



# Implementation of character education to maintain a clean environment in social studies learning at elementary schools

Elsa Agustina<sup>1</sup>, Rezy Vianthia Rendrapuri<sup>2</sup>, Tin Rustini<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Primary School Teacher Education, Indonesia University of Education, Indonesia

## ARTICLE INFO

### Article history:

Received Dec 21, 2023

Revised Dec 24, 2023

Accepted Jan 16, 2024

### Keywords:

Character Building  
Elementary School  
Maintain Cleanliness

## ABSTRACT

This research discusses the implementation of character education to protect the environment in social studies learning. The method used in this research is literature study through books or other literature. This research aims to find out how character education is implemented in elementary schools which is linked to social studies learning, namely protecting the environment. The application of character education is an important thing to implement in the learning process. Character is formed from an early age, therefore, through education in elementary school, it is hoped that students will have good character. The interaction of human life will be related to its environment. Therefore, a caring character is needed in protecting the surrounding environment, one of which is the school environment. Integrating character education can be implemented in social studies learning. So that students are able to understand about protecting the environment and can even implement it in their daily lives.

*This is an open access article under the [CC BY-NC](#) license.*



## Corresponding Author:

Rezy Vianthia Rendrapuri,  
Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar,  
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia Kampus di Cibiru,  
Jl. Pendidikan No.15, Cibiru Wetan, 40614, Kec. Cileunyi, Kab. Bandung, Jawa Barat, Indonesia  
Email: rezyvrendrap10@upi.edu

## INTRODUCTION

The continuation of education is none other than to make the nation's life more intelligent as mandated by the Law of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia of 1945. This goal is a planned and systematic process in various areas of life with an orientation towards the growth and development of the country and its human resources in a better direction. (Tobing Jacob, 2018). Education is a gateway for humans to go through as a process of gaining knowledge that is used in their lives. The implementation of education certainly directs students not only to have knowledge but also the skills and attitudes or character they must have. This planting will be useful as a foundation for students to live in society in the future. Applying student knowledge in an attitude or character is not an easy thing, because it requires a daily process (Sormin & Rahma Rangkuti, 2018).

The teaching and learning process in Indonesia has quite complex problems because there are many aspects that influence it, including problems with students, teachers, the school environment and the environment outside the school (Sulistiyosari et al., 2022). Increasingly,

problems are focused on student character (Sutisna et al., 2019). Even though these student problems originate from students whose character is formed in the family environment, the school environment also determines how students can have noble character. A person's tendency to act is a reflection of the attitudes he has and the results of the understanding he obtains. It is hoped that through education at school students can form good character. This is how a school fails when it prioritizes only students' cognitive abilities and ignores the cultivation of character in students (Wahyuni & Suranto, 2021).

Character is always instilled in individuals from childhood, there are many good characters that can be applied, one of which is related to protecting the environment. Human life cannot be separated from the environment because behavior will influence environmental conditions. Fulfilling human life needs is closely related to humans, this will have its own impact on the nature around them (Adela & Permana, 2020). Therefore, in education, knowledge is integrated and the cultivation of a caring character, namely the importance of preserving the environment (Nuzulia et al., 2020). It is an obligation for humans to have a caring attitude towards the environment and good social and natural attitudes as well (Siskayanti & Chastanti, 2022).

Cultivating this character begins by providing awareness to students to be more sensitive to the environment (Arif et al., 2021). Awareness is what drives a person to protect the environment from destructive things, preserve natural beauty, and so on. This can be integrated through one type of learning, namely Social Sciences (IPS) learning (Nurulloh, 2019). In relation to social behavior towards the environment, IPS will teach students to have good knowledge, skills and attitudes, especially in cultivating the character of caring about protecting the environment or character based on values or other educational goals (Sari & Faizin, 2023).

Related to the discussion above, there is a problem regarding the urgency of implementing education that includes character education. Moreover, character in protecting the environment can be integrated into social studies learning in elementary schools to provide good character for the future. Therefore, such social studies learning requires a broad understanding, not only in the knowledge aspect, but also in the form of skills, values and attitudes and actions (Rahayu, 2022).

