



CHARACTER EDUCATION MANAGEMENT FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AT MULTI TALENTA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ummi Kultsum

ummi@pembangunan.sch.id

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ABSTRACT

The opportunity given to children with special needs to learn together with other children in a school is given in inclusive education services. Inclusive education is expected as an effort to absorb the various abilities of students who have various differences and potentials and to provide support to enable them to participate in regular education activities as much as possible. Inclusive education can be an appropriate means of instilling students' character values to appreciate differences, foster an attitude of caring, increase a sense of mutual cooperation and tolerance among others. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative.

This research aims to describe the management of character education for children with special needs at Multi Talenta Elementary School. The things studied include the process of planning, organising, implementing and assessing character education. The subjects in this study included the principal, homeroom teacher, accompanying teacher, children with special needs coordinator, students and guardians of Multi Talenta Elementary School. The results of this study show that the process of managing character education starting from the planning, organising, implementing and assessing process has gone well, this is in line with the support of all the resources involved, namely from the school, parents, family and community environment. Multi Talenta Elementary School has 13 character values that have been applied to activities in the form of learning, habituation, example and reinforcement. The teachers have provided good service and assistance according to the needs of students.

Keywords: *Character Education Management, Children with Special Needs, Inclusive Classes*

I. INTRODUCTION

Every citizen has the same rights in education regardless of their origin, socio-economic status and physical form. The rights of citizens have been guaranteed by the government, which is then included in Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning education, which states that every citizen has the same right to obtain a quality education. So that anyone can get the right to continue their education, including children with special needs. A proper education is needed by children with disabilities. Therefore, the government is trying to make inclusive education a hope for future glory (Irawati, 2023). Students with disabilities in inclusive

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education are given the opportunity to learn together with general students in the classroom. The hope of forming inclusive education is as a form of concern and an effort to develop students' abilities and various potentials. In inclusive education, students are not judged differently and are not treated differently based on their physical background and needs (Aziz et al., 2024). Inclusive education can be an appropriate medium for teaching students character values. The 9 pillars of noble character compiled by the originator of Indonesian character education Megwangi, namely love of God and truth, responsibility, discipline and independence, trustworthiness, respect and courtesy, compassion, care and cooperation, self-confidence, creativity and perseverance, fairness and leadership, kindness and humility, tolerance and peace love (Mulyasa, 2022).

Character values are very important to be applied to everyday life. Considering that children spend a lot of time studying at school, schools play a very important role in efforts to build student character, especially in schools that implement inclusive education in which there are students who have different backgrounds from one another. With these differences, schools are expected to be able to instil character values well, especially for students with disabilities.

With so many limitations, whether physical or mental, it is not easy to build a positive self-concept for children with disabilities. Whether we realise it or not, the different physical or mental conditions inherent in children with disabilities often become a stimulus that provokes an unfriendly response to the process of self-development, so more special assistance is needed in the education and skills process (Nida, 2021). Children with disabilities are unable to carry out activities independently so they have greater dependence which is much more complex than children without disabilities (Desriani & Devita, 2019).

Inclusive education is an education that gives appreciation to students with disabilities. The model applied in this inclusive school emphasises full integration, removing limitations by using the principle of education for all. Inclusive schools serve normal students and children with disabilities in the learning process at school without discriminating. The inclusive education system is adapted to the needs of regular students and children with disabilities through adaptations to the curriculum, learning, assessment and facilities and infrastructure (Mukti & Harimi, 2021a).

Teachers and schools need to be able to recognise their unique characteristics and characters, so that teachers can conduct early detection of the positive and negative potentials of these children and can formulate the best intervention steps in learning, in order to maximise every talent and positive potential they have and encourage them to achieve a better quality of life (Hapsari et al., 2022).

Multi Talenta Elementary School is an educational institution that implements an inclusion programme. Since its establishment in 2018, this school has indeed implemented inclusive education. Multi Talenta Elementary School has 6 classes with one intensive class and a transition class in which the class is only intended for children with special needs who require special assistance such as children with motoric disorders and children who experience problems in mental development.

