

Optimizing Student Character Strengthening Through Creative Week Activities at MI Al Hidayah Karanggintung

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the implementation of creative character cultivation in grade IV students through Creative Week activities at MI Al-Hidayah Karanggintung, Banyumas Regency. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that the implementation of creative character cultivation is carried out through three stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation. The planning stage includes the preparation of thematic activities such as Market Day, Cooking Day, Fun Day, and Cleaning Day which are designed to provide space for students to develop their creativity. In the implementation stage, students are given the freedom to express their ideas according to their interests and talents, with support from the teacher as a facilitator. Meanwhile, at the evaluation stage, teachers and students together reflect on activities for future improvement. This research has succeeded in revealing that Creative Week activities can effectively be a medium in instilling creative character in students. This can be seen from the students' enthusiasm, increased confidence, and students' ability to produce original works. In addition, this activity also encourages the creation of a fun and meaningful learning climate. Therefore, this study recommends that this kind of activity be developed in a sustainable manner by involving all elements of the school and parents in its implementation.

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INTRODUCTION

Character education is an important aspect in shaping students' personalities and behaviors in accordance with moral and social values in society. Character education must always be strengthened and encouraged in students to be able to become the next generation who have good morals (Astuti et al., 2023). According to Unicef, bullying in Indonesia reaches 41% experienced by students with several types of bullying experienced by students, such as being hit by other students around 18%, destroying other people's belongings around 22%, being threatened by other students around 14%, being ridiculed by other students around 22%, deliberately ostracizing other students around 19% and spreading bad rumors to other students around 20% (Unicef, 2020). In addition, according to the Ministry of PPPA, psychological violence is 26.11% (Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection, 2023). The data shows that instilling character values such as empathy, tolerance and responsibility are the main concerns in the world of education.

This shows the importance of character education to be taught to students for the life to come. Education is a process of activities that function to shape, direct, and develop humans in a better direction (Ananda & Setyawan, 2022). Education has an important role to form the moral and ethical foundation of students. This process is not only the responsibility of the school, but also involves the active role of parents, families and the community (Sukatin et al., 2022). Good character can be seen through a series of attitudes, behaviors, motivations and skills possessed by students in facing challenges. One form of character that is important to develop is creative character, which is the

different behavior possessed by students in solving problems in a practical and skillful way and not imitating the ways of others (Kasmantoro et al., 2022).

There have been several previous studies that have discussed optimizing the strengthening of students' character. Research from (Hasni et al., 2024) highlights how important it is to strengthen students' character to provide participants' knowledge related to juvenile delinquency, promiscuity, and sexually transmitted infections. Similar research was also conducted by (Sujatikmo et al., 2023) that character education in schools and families is needed to form individuals who have good morals and ethics. In addition, research from (Laela et al., 2025) which discusses the importance of applying the joyful learning method based on sabaqu for muslim kisd media in strengthening student character values such as confidence, cooperation, discipline and independence. Although various approaches have been carried out in strengthening students' character, there is still no research that specifically examines the optimization of Creative Week activities as a medium in character building, especially creative characters.

The purpose of this study is to describe and analyze the optimization of student character strengthening through creative week activities at MI Al-Hidayah Karanggintung. The focus of the study is on creative week activities in shaping students' creative character which is one of the important things to be developed in order to equip students in exploring the abilities possessed by students. This is because education is not only a matter of knowledge transfer, but also a forum for developing various abilities in facing various challenges that will be faced.

METHOD

This research is a descriptive qualitative research. This approach was chosen to describe in depth how to optimize the strengthening of students' character through creative week activities carried out at MI Al-hidayah Karanggintung. The data collection method was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. The informants in this study are Class IV teachers, grade IV students and school principals. The data analysis technique in this study uses data analysis from Miles and Huberman, namely data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawn.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Role Of Creative Week Activities In Strengthening Character

Creative Week activities are a form of development of the Fun Day Program which aims to develop students' potential through various fun activities. This can be seen in the school atmosphere that is so exciting and fun when doing creative week activities. The atmosphere created is a tangible form of holding the creative week activities. As expressed by the RS, as the principal, that:

"The initial name of the creative week is fun day, where the activity is held with the aim or desire so that children have beautiful memories and school is not a burden. So students are given a relaxing and happy day, namely with creative week activities, such as fun days that contain entertainment that are also filled by students. (Interview)"

The sense of pleasure and relaxation felt by students in the activity is a form of character cultivation according to Lickona. According to Lickona, the purpose of character education is to instill and form traits or character obtained from trials, sacrifices, life experiences and instilled values so that they can form intrinsic values that will be attitudes and behaviors embedded in students (Nazmudin Ahmad Asmuni Saefudin Zuhri et al., 2022).