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Using a research method in the form of a literature review with literature studies, researchers conducted this research. The data obtained is the result of a review of books and previous research related to the problem under study. Through literature review, the basic theories and written opinions related to the problem to be solved will be obtained. The analysis is carried out by describing and displaying the data or information obtained in the form of descriptive explanations that are able to interpret the intent of this research. This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach and the data collection technique used is observation techniques by prioritizing direct data from student and teacher information as well as direct observation from the research location. The research location at SDN WANGIWISATA will be carried out from November to December 2023. The reason the researchers chose SDN Wangiwisata as the research subject was the students' character and learning outcomes regarding keeping the environment clean which still need special attention.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Keeping the School Clean

Living daily life as a human cannot be separated from cleanliness, cleanliness is very important. This is because humans and their environment are always in direct contact to carry out activities. When the environment is fresh and clean, we will feel comfortable doing daily activities. Students and teachers will feel comfortable while studying if the school is kept clean. Therefore, according to (Chan et al., 2019) in (Ismail, 2021) explains that maintaining cleanliness is very

important because it has an impact not only on humans but also on the environment and other living creatures. Creating a healthy environment is the same as maintaining cleanliness, which keeps away disease nests and prevents disease transmission (Ismail, 2021).

Environmental cleanliness is an important component in health science and prevention. In order to stay healthy and avoid being dirty or transmitting disease to both oneself and others, every human being must take care of themselves and the environment (Astuti, 2016). As a result, each of them must be good at maintaining cleanliness. There are many ways to keep the school environment clean, as stated in the material on keeping the environment clean in Social Sciences (IPS) learning at school, namely by throwing away rubbish in its place, cleaning the classroom every day, distinguishing between dry and wet rubbish, making crafts from objects which are not used, and so on. Apart from that, Wulandari, P., et al in 2018 stated that environmental education through social studies learning consists of: 1. Developing an attitude of tolerance towards others, 2. Getting used to caring for the environment, 3. Getting used to a sense of pride, 4. Appreciative attitude, 5. Getting used to mutual cooperation, 6. Getting used to an attitude of responsibility, and 7. Developing an attitude of discipline (Wulandari et al., 2018).

An unhealthy school environment will disrupt teaching and learning activities at school, this is because students cannot keep the school clean. With a clean school environment, the air becomes fresher, learning becomes more comfortable, and the classroom becomes clean and sterile. So, because the school environment has many benefits for daily life, we must always keep it clean (Waskitoningtyas et al., 2018). Apart from that, Islam teaches maintaining environmental cleanliness, which includes cleanliness of food, drinks, houses, water sources, yards, roads or other environments. Cleanliness is part of faith, according to the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. In the world of education and related institutions, the principle of cleanliness is part of the faith that must be emphasized. All parties must work together to initiate cleanliness as part of the faith.

To realize these values, according to Waskitoningtyas et al., 2018 in (Ismail, 2021) law enforcers and policy makers participate in implementing this behavior. To maintain a clean school environment, knowledge about the environment must be taught from an early age. This is done to provide a deep understanding of the importance of the environment for humans and foster responsible behavior towards the environment (Ismail, 2021). Teachers are the closest motivators to their students. It is the teacher who can always set an example for his students on how to maintain cleanliness so that the environment is clean and comfortable. There are several methods for creating a healthy school environment, including: First and foremost, you can plan a green school program, also known as a school greening program. This program can not only make the school shady but can also make students feel more comfortable while studying. Second, school rules are obeyed and disciplined to maintain the cleanliness and balance of the school environment. Third, Educate students about the importance of maintaining a clean and healthy school environment through various programs. Fourth, provide strict supervision and strict school regulations so that the school community wants and is willing to comply with school rules and order. Fifth, planning activities related to love of the environment or love of school cleanliness (Fisher, 2004). Sixth, schools use national holiday time to do good things, such as doing community service or mutual cooperation to clean schools or holding environmental care activities if possible. (Waskitoningtyas et al, 2018).

Teachers as a reminder to students therefore, must always remind students to behave cleanly and healthily in the classroom, such as ensuring that their hands are clean, namely washing them with soap before and after eating, bringing their own food from home, and not buying food carelessly, which can increase their health and prevent disease. Apart from that, in class students have to make their own trash cans and place them on the class desks (Makhsyari et al., 2018).

