The Role of Character Education in Overcoming the Moral and Social Ethical Crisis in Students

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Article Info	Abstract
	The problem of moral crisis and social ethics among students is very important to pay attention to. It is important to have learning that is able to overcome this, this is certainly in line with the implementation of character education for students or learners, because freedom of access to the outside world and socializing and poor environmental conditions affect the formation of students' morals and social ethics. This study aims to identify the role of character education in overcoming the moral and ethical crisis in students. This study uses a qualitative research method using a descriptive approach. Data collection techniques in this study use observation, interview and documentation techniques as well as literature reviews. The results of the study found that character education has a very important role in overcoming or overcoming the moral and social ethical crisis in students. In this case, where character education with various values and norms such as honesty, discipline, justice, compassion and responsibility. Character education in terms of social ethics teaches a life of tolerance, mutual respect and respect for others regardless of the differences in religion or culture that are adhered to by the people around them.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The problem of moral crisis and social ethics among students has become an important issue to study and pay attention to. This problem of moral and social ethical crisis does not only affect individuals, but also affects society as a whole (Firmansyah et al., 2023). Some examples of moral and social ethical crises that we can see in society are riots, students who answer police during demonstrations and there are still many examples that can be found in society. According to several previous studies, the environment, parents, social pressure, social friends, technological developments and social media are factors that cause a moral and social ethical crisis among students (Wahyuni, 2021; Sabiq, 2022; Nurlita, 2024; Hudi et al., 2024)

In the large Indonesian dictionary, the word moral is defined as "rules of decency" whereas according to the term it is used to determine the boundaries of the nature of other roles, desires, opinions or boundaries of actions that can properly be said to be right, wrong, good or bad. Morals are understood as knowledge relating to civilized human character and can also be said to be teachings about good and bad actions and behavior (morals) (Zalsabella et al., 2023). So Morals are guidelines for individuals regarding good, bad, right and wrong. Ethics are the values of right and wrong that a society believes in, and social ethics are related to obligations, attitudes and behavior as members of society who have

certain values such as mutual respect, mutual interaction, and so on (Sagala, 2022). Morals are standards of right or wrong that originate from the individual, while ethics are more universal or general in nature.

Etymologically, character comes from the Latin words kharakter, kharassein, and kharax, in Greek charassein, which means to make sharp and make deep. In the Big Indonesian Dictionary, character is a distinctive characteristic possessed by an individual that differentiates him from other individuals (Yani, 2023). Based on the meaning of the terminology, character is understood as the values of human behavior related to God Almighty, oneself, fellow humans, the environment and nationality which are manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words and actions based on religious norms, law, etiquette, culture and customs (Faqihuddin, 2021; Agustina et al., 2023). Character is the culmination of habits resulting from ethical choices, behavior and attitudes possessed by individuals which constitute excellent morals even when no one sees them (Mathes, 2021). From this definition, it can be concluded that character is the values of human behavior that differentiate them from other humans, manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words and actions carried out based on religious norms, law, etiquette, culture and customs in any condition even if no one sees them.

Etymologically, education comes from the word "paedagogie" (Greek), consisting of the words "paes" meaning child and "agogos" meaning to guide. From German, Erziehung, which means awakening latent strength or activating a child's strength or potential (Andini et al., 2023). So etymologically, education means guidance given to children, activating their potential or strength. According to Ki Hajar Dewantara, education is guiding all the natural strengths that exist in children, so that they as humans and as members of society can obtain the highest possible safety and happiness (Efendy, 2023). Based on this definition, it can be concluded that character education is guiding and activating potential values in children related to morals, morals and ethics which can be realized in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words and actions as a guide when interacting with society so that as humans and members of society obtain safety and happiness

Character education is an important thing to do to form a person who is moral and ethical, able to distinguish between right and wrong, has a sense of empathy and responsibility and so on. In recent years, many researchers have examined character education and moral and ethical crises, such as research conducted by Ningsih et al on "Analysis of the Implementation of Character Education to Overcome the Moral Crisis of Students in the History Education Study Program at the Islamic University of North Sumatra" and the results of their research show that the benefits of character education include training intelligence, preventing bad behavior, improving individual character and morals, and can create a conducive atmosphere, as well as building a more honest and better nation (Ningsih et al., 2023), Ilham Hudi et al regarding character education as a step in overcoming the moral and ethical crisis with the research title "Moral and Ethical Crisis in Indonesia's Young Generation". The results of his research show that there has been a moral and ethical crisis in teenagers and it must be resolved through general and Islamic character education (Hudi et al., 2024). Natasya Firjinia Leuol and Sherly Gaspersz who discussed the importance of character education in dealing with the moral crisis in higher education through character education with the article title "The Importance of Character Education in Overcoming the Moral Crisis Among Victory University Sorong Students," the results of their research showed that developments in the times, family, peers, campus environment and social environment had a big impact on students' moral damage. And character education can be a solution to this problem. (Leuol & Gaspersz., 2022). Of the many studies, there are still few that discuss the role of character education in overcoming moral and social ethical crises in students. What makes this research different is that it will look

at the role of character education in overcoming the moral crisis and the role of character education in overcoming the social ethical crisis in students.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, a qualitative research method was used with a descriptive approach. Descriptive qualitative is more about the process of getting a clear picture of a phenomenon in society without exaggerating the problem being studied.

