FORMATION OF CHILDREN'S CHARACTER THROUGH SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LEARNING WITH TEACHER CREATIVITY AT MI NURUL ULUM BANTUL

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Abstract
This research discussed the importance of teacher creativity in shaping children's character through socio-emotional learning at the Elementary School / Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level. This research aimed to emphasize teachers' role in helping develop children's social and emotional skills through collaborative learning and moral teaching in schools. The research location was at MI Nurul Ulum Bantul Yogyakarta. This research used a qualitative approach with interview, observation, and documentation techniques. The research results showed that teacher creativity in forming children's character through socio-emotional learning at MI Nurul Ulum was 1) generating motivation to learn with technology, 2) making the material relevant to everyday life, 3) presenting an interesting impression when learning, 4) making teachers as a role model for children, 5) creating a communicative learning atmosphere, and 6) understanding children's moods when learning.

Keywords: Teacher Creativity, Character, Socio-Emotional Learning

INTRODUCTION
Learning is a combination of human elements, materials, and facilities that influence each other to achieve predetermined goals (Samsudin, 2019). One of the things that are very important and must be done by teachers for elementary school (SD)
or Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) age children is to form character education, namely moral, social, ethical, ethical, and religious values. This personality formation becomes the core standard for strengthening children's character when they continue their studies at the next level of education (Ichsan & Samsudin, 2019).

Character education in children at elementary age is essential in shaping their personality in the future. However, in reality, character learning in schools today still needs to be more effective in shaping children's personalities. In today's life, children are starting to lose moral values because children's behavior is influenced not only by Western culture but also by the massive development of technology today (Islamuddin, 2011). It often becomes an obstacle for teachers to implement effective methods to shape children's character in elementary school or MI. Therefore, it is necessary to increase teacher creativity in shaping the surface of children in elementary age, one of which is the Socio-Emotional Learning approach, which will be discussed in more detail in this research.

Character education has been formulated in various curricula which aim to improve moral education in Indonesia. So far, education in Indonesia is still oriented towards exam results alone, not each child's learning process (Murniyetti, 2016). So far, the learning process has only been oriented towards cognitive aspects, so children's emotional intelligence cannot develop properly, which has implications for their moral degradation. Therefore, it is necessary to shape children's character through teacher creativity in socio-emotional learning (Idrus, 2020).

In instilling character values in elementary-age, a creative and qualified teacher is needed, namely a teacher who not only masters the material but is a teacher who is sensitive to the child's learning character. In the learning process, teachers are good at mastering and presenting the material and must be good at creating a pleasant learning atmosphere. The positive emotions given by teachers to children can encourage children to study actively because they feel comfortable and calm. The power of positive emotions in learning can make it easier for children to interact with their friends so that, little by little, it can create more practical education in forming children's character (Hamruni, 2019).

Positive emotions are children's joy in learning and interacting with friends and the environment. In education, forcing children to understand is like killing their intrinsic
motivation. Children who are used to being forced to learn will become afraid and even traumatized from learning. If the teacher moves the child to learn, the child will only have the motivation to learn because he is scared of the teacher (Pramono, 2015). Children who are used to learning by being forced make the learning process ineffective. On the other hand, when the learning process involves positive emotions, it can make it easier for children to interact with their friends and be more effective in forming character in children at elementary age.

This point makes character education a major part of national education goals. Therefore, in instilling character in Elementary School / Madrasah Ibtidaiyah children, a learning model is needed to foster pleasant and calming feelings so that children can learn more effectively and teachers can easily shape their character more comprehensively. Teachers should act effectively in opening the doors of their hearts and inviting their students to continue learning (Herry & Rosemary, 2019). In Law no. 20 article 4 (2), teachers must be able to create a learning atmosphere that is meaningful, fun, creatively dynamic, and sets an example for their students (National Education System Law no. 20 of 2003). Thus, to shape children's character at school, teachers position themselves as parents for children to attract sympathy and become role models for their students (Miftahurrohman et al., 2021).