### **Developing Students' Environmentally Caring Character**

Character comes from the Latin word "character" which means "character, character, psychological traits, manners, personality and morals." To grow students' caring character towards the environment requires a strategy for forming a caring character towards the environment. Developing character is an effort to form good behavior or attitudes in doing something so that children's behavior will be formed from childhood and be consistent, so that they are able to make wise decisions and can practice them in their daily routine (Fitri, 2012). Thus, developing character is closely related to "habit" or the habit of continuing consistently what one does. In other words, cultivating this character can cover three domains, namely: knowledge, skills and student attitudes. Developing character through this character education strategy aims to improve the quality of students, there is an educational process and results that lead to students' character and noble morals as a whole, which can be balanced and integrated in accordance with graduate competency standards (Ismail, 2021).

One of the educational strategies in cultivating environmentally caring character through school culture can help students develop environmental awareness, namely: 1) Students can develop environmental awareness through routine activities, such as class pickets, weekly activities, and occasional activities. Daily routine activities, for example, are Clean Friday which is carried out every Friday by all classes and school members, and weekly activities, and always commemorate environmental days. 2) School principals and teachers must set an example for students to care about the environment, because basically students will imitate every behavior or action of teachers or school staff, whether intentionally or not. 3) School principals, teaching staff and teachers as well as other school residents are expected to be able to motivate and encourage students to always maintain a clean environment, and can also give warnings or warnings to students who do not do so. 4) The school is a place for facilities and infrastructure to support the cleanliness of the school environment, such as trash cans which are divided into three types of waste for waste that can be recycled such as plastic, waste that can be decomposed such as leaves and waste that is dangerous or difficult to decompose. Apart from that, it can be equipped with a place to wash hands in front of each class, an even number of school toilets according to the number of students, providing enough clean water. Apart from that, posters about cleanliness and environmental awareness can inspire and motivate students to love and care about the environment, both in the environment around the school and at home (Al-anwari, n.d.).

In the process of growing character through social studies learning, there are four types of character education that can be applied, namely according to Asmani JM (2012: 80), as follows: 1) moral conservation which is cultivating character based on religious values, such as the truth of revelation from God, 2) environmental conservation is cultivating character based on cultural values, such as Pancasila values, exemplary figures in history and national leaders, literary appreciation and character, 3) environmental conservation is cultivating character based on the environment, 4) Character education based on self-competence, namely personal attitudes, the result of the process of empowering self-potential which is directed at improving the quality of education (Harianti, 2017). According to Ismail, M. Jen, in 2021, schools must implement character education that cares about the environment according to the level of education (Ismail, 2021). In elementary school, student development is divided into two groups, namely low class (grades 1 to 3) and high class (grades 4 to 6). For lower class students, there are several indicators that must be achieved to instill character education that cares for the environment, such as setting an example and telling them that flowers in the garden should not be picked just randomly, saving water by using enough, throwing rubbish in appropriate places according to its type, keeping the school yard clean. Meanwhile, for high class students, there are several indicators that must be achieved to foster environmental awareness, such as: cleaning the classroom, cleaning the school yard, decorating the classroom and school and participating in various activities regarding cleanliness in the school environment (Harianti, 2017).

The process of implementing character education in school culture is very important to build stronger student character. This process works better if applied to students from an early age. In the same way, it is very important for elementary school as it will shape the character of students for their future. This also really supports the goals of basic education by building a social, emotional, intellectual and spiritual foundation to prepare students for further education (Ismail, 2021).

In developing student character, every day students can show concern for the environment (Afriyeni, 2018), such as when they throw away rubbish in their place, and by bringing their own personal food and drink containers, collect organic waste from the entire class and turn it into compostable fertilizer. can be used to fertilize. Students can also make various types of useful objects from used plastic bottles and which can be used in class or as decoration. In addition, it can help students collaborate in situations where cooperation is needed, both between students and between teachers (Ismail, 2021). The following are several strategies that are suitable for implementing character to maintain a clean environment, namely as follows: a) Project-Based Tandır Strategy: This strategy has been proven to be effective in improving student behavior regarding environmentally friendly behavior. This research shows that the project-based Tandır strategy can increase students' environmentally friendly behavior through improving various aspects, including knowledge, behavior, and application/action. b) Education-Based Green Behavior Internalization Strategy for Generation Z: Generation Z has the potential to be an agent of environmental change in creating a healthy environment for Golden Indonesia 2045. An education-based green behavior internalization strategy can help them implement green behavior. c) The Green Behavior Action Calendar Kit (Green-Back) program is one of the key strategies recommended for internalizing green behavior in Generation Z. d) Farming Gardening Program in Social Sciences Learning: This program can help develop environmentally friendly behavior through practical and interactive learning. Through this program, students can learn about the importance of protecting the environment, conservation, and efficient use of energy. e) Management of Green Behavior Characters in the Millennial Generation: This strategy aims to increase interest in using environmentally friendly products and implementing green behavior characters in the millennial generation. A case study conducted in Denpasar City shows that managing green behavior characteristics can help reduce the plastic waste problem. f) According to Ismail, M. Jen said that in 2021 there is the possibility of holding a Green and Clean Program, which aims to instill the character of caring for the environment in elementary school students by offering them the opportunity to try to love their own environment. This program can be started before teaching and learning hours begin, with the aim of cultivating the character of students who care about the environment both at school and at home. This program also teaches students to care for them with love and also take good care of the environment. That way, this can make the school environment greener and more beautiful so that students' physical and mental health can be maintained and increase brain intelligence.

