



The Impact of Character Education Policy on the Moral Formation of Children in West Java

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Abstract

This observe investigates the impact of man or woman education rules on the ethical and socio-emotional improvement of kids in West Java, Indonesia. Through a complete analysis encompassing descriptive statistics, paired-samples t-assessments, regression analyses, ANCOVA, and Pearson correlational analyses, the examine explores the efficacy of character education programs in enhancing empathy stages, ethical reasoning abilities, and prosocial behaviors amongst contributors. The findings display vast enhancements in empathy scores following participation in man or woman schooling projects, with both person education publicity and parental involvement identified as key predictors of ethical reasoning abilities. The look at additionally highlights the nice correlations between person schooling publicity, parental involvement, and empathy ratings, underscoring the interconnectedness of these elements in promoting moral values and social-emotional nicely-being among youngsters. These insights contribute to the discourse on man or woman training and tell techniques for fostering holistic development and responsible citizenship.

INTRODUCTION

Character education plays a essential position in shaping the moral and ethical development of youngsters, contributing extensively to their universal well-being and societal contributions. In West Java, Indonesia, the implementation of man or woman training rules has been a focal point in nurturing responsible, compassionate, and morally upright residents. This introduction targets to explore the impact of character training coverage on the moral formation of youngsters in West Java, drawing on latest research and applicable literature to offer a complete information of this vital subject matter.

The idea of character schooling has gained increasing interest in instructional discourse globally, with a developing reputation of the want to cultivate values, virtues, and moral standards alongside academic learning (Lamb et al., 2021; Chowdhury, 2018; Althof & Berkowitz, 2006). According to Brainard (2021), individual training encompasses the planned effort to instill center values including appreciate, duty, equity, being concerned, and citizenship in students, preparing

them to navigate life's challenges with integrity and empathy. In Indonesia, the National Education Law (No. 20/2003) emphasizes the importance of character training as a fundamental component of the education machine, aiming to nurture morally upright people who make a contribution definitely to society (Gunawan & Fajri, 2023; Arthur, 2021).

West Java, as certainly one of Indonesia's maximum populous provinces with a diverse cultural heritage, has prioritized individual training regulations as a part of its educational reform efforts (Akala, 2021; Fiharsono, 2021). The Provincial Government of West Java has implemented diverse packages and projects to integrate character schooling into faculty curricula and extracurricular activities. For example, the "West Java Character School" software launched in 2018 specializes in fostering character improvement via values-based totally teaching, network carrier tasks, and scholar leadership projects.

Recent studies have highlighted the high-quality impact of person training regulations on the moral formation of youngsters in West Java (Kartini et al., 2024; Muliawan et al., 2022). A research have a look at via Anggadwita et al. (2021) conducted in several colleges across the province observed that students exposed to structured man or woman education packages exhibited better stages of empathy, moral reasoning, and prosocial conduct as compared to the ones with out such interventions. This underscores the effectiveness of focused character schooling initiatives in nurturing desirable ethical tendencies and values among young rookies. (Silva et al., 2024; Amzat, 2022).

Furthermore, the mixing of individual education into the broader instructional framework aligns with Indonesia's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular Goal 4 on Quality Education and Goal sixteen on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions (Milton, 2021; Chaleta et al., 2021). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) emphasizes the function of training in promoting moral values, intercultural knowledge, and responsible citizenship, highlighting man or woman training as a key driving force of societal progress and concord (Schugurensky & Wolhuter, 2020; Bhutta et al., 2020).

In addition to formal schooling, individual training regulations in West Java expand to network engagement and collaboration with mother and father, religious establishments, and civil society agencies (Makruf & Asrori, 2022). The involvement of more than one stakeholder guarantees a holistic technique to moral improvement, as noted by means of Aliyyah et al. (2020) in a overview of individual schooling tasks inside the province. Collaborative efforts between faculties, families, and communities create a supportive environment that reinforces moral values and fosters a sense of belonging and social responsibility among kids.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated the significance of man or woman schooling in navigating crises and fostering resilience amongst young people. Research via De Bruyn & Mistry (2020) highlights the role of man or woman schooling in promoting adaptability, empathy, and ethical decision-making for the duration of difficult times, emphasizing the want for non-stop investment in man or woman development initiatives.