Inclusion classes (intensive and transitional) are differentiated from regular classes because they have been adapted to the needs of each student. Students with mild disabilities such as slow learners can join in learning together with other students in regular classes but those with extra services will study in transitional and intensive classes because these children need special assistance and are different from students in regular classes. Based on the description above, it can generally be seen how important it is to instil character education in students with disabilities who basically have different backgrounds from ordinary children in an educational institution, especially schools that implement inclusive education. Therefore, the author is interested in conducting research at Multi Talenta Elementary School, one of the schools in Samarinda East Kalimantan that implements inclusive education with the title *“Character Education Management for Children with Special Needs at Multi Talenta Elementary School”*.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Character Education

Character education is a planned effort to help learners recognise good values, internalise them, then do good to others, the environment, God, and including themselves (Ependi et al., 2023). Character education emphasises exemplary environment creation, and habituation; through various scientific tasks and conducive activities. Thus, what students see, hear, feel, and do can shape their character (Mulyasa, 2022). In addition to modeling and habituation as the main education methods, creating a climate and culture as well as a conducive environment are also very important, and contribute to shaping the character of learners.

According to (Toron, 2024), character education needs to be integrated into the education curriculum to help students understand and internalise good values and develop the ability to think critically, be responsible, and empathise with others. Character education thus focuses not only on academic achievement, but also on the development of a balanced personality and integrity, so that any individual becomes a productive, responsible, and caring member of society. The main purpose of character education is to help individuals become moral, responsible, have integrity, and contribute positively to society (Nafsaka et al., 2023).

In character education, teachers are required to develop character in students that can be applied in their daily lives. It is expected that teachers can show good character to students who not only cover the material, and students are able to personalise akhlakul karimah in accordance with the moral Pancasila and Islamic teachings. So that akhlakul karimah is manifested in the behaviour of students in their daily lives and can build strong human resources. Through this paper, it will describe how the role of teachers can foster character in accordance with Islamic teachings and Pancasila morals in students. Thus, student character is inseparable from the teacher's ability to foster trust in students so that students know which things can be beneficial or detrimental to themselves.

B. Inclusive Education

Tanjung et al., (2022) defines inclusive education as an education delivery system for learners who have certain limitations and other learners who are brought together without considering their respective limitations. Inclusive education is an approach where children with special needs, be it physical, intellectual or emotional, are invited to learn in the same environment as their peers who do not have special needs. This means that children with special needs will receive the support necessary to learn successfully, while still participating in everyday activities with their peers (Kartika et al., 2024).

One of the main benefits of inclusive education is that it creates an inclusive and welcoming environment for all children. Such an environment promotes respect for diversity and encourages mutual understanding among children. When children grow up in an inclusive environment, they learn to appreciate differences and accept each individual for who they are. This helps build a more inclusive society as a whole (Sania, 2019).

Furthermore, inclusive education enables children with special needs to develop their full potential. In an inclusive environment, they receive the right support to help them pursue their educational goals. They have equal opportunities to access relevant curriculum and learning experiences. This not only improves their academic skills, but also strengthens social and emotional skills. Children with special needs can learn from their peers and develop holistically (Baharun & Awwaliyah, 2018).

Inclusive education is a strong foundation for building an inclusive and equitable future for all children. It shifts the educational paradigm from exclusion to inclusion, providing all children with equal opportunities to learn and develop. Through an inclusive approach, children with special needs get the support they need to succeed in education, while children without special needs also benefit from a diverse and inclusive environment.

C. Special Needs Children

The term children with special needs refers to individual conditions that are different from other individuals in their abilities/functioning both physically and mentally, because in this book we will also discuss the forms of services (interventions) that can be provided to these individuals, one of which is in educational settings (Kaloeti et al., 2021). The concept of children with special needs has a broader meaning than the notion of extraordinary children. Children with special needs are children who in education require specific services, different from children in general. Children with special needs experience obstacles in learning and development. Therefore, they need educational services that are in accordance with the learning needs of each child (Asyharinur Ayuning, 2022).