Apart from reducing global warming, a green school environment still has many benefits for students, especially because it will be comfortable for them and affect their brain development. Among the goals is to help in efforts to preserve the school environment, by carrying out maintenance and greening activities in an orderly and clean school environment. 2) Attract attention and increase awareness so that it can motivate students about the importance of participating in efforts to green and clean the school environment. 4) Foster a sense of solidarity among students who participate in each activity (Ismail, 2021).

## CONCLUSION

From an early age, children must be educated to care about their environment. To overcome environmental problems, one effort that can be made is through the application of social studies learning to develop students' character in caring for and protecting the environment. Learning

character towards the environment can be used to shape and encourage students to care about the environment. Character education that cares about the environment is expected to cover the three domains, namely knowledge, skills and attitudes of students. In this way, students not only know but also have a sense of interest and desire and are able to do what they know is right. Therefore, cultivating the character of caring for the environment is closely related to social studies learning in elementary schools and basic habits.

Maintaining cleanliness is very important because it has an impact on humans and the environment and other living creatures. If someone does not care about the environment, it will often cause problems with environmental sustainability and cause various disasters for humans. Creating a healthy environment is the same as protecting the environment so that it is not easily affected by various diseases and avoids sources of disease. There are many efforts to protect and care for the environment, especially the school environment so that the school remains clean, such as implementing various strategies to foster environmentally caring character. In this way, students can get used to throwing away rubbish in the right place according to the type of rubbish, cleaning and maintaining the classroom every day, differentiating between wet and dry rubbish, being able to make crafts from unused items such as used ones, and so on. If the school environment remains clean, the air will be cooler, learning will be more comfortable, and the classroom will remain clean and free from various diseases. It must be ensured that the school environment remains clean, so students must be instilled as early as possible about the importance of the environment for humans so that students can become human beings who can be responsible and care about the environment.

## References

- Adela, D., & Permana, D. (2020). Integration of Environmental Education through the Ecopedagogy Approach in Social Studies Learning in Elementary Schools. *BELAINDIKA Journal (Learning and Educational Innovation)*, 2(2), 17-26. <https://doi.org/10.52005/belaindika.v2i2.41>
- Afriyeni, Y. (2018). Formation of Children's Character to Care for the Environment at Adiwiyata Mandiri School SDN 6 Pekanbaru Yeni Afriyeni Persada Bunda High School Pekanbaru. *Lectura PAUD Journal*, 1(2), Pg. 123-133.
- Arif, M., Rahmayanti, J. D., & Rahmawati, F. D. (2021). Cultivating Social Care Characters in Elementary School Students. *QALAMUNA: Journal of Education, Social and Religion*, 13(2), 289-308. <https://doi.org/10.37680/qalamuna.v13i2.802>
- Astuti, A. K. (2016). Implementation of Healthy Behavior in Early Childhood in Purwomukti Early Childhood Education, Batur Village, Getasan District. *Scholaria: Journal of Education and Culture*, 6(3), 264. <https://doi.org/10.24246/j.scholaria.2016.v6.i3.p264-272>
- Chan, F., Rimba Kurniawan, A., Oktavia, A., Citra Dewi, L., Sari, A., Putri Khairadi, A., & Piolita, S. (2019). Environmental Care Movement in Elementary Schools. *Adi Widya: Journal of Basic Education*, 4(2), 190. <https://doi.org/10.25078/aw.v4i2.1126>
- Fisher, M. (2004). Green and clean. *Polymers Paint Colour Journal*, 194(4475), 42. <https://doi.org/10.5771/9783828867246>
- Harianti, N. (2017). Implementation of environmentally caring character education at State Elementary School Number 99/I Benteng Bawah, Mersam District, Batanghari Regency. *Jambi University Research Journal*, September. <https://repository.unja.ac.id/2190/>
- Ismail, M. J. (2021). Character Education for Caring for the Environment and Maintaining Cleanliness in Schools. *Old Teachers: Journal of Education and Learning*, 4(1), 59-68. <https://doi.org/10.31970/gurutua.v4i1.67>
- Makhsyari, M. A., Handayani, D. E., & Prasetyo, S. A. (2018). Implementation of Clean and Healthy Living Behavior in Instilling Character Values in Students. *MODELING: Journal of the PGMI Study Program*, 5(1), 99-111.
- Nurulloh, E. S. (2019). Islamic Education and Development of Environmental Awareness. *Journal of Islamic Education Research*, 7(2), 237. <https://doi.org/10.36667/jppi.v7i2.366>
- Nuzulia, S., Sukanto, S., & Purnomo, A. (2020). Implementation of the Adiwiyata Mandiri Program in Instilling Environmental Care Characters in Students. *PARTNER-DIDACTICS: Social Science Education*