Research data collection techniques use observation, interview and documentation techniques as well as literature review. The location in this research is within the scope of Makassar State University students. In determining informants, researchers use techniques *Purposive* Sampling which was then obtained by 5 informants. The data analysis technique in this research was carried out systematically starting from data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. Data validation techniques using *Member check*. *Member check* This aims to find out how far the data obtained matches the data from the informants.

The research focuses on qualitative data aspects by conducting comprehensive observations and interviews to observe and study character education in overcoming students' moral and social ethical crises. Documentation studies of research articles and supporting documents were carried out to strengthen the data.

Review Of Socialization Theory

The analysis of this research is in line with the socialization theory by George Herbert Mead which explains that moral values are internalized through repeated experiences and social interactions, with an initial assessment approach that is adapted to the child's individual characteristics. Positive outcomes, such as improved manners and respect for friends, show that moral values have succeeded in shaping children's behavior. Overall, this approach successfully combines the principles of persuasive communication. Mead's socialization theory shows that systematic learning and a focus on ethics can produce significant and profound behavioral changes. Socialization Theory also assumes that the social environment, including family, peers, school or college and mass media, plays a crucial role in the individual's socialization process. These various institutions and socialization agents provide a context in which individuals learn about social norms, values, and expected roles in society (Arman & Hutari, 2024). It can also be understood that George Herbert Meed in this theory focuses on the importance of social interaction in the formation and development of human consciousness. Which then also argues that individual identity and awareness develop through a process of social interaction with other people, which teaches values, norms and social roles (Andrianti et al., 2024).

The character education received by students, whether at school or as students in higher education, has provided direction in determining their attitudes and behavior in socializing in the surrounding environment. The process of receiving knowledge both in the classroom and outside the classroom is certainly influenced by communication and interaction with other people. The subsequent moral and social ethical crisis among students encouraged the government to improve character education because it can provide and shape positive values and norms for individuals in overcoming various behavioral problems that occur. Socialization theory in this case then describes students in the psychosocial development stage whose learning process is heavily influenced by the social values received from family, friends and individuals within the scope of their education or college. The character education received does not only teach values but is expected to be able to be applied in everyday life, in this case the character education policy will be a reference for implementing values and social obligations, so as to be able to create better morals and ethics and be respected by the wider community.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Character education has been seen as very important for students, especially in this case for students. As time goes by, it provides more and more convenience, especially in accessing information, which has had a lot of influence on individual morals and ethics in interacting with the surrounding environment. The influence brought by globalization on morals and ethics depends on how individuals respond and accept what is considered good and bad. Because it does not rule out the possibility of individuals behaving in ways that are not in accordance with the values of norms, the rules that apply in their environment. So in this case character education is understood as an important form of education that must be present in the learning process at both schools and universities. As explained by (Widiastuti, 2024) it is important to apply character education within the campus because the freedom of the younger generation to receive information and follow westernized or foreign cultural trends brought about by rapid advances in information and communication technology, which does not rule out the possibility of having a negative influence on individual morals and ethics has provided an illustration of the importance of applying character education to the learning process, although not all of it is negative, the government must be alert to foreign cultures. This statement is then in accordance with the results of interviews with several students who stated that:

> *"In my opinion, the importance of character education in higher education is very good to implement, considering that higher education is a place that is a meeting space for intellectuals who naturally interact based on values and morals. Through this character education, I think it will help people on campus to interact and socialize with each other in a more appropriate and polite way." (Lidia, 23 years old)*

> *"Character education is very important, especially in the current situation with various freedoms of individual access. Character education in tertiary institutions really influences students because character formation is really needed, from student character it helps students become responsible, independent and tough individuals. Character education also helps students develop the social skills needed in professional and personal life." (Syam, 22 Years)*

> *"The importance of character education in higher education aims to form students who are not only academically intelligent, but also have good personalities. With character education, students are taught values such as courtesy, honesty, responsibility, empathy, etc., which are very much needed in everyday life." (Tika, 22 Years)*

From this statement it is clear that character education in the scope of learning is very important for students in particular because it is able to provide positive value guidance in carrying out their lives and in deciding things.