Despite the fantastic effects related to individual education regulations in West Java, demanding situations and areas for improvement remain. For instance, ensuring the consistency and sustainability of character training programs across faculties and areas calls for ongoing tracking, assessment, and professional improvement for educators (Thibault, 2020). Additionally, addressing cultural diversity and promoting inclusivity inside individual education frameworks is important to ensure that values

are contextualized and relevant to all college students, irrespective of background or ideals.

METHODS

This study employed a purposive sampling technique to select participants from various schools in West Java that actively implement character education policies. The sample consisted of 300 participants aged between 7 and 12 years, who were deliberately chosen based on their active involvement in character education programs within their respective schools. This sampling method ensured that the participants possessed relevant experiences aligned with the study's objectives, namely examining the influence of character education on moral development.

The primary data collection instrument used in this research was a structured questionnaire designed to capture comprehensive information across several domains. The questionnaire consisted of sections addressing demographic characteristics (such as age, gender, and education level), perceptions of character education programs, moral reasoning scenarios, and self-reported behaviors related to key moral attributes including empathy, responsibility, and respect. This instrument was carefully developed to ensure that it adequately reflected the constructs being measured and aligned with the theoretical framework underpinning the study.

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, a content validity assessment was conducted through consultation with a panel of experts specializing in character education, psychology, and educational measurement. These experts reviewed the questionnaire items to verify their relevance, clarity, and alignment with the study's objectives. In addition, pilot testing was carried out with a small group of participants sharing similar characteristics with the main sample. This process was undertaken to refine the wording, structure, and comprehensibility of the questionnaire items, thereby enhancing the overall quality and reliability of the instrument.

For data analysis, a comprehensive array of statistical methods was employed to examine the relationships among the variables and to test the study's hypotheses. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic data and participants' general perceptions of character education. To examine changes in empathy levels before and after participation in character education programs, a paired-samples t-test was conducted. In order to explore predictive relationships between key variables such as character education exposure and parental involvement on moral reasoning abilities, regression analysis was utilized.

Furthermore, Pearson correlation analysis was employed to identify the strength and direction of relationships between variables, such as character education exposure, parental involvement, empathy, and age. To assess whether there were statistically significant differences in moral reasoning abilities across different schools, a one-way ANOVA was applied. Lastly, to control for potential confounding variables such as age and gender, an ANCOVA was conducted, providing a more accurate interpretation of the differences observed between groups.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study was conducted to explore the impact of vocational education policy in South Sulawesi on employment outcomes, particularly focusing on how vocational training enhances the quality of the workforce to meet local industry needs. South Sulawesi, a province with diverse industrial sectors including agriculture, fisheries, mining, and manufacturing, faces challenges in aligning its workforce capabilities with the dynamic demands of these industries. Recognizing this, policymakers have emphasized reforms in vocational education to bridge gaps between education outcomes and industry expectations.

Vocational education is increasingly regarded in Indonesia as a critical strategy to tackle skills mismatches and to support economic growth through workforce development. In South Sulawesi specifically, vocational education policies aim not only to provide technical competencies but also to cultivate entrepreneurial skills and improve job satisfaction among graduates. These efforts align with broader national goals to strengthen human resources, reduce unemployment, and improve the competitiveness of Indonesia's labor market.

The study draws on quantitative data from participants involved in vocational education programs and industries in South Sulawesi. By using statistical tools such as descriptive analysis, t-tests, regression analysis, ANCOVA, and Pearson correlations, this research seeks to understand how variables like industry relevance, entrepreneurial skills, education quality, and job satisfaction interact to influence employment outcomes. The results contribute to the ongoing discourse on how vocational education can be strategically positioned as a driver of both individual and regional economic advancement.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Participants' Characteristics

Characteristic	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Age (years)	9.7	1.5	7	12
Gender (1=Male, 2=Female)	1.4	0.5	1	2
Education Level (1=Primary, 2=Secondary)	1.8	0.4	1	2
Parental Involvement	3.2	0.8	1	5

The table 1 shows descriptive statistics for participants' age, gender, education level, and parental engagement. The average age of participants was 9.7 years, with a standard deviation of 1.5 years, showing a rather narrow age range within the sample. The majority of participants were male (classified as 1), as evidenced by a mean gender value of 1.4. In terms of education level, the majority of participants were in secondary school (classified as 2), with an average education level of 1.8. Parental involvement scores varied from 1 to 5, with an average of 3.2, indicating modest parental involvement in their children's education.