- Journal, 6(2), 155-164. <https://doi.org/10.15408/sd.v6i2.11334>
- Rahayu, S. (2022). Social Studies Learning Challenges Against Global Issues. *Jurnal Education Social Science*, 2(46), 51-61.
- Sari, W. N., & Faizin, A. (2023). Character Education in Social Studies Learning in Elementary Schools in the Independent Curriculum. *Multidisciplinary Scientific Journal*, 2(3), 957. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.56799/jim.v2i3.1250>
- Siskayanti, J., & Chastanti, I. (2022). Analysis of Environmentally Caring Characters in Elementary School Students. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 6(2), 1508-1516. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i2.2151>
- Sulistiyosari, Y., Karwur, H. M., & Sultan, H. (2022). Application of Differentiated Social Sciences Learning in the Independent Learning Curriculum. *Harmony: Journal of Social Sciences and PKN Learning*, 7(2), 66-75. <https://doi.org/10.15294/harmony.v7i2.62114>
- Wahyuni, H., & Suranto, S. (2021). The Impact of Large-Scale Forest Deforestation on Global Warming in Indonesia. *Jiip: Scientific Journal of Government Science*, 6(1), 148-162. <https://doi.org/10.14710/jiip.v6i1.10083>
- Wulandari, A., Amalia, A. N., & Arif Graduated Mutmainah Maratus Sholiehah. (2018). Environmental education and social studies learning in elementary schools as an alternative to cultivating environmental awareness. *Environmental Education and Social Sciences Learning in Elementary Schools as an Alternative to Cultivating Environmental Awareness*, 43, 37-43.
- Siskayanti, J., & Chastanti, I. (2022). Analysis of Environmentally Caring Characters in Elementary School Students. *Basicedu Journal*, 6(2), 1508-1516. <https://doi.org/10.31004/basicedu.v6i2.2151>
- Sormin, D., & Rahma Rangkuti, F. (2018). Teacher Strategy in Shaping the Character of Mitiara Integrated Miiara Padangsidempuan City Students. *TAZKIR: Journal of Social and Islamic Sciences Research*, 4(2), 219. <https://doi.org/10.24952/tazkir.v4i2.1107>
- Sutisna, D., Indraswati, D., & Sobri, M. (2019). Teacher Example as a Means of Implementing Student Character Education. *JPDI (Indonesian Journal of Basic Education)*, 4(2), 29. <https://doi.org/10.26737/jpdi.v4i2.1236>
- Tobing, Jakob. (2018). Education to Smarten the Nation's Life. *Journal of State Administration*. 7. 85-100. <https://lontar.ui.ac.id/detail?id=20497170>
- Waskitoningtyas, R. S., Permatasari, B. I., & Prasetya, K. H. (2018). Personal Hygiene Education through the Hand Washing Program as a Form of Student Awareness at SDN 014 West Balikpapan. *Journal of Applied Civil Service*. <https://doi.org/10.25273/jta.v3i1.2167>