Children with special needs are children who need special services or treatment to achieve optimal development as a result of their abnormalities.

This definition shows that without special services or treatment they cannot achieve optimal development, including special needs in education services (Prameswari, 2022).

For this reason, a good understanding of children who need special education services is needed in designing their education programmes, including in this case to design life skills education for them. In line with the current paradigm shift in education which is more demand-driven and life skills-oriented, it has encouraged the implementation of innovations in all components of education which include curriculum improvement, management improvement, infrastructure procurement, teacher quality improvement, teaching material procurement, book procurement and increased cooperation with the community and the business world or industrial world.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Based on the title of the research in this journal, namely character education management for children with special needs in inclusive classes at Multi Talenta Elementary School, by describing various problems according to the data that has been found, this study uses a qualitative approach.

This approach is used to obtain actual data on how character education management is for children with special needs in inclusive classes at Multi Talenta Elementary School. The location of this research is at Multi Talenta Elementary School which is located at Jl. A. Wahab Syahrani 4 Block L, West Sempaja, North Samarinda District, Samarinda City, East Kalimantan Province. The subjects selected in this study were the principal, homeroom teacher, accompanying homeroom teacher, special needs student coordinator, grade V students, and student guardians. The object of research in this study is character education management for children with special needs in inclusive classes at Multi Talenta Elementary School.

The primary data sources are the principal, homeroom teacher, accompanying homeroom teacher, special needs students coordinator, grade V students, and student guardians at Multi Talenta Elementary School. The data collection technique used in this study is using non-participant observation techniques, namely researchers are not directly involved in data source activities but only as observers, unstructured interview techniques. Qualitative research types are descriptive in nature and tend to use analysis. The process and meaning are more emphasized in this type of research with a theoretical basis used as a guide so that the focus of this research is in accordance with the facts on the ground (Ramdhan, 2021). The data collection technique used in this study is using data reduction techniques, triangulation, data presentation described in the form of brief narrative descriptions and making conclusions.

IV. RESEARCH RESULT

Micro character can be built through teaching and learning activities at school, school culture in daily activities, extracurricular activities, and daily activities at home and society (Hapsari et al., 2022). In line with this, there are

several routine activities held at Multi Talenta Elementary School which are divided into several daily activity programmes, weekly activities, monthly activities and extracurricular activities. There are some special activities for students with special needs, namely the school has an activity programme with speech therapy in collaboration with psychologists to consult the conditions of students with special needs and then provide the results of the psychologist with parents. Anton Athoillah stated that management according to G. R Terry is a typical process consisting of planning, organising, mobilising and controlling actions to determine and achieve goals through the use of human resources and other resources (Athoillah, 2015): 16). In line with this theory, the following will describe how the management process in Multi Talenta Elementary School is organised:

A. Planning

In this process, the school starts by conducting early detection to prospective students during PPDB. In planning character education, of course, it cannot be separated from lesson planning. The school has thirteen character values that become a reference in making learning plans. All of these character values are Love of Allah and Rasulullah SAW, honesty, sincerity, fairness and wisdom, courage and confidence, tolerance and brotherhood, discipline, patience and perseverance, responsibility, compassion, strong determination and high ideals, beauty and independence. There are 2 teachers who teach in inclusive classes, namely homeroom teachers and homeroom assistants, then there are 3 teaching teachers in intensive classes.

B. Organising

According to the theory of Syafrida and Aryani Tri Wastari in the Journal of Psychology and Educational Development, there are several forms of classes in inclusive schools, namely regular classes, regular classes with clusters, regular classes with pull outs, regular classes with clusters and pull outs, special classes with various integrations and full special classes (Chairunisa et al., 2023).

