics, geography, law, philosophy religion and sociology, as well as appropriate content from the humanities, mathematics and natural sciences. (D., 1922; NCSS, 2009)"

Through social studies, students are taught to become good and peaceful Indonesian citizens. Social studies are essential for a successful transition to adulthood, and for the development of national character in line with national principles and spirit. Thus, students in social studies are trained to solve social problems with a holistic and integrated approach from various perspectives.

The character learning process in social studies learning is more directed at the aspects of knowledge, skills and behavior, there are three aspects in learning that must be achieved, namely; "a) knowledge, which is a body of facts and principles; b) skill, which is acquiring an ability through experience or training; c) attitude, which is one opinion, feeling or mental set as demonstrated by one action" (Mursyidi, 2020). Character education is a process to shape, grow, develop and mature a child's personality into a wise and responsible person through continuous habituation of the mind, heart and actions whose results can be seen in the learning process and daily real actions both at school and in society. Social studies learning has an important role in the formation of student character. In his research, Ali Ibrahim Akbar (Marhayani, 2018)) explains that a person's success is only determined 20% by hard skills and the remaining 80% by soft skills. From this explanation, it shows that it is very important to carry out character formation for students. Students who have mental strength and have good morals will certainly be able to have a characterful personality. This can differentiate them from other students. Learning social studies to shape student character is certainly not easy; it requires continuous effort to produce results that align with national education goals.

Social studies learning consistently draws attention to the role of teachers and the students' well-being. Teachers still hold primary control over learning, while students merely follow their instructions. Ironically, students are often presented with rote learning methods, resulting in boredom. This learning process demonstrates that social studies learning is still unable to optimally develop and enhance students' character, particularly in instilling character values in their daily lives (Anis et al., 2020).

Current phenomena indicate a worrying decline. Truth, honesty, justice, mutual assistance, and compassion have become increasingly expensive, overshadowed by abuse, deception, oppression, indifference, the usurpation of others' rights, and many other deviant acts. The world of education in Indonesia is currently entering a difficult period. The large amount of education budgets and various breakthrough programs seem incapable of solving the fundamental problem in the world of education: how to produce superior graduates who are faithful, pious, professional, and have character. Therefore, like other developing countries, Indonesia is striving to build the character of its children to improve the nation's image while maintaining its cultural identity.

Character education is intended to simultaneously shape character. Character education itself is a long process, namely a learning process to instill noble values, good manners, and noble morals rooted in religious teachings, customs, and Indonesian values in order to develop the personality of students so that they become dignified human beings, become citizens of the nation with character in accordance with the noble values of the nation and religion. Thus, students need character education that will shape positive character. The government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, has launched character education for all levels of education, from elementary school to tertiary level. Character formation needs to be carried out from an early age. The emergence of the idea of a character education program in the world of education in Indonesia is understandable, because so far it has been felt that the educational process has not been successful in developing Indonesian people with character.

## II. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted in Makassar City, located at the SPF UPT SDN Gaddong II on January 8, 2023. The data sources used were primary and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly through interviews with informants, while secondary data is documents that can be published. The data collection techniques are observation, interviews, and documentation. The method in this research is to use a qualitative approach so that the resulting data is in the form of descriptive words, namely by analyzing the Implementation of Social Studies Learning on Student Character Formation in Elementary Schools. The nature of descriptive qualitative research means qualitative research that always presents its findings in the form of detailed, complete, and in-depth sentence descriptions regarding the process of why and how something happens (Gunawan, 2013; Moleong, 2018; Nugrahani & Hum, 2014). By using descriptive qualitative research, researchers will be able to capture various qualitative information with careful descriptions. The data obtained is then analyzed to form a conclusion that becomes the research process.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study describes and presents a general overview of the Implementation of Social Studies Learning on the Formation of Student Character in Elementary Schools. Based on interviews and observations conducted on Monday, January 8, 2023, various data were obtained related to Social Studies Learning and the Formation of Student Character. The results of the interview are regarding the character "Character is an individual trait, a person's personality, character and behavior in everyday life." (Ermianti, S.Pd, homeroom teacher VA). "Character is the nature, character, and behavior that a person has in everyday life." (Saipul, S.Pd, homeroom teacher VB). To form student character, teachers teach students with courtesy, and are honest or open in their mistakes and share inspiring experiences and positive stories. "Giving appreciation or rewards, no matter how small, to students. This will make students feel more confident and more enthusiastic in learning. Responding to the different characters that exist in elementary school children. A teacher must be firm with his students, although we learn gently, not completely because each student has a different character. Provide motivation to students at the end of the lesson, and use interesting learning methods for learning. Do not differentiate between one student and another, be fair, and apply the right learning model. Regarding the social studies learning questionnaire can shape the character of children is certainly very important because character education in social studies learning in elementary schools, students who have positive character, ethics, morals, good character and good behavior. Character education should begin as early as childhood has been taught by parents. Students are taught to be polite, and how to mix with society. Regarding the role of social studies learning in elementary schools Using the use of interesting learning media using cooperative methods. For example, a teacher gives an assignment and work with group members by solving problems known in the assignment. If a student does not understand, the teacher must explain how to do it with learning media assistance The application of social studies learning in elementary schools can be implemented by using learning models that suit the character of students. Regarding the questionnaire on the role of social studies lessons in the formation of student character in elementary schools, social studies education is actually very closely related to character education. Developing students' knowledge and understanding of social life in their local communities. The role of social studies learning is very important in the formation of student character, because in social studies learning, in addition to developing knowledge, we are also taught how to socialize with the community. In social studies education, it must be integrated with character education. The integration in question is how character education is incorporated into learning so that teaching it is not separate, but becomes one unit.