There are at least several other studies that discuss teacher creativity in shaping children's character. Still, only a few studies have been found that discuss character formation through socio-emotional learning in MI children. Several studies focusing on teacher creativity in character formation by emphasizing cognitive aspects include research from Sudharmono Syam (2023). His study shows that character formation through Islamic education requires students to be taught aqidah as a religious basis and as a guide to life. Another analysis from Harlina & Wardarita (2020) researched the role of language learning in forming the character of elementary school students. Not only that, research from Khairiyah, et al (2023) also discusses the phenomenon of implementing the Independent Curriculum in character formation through the Pancasila Student Profile for elementary school students.

However, the research orientation of the three studies above only focuses on cognitive aspects, not socio-emotional learning models, so this article has novelties that must be understood together. In the Socio-Emotional Learning process, teachers can
help children deal with emotions and social skills that arise at school. Of course, this is very important in developing children's social skills, which are needed daily. It has also been stated in the Law (UU) of the Republic of Indonesia no. 20 Article 1 of 2003 concerning the National Education System (Sisdiknas), namely education as a conscious and planned effort to create a conducive learning atmosphere and learning process so that they can develop their abilities and have noble character.

**METHODS**

Researchers use qualitative research, which produces descriptive data in the form of written, verbal, or observable behavior. In this qualitative approach, what is more important is the process rather than the results, and the analysis is carried out inductively (Sugiyono, 2019). The type of research used is a case study which collects from field notes, interviews, and other documents (Moleong, 2013).

In this research, researchers acted as data collectors through interviews with teachers and students at MI Nurul Ulum Bantul. The researchers used data analysis by searching and compiling data from observations, discussions, and documentation in the field (Rukin, 2019). Not only that, researchers also use data triangulation by combining various data collection techniques from the three sources above and comparing one source with another source so that valid and credible conclusions can be drawn (Creswell, 2015). From the various methods used by this researcher, it is hoped that this research will make it easier for teachers to instill character values through socio-emotional learning in children at the elementary age, especially at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

**Socio-Emotional Learning in Character Formation in Elementary-Age Children: An Initial Concept**

In socio-emotional learning, several approaches can instill character in children by creating a warm and safe learning environment, building healthy relationships, and balancing individual and collaborative learning (Helaludin & Alamsyah, 2019). Learning in character building for elementary-age children must pay attention to and involve children's emotions. The greatness of reason supported by positive emotions can foster positive behavior. On the other hand, children's intelligence not endorsed by
emotional intelligence causes children to take spontaneous actions that sometimes conflict with character values (Wuriyani et al., 2021). So, children's behavior is primarily influenced by their emotional tendencies, not their knowledge. It means that children cannot act according to their understanding. Therefore, the formation of character values in elementary-age children does not only require expertise but also the need for children's emotional involvement in the learning process (Ananda, 2017).

Elementary School / Madrasah Ibtidaiyah is the end of childhood when children realize that negative emotions will enter them if they are not accepted and liked by their friends. At this age, children begin to realize the importance of peers, so they start controlling and containing their emotional expressions. This ability should be acquired through imitation, practice, and habituation. In the imitation process, the teacher's example is very influential in controlling children's emotions (Yusuf, 2011). If teachers act humanely towards children in the learning process, children's feelings will be stable and healthy.