At Multi Talenta Elementary School, there are three types of inclusive classes: regular classes, intensive classes and transition classes. In the regular class, students with disabilities and other students learn together in one classroom. The regular class is intended for students with mild special needs such as slow learners. In the Intensive Class (a full special class intended specifically for students with special needs with a high level of service such as Down syndrome, mentally disabled and others to learn together in one classroom). Transition Classes (special classes with various integrations have the aim of seeing how students develop, so students with special needs learn in intensive classes but at certain times can learn together with other children in regular classes.

The reference used is seen from the ability to socialise with their peers and then from the academic aspect. If in the transition class the student is considered to have made progress, then the student can be moved to the regular class. In each regular class there are 2 teachers, namely homeroom teacher I as

the main class teacher and homeroom teacher II as a companion teacher. Structurally, the division of labour for the homeroom teacher is that when homeroom teacher I is teaching, homeroom teacher II is in charge of accompanying and conditioning students with special needs who do require special services. However, in reality, homeroom teacher I and homeroom teacher II can alternate roles in teaching according to the situation and conditions.

C. Implementation

According to Mulyasa's theory, the implementation stage of character education in schools emphasises the aspects of exemplary, habituation, learning, and reinforcement (Mulyasa, 2021). In line with this theory, the learning process in regular classes related to the programme is the same for all students, including students with special needs, but the intensive class has more programmes because in the intensive class there is learning that is shared and some get personalised services. In the learning aspect, Multi Talenta Elementary School is a school that has a character education base in it, there are 13 character values that are applied and are a reflection of the vision and mission of Multi Talenta Elementary School. The 13 character values are automatically included in the learning plan for each subject.

According to the results of interviews conducted with the principal, the curriculum used at Multi Talenta Elementary School uses the Merdeka curriculum, but for technical implementation, the school has its own policy in determining the curriculum for students with special needs which still refers to the government curriculum, namely the Merdeka curriculum. The material taught between regular students and students with special needs is the same, it's just that the delivery techniques are different, such as through simplifying the material, simplifying the indicators on tests and so on. The targets used are also different from regular students, the targets for students with special needs tend to be more about their social abilities than their academic abilities. In the exemplary aspect, teachers play a very large role in determining the success of character education in schools, especially for students with special needs. Teachers must model good behaviour and positive habits so that students can imitate and implement them.

Therefore, in accordance with the mission of Multi Talenta Elementary School, the last point is to equip students to have the character of leadership, independence, creativity, innovation and Islamic morals, the step of Ustazdah is to try to apply these characters in students' daily lives by modelling various good actions such as modelling ablution and prayer procedures, speaking kindly and politely and so on. In the aspect of habituation carried out at Multi Talenta Elementary School which is a reflection of the 13 existing character values. For the character of Love Allah SWT and the Prophet SAW, the habit of praying in congregation (dhuha, dhuhur, jum'at), praying when starting lessons and going home, always behaving following the sunnah of the Apostle. For the character of student leadership, students are accustomed to being able

to lead in front of the class either to lead prayers, lead meals, lead prayers, each of which already has its own schedule for all students.

According to the results of interviews with the homeroom teacher, Multi Talenta Elementary School also has a dual language habituation programme, namely Arabic and English, which is used in learning and daily conversation. In the exemplary aspect, in accordance with the mission of Multi Talenta Elementary School, the last point is to equip students to have the character of leadership, independence, creativity, innovation and Islamic morals, the teacher's step is to try to apply these characters in students' daily lives by setting an example with various good actions such as modelling ablution and prayer procedures, speaking kindly and politely and so on. In the aspect of reinforcement carried out by the teacher is by giving rewards in the form of non-verbal awards in the form of achievement stars, giving gifts in the form of stationery or goods according to student needs. In addition, another form of reinforcement is the provision of motivation by teachers to students and parents.