Because social studies education and student character are often related. Social studies education studies community life and character education is related to children's behavior in everyday life.

From the results of interviews conducted with teachers, we can find out that character is an individual trait, a person's personality, nature, and behavior that a person has in one's life. Character is a major aspect in shaping a person's quality to become a noble person. If a person's quality is good and continuously developed, then that person can become a human being who is beneficial to the surrounding environment and the progress of the nation. Thus, it can be interpreted that character education must be pursued by educational units, to improve the quality of the implementation and results of education in schools that lead to the achievement of student character formation. The instillation of character education is important to be implemented in schools, in order to direct and strengthen students to have character. The importance of character education is mandated as written in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, Article 3 states that: National Education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the life of the nation, aiming to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

The importance of character is a very serious issue to discuss. The government has included character education in the curriculum (2013). Character education in the 2013 curriculum is included in core competencies parts 1 and 2. Competencies related to religious and social attitudes are developed indirectly (indirect teaching), namely when students learn about knowledge (core competency 3) and knowledge planning (competency 4). In accordance with the 2013 curriculum design, which focuses great attention on character in high school before children enter junior high school and beyond. The character values developed by the Ministry of National Education are eighteen characters, including: religious character, honesty, discipline, tolerance, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, love of the homeland, respect for achievement, friendship, love of peace, love of reading, care for the environment, care for society, and responsibility. At the elementary school level, especially the lower grades, students are expected to have five basic characters, namely: religious, honest, disciplined, independent, and responsible. Guidance: The simplest thing you can do is to be a good role model for your students. Character education isn't just about acquiring knowledge, but also about taking positive action based on that knowledge.

Character is not formed just like that, but is formed through several influencing factors, namely: biological factors and environmental factors. Biological Factors Biological Factors are factors that come from within the person himself. This factor comes from heredity or innate traits carried from birth and the influence of heredity from one of the traits possessed by one of the two. Environmental Factors In addition to the relatively constant hereditary factors (endogyn factors), their nature, which consists of, among others, the living environment, education, living conditions and situations and social conditions (all of which are exogyn factors) all have a big influence on character formation.

Developing student character through books alone is not enough; teachers need to develop skills to foster democracy, creativity, and independence. For example, teachers need to train students in communication. According to James A.F. Stoner, communication is a process in which someone attempts to provide understanding and information by conveying a message to another person. Teacher responses are crucial in shaping student behavior. Critical responses that belittle or put students down should be avoided. Praise is an effective response, but it is important to ensure that this attention is truly meaningful to the student. Excessive or inappropriate praise will render it meaningless. Praise given appropriately will motivate students to do their best.

In one class, we will definitely find diversity. Then how should the teacher's attitude in dealing with the diversity of different student characters. The way that a teacher should deal with different student characters is by: Choosing the right learning method. Learning methods that only read may not be suitable for children who rely on audio abilities. Conversely, not all children can grasp the material only with explanations. By knowing what characters exist in the class, we can combine various learning methods for one material so that it can be understood by all children. Treating students fairly. Not all children have the

same abilities in one subject. One of the teacher's attitudes in dealing with these differences in character is to continue to treat all students equally. Regardless of how much of their ability to receive the material being taught.

Provide the right motivation. We may encounter students who don't have as strong a language ability as their peers. This is where our role as teachers comes in: providing the right motivation. Instead of viewing their limited abilities as a weakness, try to identify their other strengths. Then, encourage them to develop their potential. This way, they won't feel less valuable than their peers.

Social studies lessons in elementary schools can shape children's character because in social studies learning in elementary schools, students are taught to be polite, ethical, moral, have good behavior and how to mix with society. In learning activities, social studies is one of the strategic subjects for instilling moral values in students. Kirschenbaum emphasized that the ultimate goal of social studies studies is directed towards the goal of moral education. Social studies education as part of general education has an important role in improving the quality of education. Specifically, social studies education plays a role in producing quality students, namely people who are able to think critically, creatively, logically, and take the initiative in dealing with social symptoms and problems that develop in society caused by technological developments in the global era.

Studying social studies is essentially developing students' knowledge, values, attitudes, and social skills to be able to examine the social life they face every day with the aim of students being able to develop knowledge, values, and attitudes, as well as social skills that are useful for themselves. Thus, social studies education cannot avoid the task of developing morals and ethics. In learning social studies, one important thing to pay attention to is the learning method. So far, the social studies learning method that has developed in schools is the functional method. The criteria for this functional method are: (1) having rigid objectivity standards, (2) leading to cognitive development, and (3) teachers also pursue targets that are oriented towards final exam scores so that students prefer to memorize material rather than understand the essence of the knowledge conveyed by teachers in class.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the qualitative study conducted through interviews and documentation in Grade IV at UPT SPF SDN Gaddong II during the 2023–2024 academic year, it can be concluded that the implementation of Social Studies learning contributes positively to students' character formation. Social Studies provides opportunities for teachers to integrate moral, ethical, social, and behavioral values into classroom learning. Through discussions of social life and community issues, students are encouraged to develop politeness, responsibility, respect, cooperation, and appropriate social behavior.

The findings further demonstrate that Social Studies functions not only as a means of developing students' knowledge of social phenomena but also as a strategic medium for character education. It supports the development of critical, creative, logical, and socially responsive thinking, enabling students to respond appropriately to problems in their environment. Therefore, Social Studies learning at the elementary level has an important role in developing students' positive character and preparing them to become responsible individuals who can contribute constructively to society and national development.

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