By looking at the moral and ethical conditions of both students and students, this time has given policy makers an important task to be astute in making decisions regarding all aspects related to the younger generation, because they are the country's big capital in contributing to progress in various fields. According to (Nengsih et al., 2023), the results of his research have shown that there are factors that influence the moral decline of students, for example changes in time, family, peers, school environment and social environment. The process of interacting with people around them who do not have a positive influence has created bad behavior for the individual. Then (Aisyah & Fitriatin, 2025) stated that the moral and social ethical crisis has become a serious issue among Indonesia's young generation, which is characterized by behavior such as brawls, bullying and degradation of social values. As for the main causes of the moral and ethical social crisis itself, such as the impact of globalization, social media, and the lack of parental role and character education in educational units is still not optimal. Lack of understanding of social ethics within a

person, especially students, can also become a serious problem if it continues to occur and is ignored (Mutiarani et al., 2024). This is in line with the interview data obtained that:

"In my view, the current moral and ethical condition of students is overall unsatisfactory because I often see many students who do not heed the culture of greeting, smiling and saying hello. Even though we don't have to do all of these three cultures, we hope that at least we can greet each other, especially greeting the lecturers as a form of appreciation for the lecturers and staff on campus. Caring for other people, including strangers, needs to be increased further. This will help students and lecturers or staff in terms of helping each other in various obstacles and problems. The factors that are the main cause of the social ethical crisis "In my opinion, it seems that this attitude is actually aimed at not interfering in other people's affairs and not wanting to bother other people. However, this attitude also subconsciously puts aside one's social attitudes such as empathy and so on, thus hindering the implementation of mutual assistance and ethics in interactions between students." (Lidia, 23 Years)

"One of the factors causing the moral and social ethical crisis is excessive consumption of digital media and a lack of ability to filter what is good and what is not, in behaving and interacting politely and not speaking rudely when dealing with other people." (Tika, 22 Years)

"Environmental factors or peers can be observed by looking at how the student socializes and imitates the people around him. For example, friends who like drinking, smoking, drugs, are lazy and so on can influence the individual." (Devi, 23 Years)

Seeing and reviewing how important character education is for students has certainly provided an illustration that there is a very important role for its existence in responding to the moral and social ethical crisis for students. From research by (Rudiyanto & Kasanova, 2023) that character education contains elements of learning the values of courage, perseverance, honesty and loyalty. Competent and virtuous individuals are human resources who are capable of being good, virtuous, intelligent and competitive in facing global difficulties. The values instilled in it will have a positive influence on students so that they are aware not to carry out actions that damage morals and social ethics in society. Character education must be consistently applied in the tertiary environment in order to be able to improve and instill noble morals in students. Students will imitate and tend to view academics as role models, if the lecturers and academics involved are able to provide good examples. Apart from that, students in character formation are also influenced by other students or their peers, how they imitate the behavior of their friends which they then apply in their daily lives, both regarding morals and ethics in interacting with other people (Munir & Syukurman, 2023; Hartanti, 2023). In this case, technology also plays an important role in forming students' character because nowadays, most of their time is taken up by social media, so they unconsciously learn and imitate what is presented in that media. Of course, in interactions with peers (students) and social media, the hope is to obtain positive values (Muhsinin et al., 2023; Saputra, 2024). In (Miramadhani & Nursalim, 2024) memphasizes that character education has a crucial role in shaping the morality of society and the nation. In various countries, including Indonesia, character education has become a national movement. This is because apart from providing the values of honesty and justice, it also increases awareness in complying with social norms, appreciating and respecting the rights of other people. The interview results obtained were:

"The role of character education is in shaping students' morals and social ethics, helping people on campus to interact and socialize with each other in a more appropriate, ethical way, and has the potential to direct students to actually apply this character education." (Lidia, 23 Years)

"The role of character education in forming moral and social ethics in students is

that students are taught to understand and be able to apply positive values in their daily lives. Apart from that, character education can also help students develop the ability to think critically, empathy, and other social skills that are important in interacting with other people, especially those around them." (Tika, 22 Years)

It can be concluded that character education has a very important role in overcoming or overcoming the moral and social ethical crisis in students. In this case, character education with various existing values and norms such as honesty, discipline, justice, compassion and responsibility for what one does will provide added value for students so that they no longer do things that damage their identity and behavior. Apart from that, character education in terms of social ethics teaches a life of tolerance, mutual respect and respect for others regardless of the religious or cultural differences held by the people around them in order to create social harmony, order and peace. Of course, apart from studying theory, it is necessary to apply it in everyday life so that attitudes are truly ingrained in oneself that reflect the values of Pancasila and the norms that apply in society.

Character education can be easily obtained anywhere, especially if it is in a formal learning environment such as a school or college. The values taught in it will be easy to apply if there is seriousness in applying it within oneself. Because the complex and focused material of the on-campus learning environment makes the character-based education learning process easier. Students apply the character values taught on campus in social life outside campus by analyzing character education that is suitable for use in society. In essence, students need to adapt and be clever at placing themselves in line with the values and norms adopted by the environment around them so that unwanted conflicts do not occur.

4. CONCLUSION

Researchers can then draw conclusions regarding the phenomenon studied, namely, the role of character education in overcoming the moral and ethical crisis in students, that the birth of character education was due to overcoming various problems that arise due to character decline for individuals, either to prevent or overcome. The flow of globalization which provides all kinds of conveniences has had many impacts, especially regarding morals and ethics for students. Values in character education have an important role in overcoming problems such as moral crises and student social ethics. Character education is able to develop and improve the values and norms taught therein, such as the value of living in honesty, justice, discipline, responsibility, tolerance and so on as an effort to overcome existing problems.

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