The emotional characteristics of elementary-age children can be seen from two emotions: stable and unstable (Yusuf, 2011). The detailed features can be seen in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stable Emotions</th>
<th>Unstable Emotion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Showing a cheerful face.</td>
<td>1. Showing a gloomy face.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Hanging out with friends well.</td>
<td>2. Easily offended.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Passionating about learning.</td>
<td>3. I don't want to hang out with other people.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Concentrating on studying.</td>
<td>4. He likes to be angry and wants to annoy friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Being respectful of yourself and others.</td>
<td>5. Needs to be more confident.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The emotional characteristics of elementary-age children above must be developed by a teacher in character formation through socio-emotional learning. Emotions are a very dominant factor in influencing children's character through education. Positive emotions in children, such as enthusiasm for learning, willingness to interact, and respect, are the initial capital teachers must develop to shape children's character.
On the other hand, if the child's emotions are unstable (such as not feeling enthusiastic about learning or not being happy with the way the teacher teaches), the learning process will experience obstacles. It means that children who cannot focus their attention on learning will experience failure in forming the child's character. In education, teachers should be concerned about creating a learning atmosphere that can foster stable emotions to create a learning process that is fun, calming, and conducive, thus creating an effective learning process (Sarnoto & Romli, 2019).

Emotional disorders in children can hinder motivation and reduce learning achievement. Therefore, efforts to develop socio-emotional learning in forming children's character are 1) Creating a conducive emotional atmosphere (friendly and affectionate attitude). 2) Developing attitudes and habits of mutual affection with friends. 3) Developing an attitude of respect for yourself and others. 4) Respecting the child's personality, such as speaking politely and responding to greetings. 5) Giving rewards to children such as praise, gifts, or thumbs up. 6) Displaying good behavior. It is an effort to develop socio-emotional learning in elementary-age children in character building. For this reason, teachers must organize the socio-emotional climate well to support the development of children's two competencies, namely children's social and emotional competencies through learning (Neviyarni, 2020).

**Teacher Creativity in Shaping Children's Character at MI Nurul Ulum Bantul**

1. Generating motivation to learn with technology

   To shape children's character, learning-based technology must be designed to foster children's learning motivation from an intellectual, spiritual, and social perspective. In the current era, teachers must be included in technological developments. Teachers must have the ability to have knowledge and experience in responding to recent developments, especially in the field of Science and Technology (Science and Technology). It is because children are individuals who will live and become substitutes for civilization in the future. Technology is one of the advancements that are very valuable and instrumental in making the learning process easier. In this modern era, teachers and technology cannot be separated. Teachers are still needed as long as they continue to improve their professionalism.
Teachers must utilize this very sophisticated technological progress to support the learning process in forming children's character (Isjoni, 2012).

The results of the interview with the school principal, Mr. NRP, showed that a teacher must follow technological developments. Teachers as teachers must continue learning and not only focus on what they know today. Teachers must follow and utilize technology, which is currently trending in life. With technology, children can learn anytime and anywhere, making the learning process easier and more efficient. In this modern world, teachers must be able to apply technology in the learning process through materials supporting children's character formation. As observed, teachers use animated learning videos to raise awareness of the importance of moral education, such as animated cartoons of the Prophets, Islamic stories, and so on.

Apart from that, he said that all MI Nurul Ulum teachers must prepare materials online via web applications or other applications to give teachers space to be more creative so that teachers are more consistent in instilling character in children through various technology options. Viewed from this point, the advantages of technology can be used as a form of teacher creativity. Good use of technology can create more exciting learning, producing a generation with noble character with various innovations that can make children aware from an early age (Surani, 2019). Teachers can use technological facilities to support and create more exciting learning in shaping children's character, primarily through socio-emotional learning.

2. Relevanting the material to everyday life

To build character in elementary-age children, creative teachers are needed. An innovative teacher must be able to make children interested in continuing to learn without any coercion from anyone (Huzuwah et al., 2021). Getting children involved in the learning process is very difficult, and this problem is sometimes ignored by teachers, even though this step is an important step that a teacher needs to pay attention to in shaping children's character through socio-emotional learning before the material is delivered. According to the principal of MI Nurul Ulum Bantul, teachers must be creative and have their tasks, namely, making children
interested in continuing to be enthusiastic about learning. For example, teachers make the material taught relevant to everyday life.