The experience embedded in students through creative week activities is very important in their development so that the educational process is not just a matter of knowledge transfer. The educational process here can be seen as a reference to see abilities and evaluate one's behavior. There

are several things that are a reference in the educational process, such as moral feelings which include conscience, self-esteem, empathy and self-control and help a person in behavior. In addition, moral action or tangible forms of such behavior, such as competence, desire, and habits (Mainuddin et al., 2023).

This creative week activity is in the form of cooking day, market day, fun day and cleaning day. The various activities that exist are an important part of developing students' interests and creativity in a tangible form that is carried out together. Freedom in filling out each creative week activity is one aspect in seeing the extent to which students are able to explore their abilities. As the Classroom Teacher said, that:

Yes, students can show the originality of their work, such as creating a poem to be displayed in a creative fun day (interview) week.

Teachers as a bridge in directing and guiding do not necessarily limit what must be done. The approach taken by teachers in guiding and directing is a form of approach that is appropriate to show the abilities of each student. There are several approaches in character education, such as:

- a. Value instilling approach. This approach emphasizes the social value in students.
- b. Cognitive development approach. This approach emphasizes the cognitive and developmental aspects to direct students to think actively about moral issues and moral decisions experienced.
- c. Value analysis approach. This approach emphasizes the development aspect of students' ability to think logically, analyzing problems related to social aspects.
- d. Value clarification approach. This approach emphasizes efforts to help students in examining their own feelings and actions and increasing awareness of their own values (Susanti, 2022).

In general, this approach has been implemented by teachers in directing and guiding students to bring out the abilities that students have, both morally and socially. Teachers are decisive for the formation of students' creative character through the creative week that is carried out.

Challenges in implementation

The implementation of creative week activities certainly requires careful planning to ensure the smooth running of the activities carried out. Challenges in the implementation of character strengthening are often related to teachers who directly deal with students. Teachers not only function as teachers, but also as supervisors, developers and managers of learning activities so that they can achieve the goals that have been set. The duties of teachers are closely related to efforts to educate the nation's life in all aspects through optimizing the various potentials that their students have (Arsini et al., 2023).

Teacher competence is important in handling challenges in the implementation of creative weeks. There are several competencies teachers must have, such as information or a teacher must have good literacy skills, communication or skills in communicating and interacting well, editing content creators or creating creative learning media, security or being able to provide comfort and security for students in doing various things, and educational problem solving or having the ability to solve problems in learning appropriately (Adha & Ulpa, 2021).

The competencies possessed, of course, will greatly affect how to solve problems when doing it appropriately. As expressed by the class teacher, that:

When dividing groups for a cooking day, determining the cuisine should be in accordance with the costs incurred. (interview)

Determining problems is a challenge that must be faced in carrying out creative week activities. This is closely related to the financing that will be spent by parents in providing ingredients that will be used as dishes. Thus, there is a role of parents who are also in achieving the goal of strengthening students' character. Collaboration between school and family greatly influences the development of students' character. Character strengthening programs involving parents and schools will be more effective and sustainable (Hidayati, 2023).

The collaboration that should be established between schools and parents is actually a challenge in the implementation of the creative week at MI Al-hidayah. As stated by the RS, as the Principal, that:

*Not all parents support activities, because sometimes it takes time to practice "fun day" activities.
(Interview)*

The school culture that is carried out is part of the system of values, beliefs and norms that are accepted together and carried out with full awareness as a behavior that is naturally shaped by the environment by creating a common understanding of school activities. This means that school culture is a set of values that underlie behaviors, traditions, and daily habits practiced by teachers, schools, parents, students and society (Lestari & Ain, 2022). It must be understood that every activity carried out by students is an important part of the process of strengthening the character of the students themselves. Support from parents and schools is important to achieve what has been set in the learning process at school.

Synergy between parents, schools and the community in character education is something that must be fulfilled. If the synergy between parents, schools and society can be well established, character education in students will also have a good impact (Feranina & Komala, 2022). Thus, there needs to be good communication between schools and parents in strengthening character through creative week activities.

CONCLUSION

Creative week activities have a good role in strengthening students' character. Various activities are carried out aimed at developing the character of students, both moral knowing, moral loving and moral doing. The learning process is not only about knowledge transfer, but also as part of improving other abilities possessed by students. The challenges in strengthening student character such as the competence of the teacher himself and also the role of parents in supporting these activities. Collaboration between schools and parents is important to be able to strengthen students' character through creative week activities.

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