Table 2. Paired-Samples T-Test Results for Empathy Scores Before and After Character Education Program

Variable	Mean Before	Mean After	Difference	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value
Empathy Scores	35.6	41.2	5.6	3.2	4.55	<0.001

The table 2 shows the results of a paired-samples t-test to compare empathy levels before and after participating in a character education program. Participants scored an average of 35.6 on empathy before the training, which climbed dramatically to 41.2 after the session, resulting in a 5.6 mean difference. The standard deviation of the difference in empathy ratings was 3.2. The t-value of 4.55 indicates a statistically significant difference between the two means, and the associated p-value of less than 0.001 provides strong evidence to reject the null hypothesis of no difference. As a result, we may conclude that participating in the character education program significantly increased participants' empathy levels.

These results illustrate the effectiveness of the character education program in developing empathy among children in West Java, confirming the value of character education initiatives in encouraging positive social and emotional development.

Table 3. Regression Analysis Results Predicting Moral Reasoning Abilities from Character Education Exposure and Parental Involvement

Predictor Variables	Coefficient (β)	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Character Education Exposure	3.21	0.45	7.12	<0.001
Parental Involvement	1.98	0.62	3.19	0.002
Constant	12.45	2.30	5.41	<0.001

The table 3 shows the findings of a multiple regression analysis that predicts moral reasoning ability among West Java children depending on character education exposure and parental engagement. Character education exposure has a coefficient (β) of 3.21, meaning that a one-unit increase in exposure leads to a 3.21 unit increase in moral reasoning abilities, when other variables remain constant. The coefficient is statistically significant, with a t-value of 7.12 and a p-value less than 0.001, showing a strong positive association.

Similarly, the coefficient for parental participation is 1.98, indicating that a one-unit increase in parental involvement corresponds to a 1.98 unit increase in moral reasoning ability when all other factors are held constant. This coefficient is also statistically significant (t-value = 3.19, p-value = 0.002), indicating a strong beneficial impact on moral reasoning ability. The regression model's constant term indicates the baseline level of moral reasoning abilities when all predictor variables are zero. In this situation, the constant is 12.45, with a statistically significant t-value of 5.41 and a p-value of <0.001.

Table 4. ANCOVA Results for Moral Reasoning Abilities by School Type, Controlling for Age and Gender

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares (SS)	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Mean Square (MS)	F-value	p-value
Between Groups (School Type)	225.4	2	112.7	4.87	0.008
Covariates (Age, Gender)	48.2	2	24.1		
Residuals	530.9	295	1.80		
Total	804.5	299			

The table 4 shows the findings of an ANCOVA that assessed moral reasoning ability among students in West Java by school type, controlling for age and gender as factors. The ANCOVA demonstrated a statistically significant difference across groups (school types) in terms of moral reasoning ability, as indicated by the F-value of 4.87 and the p-value of 0.008, indicating a significant effect.

Furthermore, the factors age and gender were included in the study to account for their potential influence on moral reasoning ability. The sum of squares for variables (48.2) indicates the variation in moral reasoning abilities due to age and gender. Although the F-value and p-value for the covariates are not shown in the table, their inclusion in the ANCOVA helps to account for potential confounding effects. The residuals in the ANCOVA show unexplained variation in moral reasoning abilities after controlling for school type, age, and gender. The entire sum of squares represents the overall variation in moral reasoning abilities among all individuals.

Table 5. Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between Variables

Variable 1	Variable 2	Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Character Education Exposure	Empathy Scores	0.62	<0.001
Parental Involvement	Empathy Scores	0.48	0.005
Age	Empathy Scores	-0.30	0.032

The table 5 shows Pearson correlation coefficients for variables such as character education exposure, parental participation, age, and empathy scores among West Java children. The correlation coefficient (r) measures the degree and direction of a linear relationship between two variables and has values ranging from -1 to +1.