The steps that teachers must consider so that children are interested in learning are as follows:

a. Understanding the importance of studying a topic and the benefits of learning for children's lives. Knowing the benefits makes children interested and curious to learn more deeply.

b. Using varied learning methods as a way of delivering material. Variations in learning must continue to be developed by teachers. It is because elementary-age children get bored more easily when receiving an education that tends to be monotonous.

c. Understanding each child's abilities and character in the learning process. It means that teachers should refrain from forcing children to accept lessons when they cannot clearly understand the sub-themes of learning.

d. Creating a relaxed learning atmosphere so that children feel comfortable but remain focused on learning. Teachers must avoid learning that makes children stressed.

Therefore, the class teacher at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah has an essential role as a counselor. They are required to be able to know the psychological condition of their students. The socio-emotional learning approach makes it easier for class teachers to understand their students better and provide treatment that suits their students' learning characteristics. The assumption is that if the class teacher understands the psychological condition of each student's learning, this will provide effectiveness in the learning process.

3. Presenting an exciting impression when studying

Creating a good impression in learning is every teacher's dream. For this reason, teachers must create creative learning to shape children's character (Fahrudin et al., 2021). Mr. IMK, as Deputy Principal for Curriculum at MI Nurul Ulum, said that in socio-emotional learning, teachers not only prepare and master the material to be delivered but must be able to give an excellent impression to
children, such as telling humorous stories, stories that positive value, or life stories accompanied by a friendly teacher attitude.

This humorous nature and friendly attitude can create closeness between teachers and children in learning (Ichsan, 2019). The closer the child is to the teacher, the easier it will be to form character. Mr MHT, MI Nurul Ulum's teacher, also said that many children are happy with the humorous nature of teachers because, after all, a funny figure can relieve tension in children's learning.

In socio-emotional learning, teachers must not act emotionally, which tends to be hostile towards children, especially during the learning process. It is because the attitudes and impressions of a teacher are a form of teacher creativity in shaping children's character. It is the importance of creative teachers who can create a good impression in forming character values in elementary-age children. As the results of interviews and observations by researchers, this teachers at MI Nurul Ulum continue to show exemplary behavior, always spreads a smile in interactions, and maintains warmth in socializing with his students.

4. Making teachers role models for children

In this modern era, children always need teachers in the learning process. The teacher is no longer a scary figure, so the children in a class are always tense when receiving lessons (Alga et al., 2023). Various cases of education in elementary schools show that many children learn, sometimes only under pressure and coercion. According to one of the teachers at MI Nurul Ulum, Mr. MHT, to shape children's character through socio-emotional means, a teacher must be able to make children need the figure of a teacher. Teachers must be a bridge in optimizing children's potential so that children will grow up with good personalities because of the example that teachers continue to show daily.

Also, according to Mr. IMK, as an exemplary teacher, a humanist attitude to learning must continue to be displayed in everyday life by a teacher to shape children's character. This humanist attitude is one way to motivate children to be enthusiastic about learning and behaving. Teachers must be able to show children as an example by Eastern cultural values and religiosity so that each attitude can be used as a standard for the child's life.
Thus, teachers' teaching must become a professional routine, accompanied by a humanist-religious attitude (Hibana et al., 2015). This attitude must enter the soul to grow a generation with character, especially to welcome the golden era in 2045. Creative teachers must continue to make children feel happy and calm when they are next to them. In every teacher's presence, children can benefit from it, no matter how small for them. It means that an exemplary teacher is good in himself, so it significantly helps children. Through socio-emotional learning, teachers in this MI Nurul Ulum continue to act in front of children so that, socially and emotionally, children can become role models who continue to be imitated, both in character and attitude.

It is in line with the existing curriculum, where one of the competencies possessed by teachers is personality competency and social competency. A teacher with the two competencies above will positively contribute to the formation of students' character (Rizki, 2021). Children who are influenced by the attitudes and characteristics of their teachers in this school will become more independent and enthusiastic in facing life.

