



A Comparative Study of Character Education Practices in The United States, The United Kingdom, and Indonesia

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Abstract: This article discusses character education practices in the United States, the United Kingdom and Indonesia based on existing literature. Character education practices in the United States tend to use a comprehensive approach that is integrated with the academic curriculum, while the UK emphasizes the development of core values and a whole school approach. In Indonesia, character education adopts elements from both countries but shows a stronger tendency towards the US approach in some aspects. This article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of how character education practices in Indonesia compare with the US and the UK, with in-depth analyses of the key elements and practical implementation in the three countries.

Keywords: Character Education, USA, UK, Indonesia, comparison

Introduction

Character education is an essential component in the formation of individual morals and ethics that plays a crucial role in shaping the behavior and personality of the younger generation (Zuliana et al., 2020). In a global context, different countries have developed different approaches in the implementation of character education in schools. The United States and the United Kingdom, for example, have distinctive and specific methods of integrating character education into their education systems.

In the US, character education is often implemented through special programs designed to teach moral values, such as honesty, responsibility, and respect. These programs are usually supported by educational institutions and non-governmental organizations that focus on student character development. This approach emphasizes character building through daily activities and social interactions in the school environment, as

well as reinforcement through rewards and recognition of positive behavior (Arthur, 2003; Nucci et al., 2014).

Meanwhile, in the UK, character education is often integrated into the national curriculum and supported by comprehensive government policies. This approach involves teaching moral values through formal subjects and extracurricular activities. In the UK, the importance of character education is widely recognized and implemented through various initiatives involving teachers, students, and the whole school community (Arthur, 2003; Nucci et al., 2014).

In Indonesia, character education is an integral part of the national curriculum that aims to develop moral values based on Pancasila. The Indonesian government has stipulated that character education should be integrated into all subjects and school activities. Values such as religiosity, nationalism, gotong royong, integrity, and independence are identified as key components that should be taught to students. The implementation of character education in Indonesia involves various strategies, including project-based

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learning, social activities, and special programs designed to strengthen students' character (Imawan & Ismail, 2023; Suryanto et al., 2023; Wahyuni et al., 2023).

This study aims to compare character education practices in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Indonesia, focusing on the approaches used and their effectiveness in each country's context. By highlighting the similarities and differences in character education approaches, this study is expected to provide deeper insights into how character education can be optimized in different cultural contexts and education systems. Through this comparative analysis, it is expected to identify best practices that can be adopted and adapted by other countries to improve the overall quality of character education.

Method

This research uses the literature review method by referring to the book "Handbook of Moral and Character Education" edited by Larry Nucci, Darcia Narvaez, and Tobias Krettenauer (Nucci et al., 2014), as well as the book "Education With Character" by James Arthur (Arthur, 2003). Additional data were obtained from various literature sources related to character education in Indonesia. The analysis was conducted by comparing key elements of character education practices in the three countries, including a comprehensive approach, social and emotional learning (SEL) (Simion, 2023; Soutter, 2023), community engagement, assessment and evaluation, a focus on core values, and a whole school approach (Raihani, 2011; Rathje, 2023).

Result and Discussion

Character Education Practices in the United States

The practice of character education in the United States has some prominent features. According to the "Handbook of Moral and Character Education," character education programs in the United States often use a comprehensive approach and are integrated with the academic curriculum. They cover various aspects of student life, both inside and outside the classroom. A major focus in this practice is the development of social and emotional skills (SEL) as an integral part of character education. These include emotion management, empathy, interpersonal skills, and ethical decision-making. In addition, there is involvement of the local community and parents in supporting character education programs. This participation often includes community service projects that engage students in activities that benefit their neighborhood. Assessment tools are also used to measure student character development and program effectiveness, with feedback

for continuous improvement (Nucci et al., 2014; Simion, 2023; Soutter, 2023).

One comprehensive approach implemented in the United States is the integration of character values in all aspects of education, from classroom activities to extracurricular activities. Programs such as Character Counts! Positive Action, and The Virtues Project are examples of well-known character education programs in the United States. These programs not only teach moral values, but also focus on developing important life skills for students. For example, Character Counts! is a program that focuses on the six pillars of character: trust, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring and citizenship. The program is designed to help students understand and internalize these values through structured and purposeful activities.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) is also an important component of character education in the United States. SEL involves teaching skills such as emotional management, empathy, co-operation, and ethical decision-making. SEL programs are designed to help students develop the skills necessary to interact positively with others and manage the emotional challenges they face. Research shows that SEL programs can improve academic outcomes, reduce problem behaviors, and improve students' emotional well-being.

Community engagement is another important aspect of character education in the United States. Schools often work with local communities and parents to support character education programs. Community participation in these programs can take the form of involvement in community service projects, financial support, or participation in school activities that support student character development. Community service projects, for example, allow students to engage in activities that benefit their community, such as cleaning up the environment, helping out at an orphanage, or engaging in social awareness campaigns.