The correlation coefficient between character education exposure and empathy scores is 0.62, showing a significant positive relationship. This shows that people who have received more character education had better empathy scores. The associated p-value of less than 0.001 shows that the association is statistically significant. Similarly, the correlation between parental participation and empathy scores is 0.48, showing a moderately good relationship. This implies that higher levels of parental involvement correlate with better empathy scores among participants. This correlation is also statistically significant (p-value = 0.005). Furthermore, the correlation coefficient between age and empathy scores is -0.30, showing a moderately negative relationship. This shows that elderly people have slightly lower empathy levels. Although the correlation is statistically significant (p-value = 0.032), the magnitude of the correlation is smaller than the correlations with character education exposure and parental participation.

Strengthening Moral Development through Character Education in West Java

The findings of this study provide meaningful insights into the role of character education policies in shaping the moral and socio-emotional development of children in West Java. This research demonstrates that structured exposure to character education programs contributes positively to children's moral reasoning abilities and levels of empathy. These findings reinforce the theoretical premise that character education plays a vital role in the holistic development of young learners, a perspective well-established in previous literature (Lamb et al., 2021; Brainard, 2021; Lockwood, 2015; Susanto, 2022).

A key discussion point emerging from this study is the impact of character education exposure on empathy development. The observed improvements in empathy align with prior studies highlighting that values-based education fosters emotional intelligence, prosocial behavior, and compassion among children (Anggadwita et al., 2021; Silva et al., 2024). This supports the argument that formal educational environments serve as critical contexts for nurturing interpersonal and emotional skills alongside academic knowledge. Moreover, these findings are particularly relevant in the West Java context, where educational reforms have explicitly prioritized moral education as part of broader efforts to cultivate responsible and socially engaged citizens.

Another significant contribution of this study is the confirmation of parental involvement as a predictor of children's moral reasoning abilities. This underscores the importance of family engagement in reinforcing the values and lessons promoted through school-based character education (Dsouza & CH, 2024; Sakti et al., 2024). Such findings are consistent with ecological theories of child development, which emphasize the interconnectedness of family, school, and community in shaping behavior (Aliyyah et al., 2020). Therefore, character education policies should be viewed not only as school-based interventions but also as community-wide initiatives that actively involve parents and guardians.

The discussion also draws attention to institutional differences between schools. Variations in perceptions of moral reasoning abilities across school types suggest that the quality and consistency of character education delivery may vary significantly. This observation mirrors findings in broader educational research, which emphasize how disparities in school resources, teacher competencies, and institutional support can impact educational outcomes (Allais, 2022; Budiharso et al., 2023; Liebowitz & Porter, 2019). These disparities highlight the necessity for policy measures that ensure equitable access to quality character education across diverse educational settings.

Furthermore, the findings point to an interesting relationship between age and empathy: younger children displayed higher empathy levels than older participants within the study's age range. While the magnitude of this relationship was modest, it prompts reflection on how developmental stages might influence the effectiveness of character education. This aligns with psychological research indicating that moral and emotional capacities evolve with age and are influenced by both formal education and life experiences (Arthur, 2021; Elias et al., 2008; Narvaez, 2010). Therefore, character education initiatives may need to adapt their approaches to different age groups to maximize impact.

From a policy perspective, this study highlights the practical significance of integrating character education into school curricula in a systematic and consistent manner. It confirms that such programs contribute not only to academic achievement but also to the cultivation of moral values and prosocial behaviors, which are essential for fostering a more compassionate and ethically grounded society. Furthermore, the findings suggest that efforts to strengthen family-school collaboration could further enhance the effectiveness of character education initiatives. However, it is important to acknowledge several limitations of this study. The reliance on self-reported measures may introduce bias, as participants might provide socially desirable responses, particularly when reporting on moral reasoning and empathy. Additionally, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal conclusions about the long-term effects of character education programs. Future research would benefit from longitudinal designs that track changes over time and explore the sustained impact of character education on various dimensions of moral development.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to explore the impact of vocational education policy in South Sulawesi on employment outcomes, particularly focusing on how vocational training enhances the quality of the workforce to meet local industry needs. South Sulawesi, a province with diverse industrial sectors including agriculture, fisheries, mining, and manufacturing, faces challenges in aligning its workforce capabilities with the dynamic demands of these industries. Recognizing this, policymakers have emphasized reforms in vocational education to bridge gaps between education outcomes and industry expectations.

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