D. Evaluation

According to Mulyasa's theory, indicators of the success of character education programs in schools can be seen from various daily behaviors that appear in student activities, namely awareness, sincerity, honesty, independence, caring, simplicity, commitment, precision and freedom to act (Mulyasa, 2021). Similar to this theory, the indicator of the success of character education in students with special needs is when students with special needs can apply good moral behavior in their daily activities. The level of student success can be seen when the student does something that is beyond the predictions of the Ustadzah, considering that students with special needs tend to have limited socialization skills and are indifferent to their friends. Assessment of character education in schools must be carried out continuously and sustainably.

Related to continuous assessment, Multi Talenta Elementary School conducts routine evaluations every Saturday. The evaluation consists of class level evaluation or *rombel* and school level evaluation, namely from class one to class 6. The assessment process is not only carried out on students but also on all components in the school, one of which is the teacher, namely checking the ability to read the Qur'an from the teachers, career levels, administration, learning supervision, and social observation. Related to the type of students with special needs in class V are students with mild category disorders, namely slow learners, hyperactive and learning difficulties. Slow learners experience some difficulties in thinking and grasping material, are slow in responding to various stimuli so that in their development they require special education services (Rezieka et al., 2021).

According to Meita Shanty, hyperactivity or commonly called ADHD (Attention Deficit Disorder with Hyperactive) is not a disease but a symptom. The symptoms themselves occur due to factors of brain damage, emotional

disorders, hearing disorders and mental retardation (Shanty, 2012:36). According to the theory of Muhammad Irham, children with learning difficulties are children who experience difficulties in the learning process and their academic tasks so that they cannot achieve learning goals properly as expected (Mukti & Harimi, 2021b). There are several types of learning difficulties, namely disorders in arithmetic (dyscalculia), disorders in reading (dyslexia) and disorders in writing (dysgraphia). According to the principal, the assessment process carried out at Multi Talenta Elementary School is not only carried out on students but also on all components in the school, one of which is teachers. Assessment of teacher performance is to provide coaching to see the development of teacher abilities, including routinely checking the ability to read the Qur'an from teachers, career levels, administration, learning supervision, and social observation. Teachers at Multi Talenta Elementary School are also given the same opportunity to attend seminars, training, workshops and others as a form of support and effort from the school to improve the level of teacher professionalism. So the assessment process at Multi Talenta Elementary School is carried out comprehensively, not only focusing on one aspect, so that it can be known to what extent the goals have been achieved and the assessment can be a reference for what needs to be improved and developed.

A teacher has a very important function in understanding students with special needs in schools. The diversity of student characters must be understood in the learning process so that teachers' abilities and learning needs can also be understood well (Melinda, 2013:13). In line with this theory, there are several strategies used in dealing with students with special needs, namely providing students with special needs assistance according to their needs, simplifying materials and indicators during learning, using more private methods to better affect students, such as delivering simple words so that they are easier to understand and accept by students with special needs, using visual forms during learning such as using image media and showing films that have Islamic characteristics. In the learning process at Multi Talenta Elementary School, of course, there are several violations committed by students. In order for character values to be conveyed properly to students, the school must determine the right steps to deal with students when they commit a violation. Multi Talenta Elementary School has its own student team tasked with handling everything related to student development. The form of punishment given can be in the form of a sermon and being ordered to do good deeds as a form of accountability for the mistakes made. This is a reflection of the character value of responsibility.

V. CLOSURE

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that support from all human resources involved, namely from the school, parents, family and community environment is needed to achieve the success of character education for students with special needs in inclusive classes. The process needs to be managed well by the school from the planning process, the organizing process, the implementation

process and the assessment process. Of the 13 character values that exist, Multi Talenta Elementary School has been applied to activities such as in the form of learning, habituation, role models and reinforcement. These activities have been implemented in daily, weekly, monthly activities and extracurricular activities which are a reflection of each of these character values. Good service and assistance are provided by the ustadzah according to the needs of the child even though there are many obstacles and challenges faced, the school tries as much as possible so that students can independently use and improve their knowledge and abilities to be able to internalize character values in daily behavior in accordance with the vision and mission of Multi Talenta Elementary School.

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