Assessment and evaluation are also important components of character education in the United States. Assessment tools are used to measure students' character development and the effectiveness of character education programs. These evaluations can be surveys, observations, or portfolio assessments that include student reflections on their experiences in the character education program. Feedback from these assessments is used to improve the program and ensure that character education goals are achieved.

Character Education Practices in the UK

The practice of character education in the UK has a different approach. Based on the book "Education With Character" by James Arthur, character education in the UK often emphasizes core values such as honesty, respect, and responsibility. These values are delivered

through the curriculum and school activities. Character education in the UK is implemented as a whole-school approach, where all aspects of the school, from policies to school culture, support students' character development (Arthur, 2003; Raihani, 2011; Rathje, 2023).

One of the main characteristics of character education in the UK is the whole school approach, which means that character education is integrated into all aspects of school life. This includes the academic curriculum, extracurricular activities, and relationships between students, teachers, and staff. This approach ensures that character values are not only taught in isolation, but also applied in the daily actions of the school. Programs such as SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning), Restorative Justice, and Philosophy for Children are examples of character education programs in the UK. These programs emphasize the importance of student participation in the life of the school community and the development of social and emotional skills.

The integration of character values into the academic curriculum is another important component of character education in the UK. For example, moral lessons are often integrated into subjects such as history and literature, where students are invited to reflect on the moral values of stories or historical events. In addition, programs such as Philosophy for Children encourage students to engage in ethical discussion and reflection on moral values. This approach helps students develop a deeper understanding of moral values and how to apply them in their lives.

The importance of teachers and school staff as role models is also highly emphasized in character education in the UK. Teachers and staff are expected to demonstrate good character in their daily actions and serve as role models for students. This means that character values are not only taught, but also demonstrated through real actions. For example, teachers might demonstrate honesty by admitting their mistakes, or show respect by listening to students' opinions and appreciating differences.

Character Education Practices in Indonesia

Character education in Indonesia, according to an analysis of the literature, tends to adopt elements of both the US and UK approaches, but shows a stronger tendency towards the US approach in some aspects. Character education programs in Indonesia are often integrated in the national curriculum and include a range of extracurricular activities. There are efforts to integrate social and emotional learning in character education programs, although implementation varies from school to school.

As in the United States, the involvement of local communities and parents is also an important aspect of

character education programs in Indonesia. Community participation in the program can take the form of involvement in school activities, financial support, or participation in community service projects involving students. Character education programs in Indonesia emphasize core values such as religiosity, nationalism, and gotong royong, which are integrated in various subjects. A whole school approach is also being implemented in some schools, where all aspects of the school support students' character development.

Assessment and evaluation in character education in Indonesia is starting to be considered, although not as comprehensively as in the United States. Assessment tools are used to measure students' character development and the effectiveness of character education programs. These evaluations can take the form of surveys, observations or portfolio assessments that include students' reflections on their experiences in the character education program. Feedback from these assessments is used to improve the program and ensure that character education goals are achieved.

Character education programs in Indonesia emphasize core values such as religiosity, nationalism, and gotong royong, which are integrated in various subjects. A whole school approach is also being implemented in some schools, where all aspects of the school support students' character development. In addition, there are specific programs such as Classroom-Based Character Education, Child-Friendly Schools and the National Movement for Mental Revolution designed to teach moral values and shape student character.

Comparative Analysis

Character education practices in Indonesia have similarities with both US and UK models. The stronger tendency towards the US approach is evident in the presence of character education programs that use an explicit approach and focus on individual character development. However, the integrated approach that has historically been part of character education in Indonesia also reflects the UK approach. The comprehensive approach used in the United States, which includes social and emotional skills (SEL) development, community engagement, and assessment and evaluation, is also applied in character education programs in Indonesia.

At the same time, the whole school approach used in the UK, which emphasizes the integration of character values into all aspects of school life, is also seen in character education practices in Indonesia. Character education programs in Indonesia often integrate moral values into the academic curriculum and extracurricular activities and involve teachers and school staff as role models. Programs such as Classroom-Based Character

Education, Child-Friendly Schools, and the National Movement for Mental Revolution reflect this approach.

Based on the literature analysis, character education in Indonesia leans more towards the US approach with some elements from the UK approach. This is due to the focus on a comprehensive approach, integration with social and emotional learning, and community involvement in supporting character education programs. However, the core values held in character education in Indonesia also reflect the British approach in emphasizing the importance of morality and ethics in learning.

Conclusion

Character education practices in Indonesia incorporate elements from both the US and UK approaches but have a stronger tendency towards the US approach in terms of the comprehensive approach and community involvement. The core values held in character education in Indonesia also reflect the British approach in emphasizing the importance of morality and ethics in learning. Thus, character education in Indonesia can be seen as a blend of both models, with an emphasis on the integration of moral values in the academic curriculum and daily school life.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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