5. Creating a communicative learning atmosphere

When learning in class, every child feels bored. Teachers' efforts to shape children's character must create a communicative learning atmosphere. A severe and tense learning process without being punctuated by a humorous attitude will foster boredom in learning, and children will be lazy about receiving lessons. When there is boredom in children, the character will be complex to form.

The results of the interview with the principal of MI Nurul Ulum Bantul, Mr. NRP, in character building through socio-emotional learning, teachers must create a communicative learning atmosphere. It means that teachers must create harmony with their students. In communicative learning, interaction and communication between teachers and children must be actively involved with each other (Yani, 2021). The teacher's attention to children is significant. Teachers should focus on more than one child. There is no most special child in the class, but each child has their unique character and attitude, which teachers must be aware of from an early
age. So, it is not surprising that interaction between teachers and students at MI Nurul Ulum is well maintained.

In socio-emotional learning, teachers must continue establishing dialogue with their students by asking questions that may be considered normal. Still, for children, they can leave an impression on them. It is like asking how your child is before learning starts, asking about their activities at home during the holidays, and so on. Teachers must also be able to feel what children feel during the learning process. This communicative learning atmosphere can be a dominant factor in determining success in forming a child's character (Widodo & Ruhaena, 2018).

In socio-emotional learning, the harmonious attitude of teachers and children will influence children's development in adulthood. A communicative perspective in education will make children feel valued and humanized so that it can grow children's self-confidence so that little by little, a strong character is formed in them. It can also be understood in the learning process implemented at MI Nurul Ulum. Learning at this school involves a lot and provides more of a portion to students (student-centered), although the role of the teacher remains the main one in the learning process. With this student-centered learning model, communicative learning activities will likely emerge.

6. Understanding children's moods when studying

As explained above, children will feel bored, fed up, and lazy about receiving lessons in the learning process. In teachers' efforts to shape character in children, teachers must continue to create a relaxed and enjoyable learning atmosphere (Albab, 2018). For this reason, teachers can be creative by providing icebreakers for each learning activity. Through this activity, the teacher's attitude can positively impact and emotionally bring the teacher and child closer together and between one child and another.

According to one of the teachers, Mr. MHT, in shaping children's character, teachers must be able to read and feel the children's mood when they are learning in class. If a child's mood tends to be lazy in accepting lessons, the teacher must divert the learning to something fun. As creative teachers, teachers are not only required to understand children's intelligence levels, but they must understand each child one
by one when they learn (Aqib, 2012). It is like teachers paying attention to children's facial expressions during learning, teachers asking questions personally when children tend to feel sleepy in class, and so on. The most effective way to find children who are lazy about learning is to listen to their stories or experiences and then relate their attitude to the learning process. This contextual learning attitude is an essential part of socio-emotional learning. What happens is that education will provide space for students' imagination, which is directed at fostering creative thinking based on the reality at that time. Therefore, at this point, the MI Nurul Ulum academic community has realized how important it is to optimize socio-emotional learning.

CONCLUSION

Character education is an inseparable part of national education goals, creating a conducive and enjoyable learning process to develop children's abilities and noble character. In forming the nature of children at elementary age, the learning process is oriented towards cognitive aspects and needs to involve socio-emotional aspects. It is because developing children's character will be more effective and meaningful if it involves positive emotions from themselves. One of the basic steps in forming children's surface at MI Nurul Ulum is teacher creativity through socio-emotional learning. In this school, socio-emotional learning is the dominant factor in creating students' character because this learning must involve a conducive emotional atmosphere, and teachers must organize the socio-emotional climate of each child. To shape character at MI Nurul Ulum, teachers continue to carry out creative learning in developing and creating a fun and friendly learning process, namely being humorous, friendly, communicative, and innovative. This research focuses on building children's character through social emotional learning through creative teachers. In the future, research is needed on how to develop the child's character to become an important part of his emotional, social and spiritual life

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