



Comparison of Character Education in Malaysian and Indonesian Elementary Schools

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Abstract: Implementation of character education will create superior human resources in all aspects of personality. This study aims to explore the essential core of character education in elementary schools and explore the similarities and differences in character education applied in elementary schools in Malaysia and Indonesia. This research used a descriptive qualitative approach with the comparative method, and the type of research used was library research. Data collection techniques included researching and identifying data through various documents from scientific publications in journals, national and international articles, and applicable laws and regulations. The results of a literature review on character education in elementary schools in Malaysia and Indonesia show similarities and differences in the concepts, programs, and implementation of character education in the two countries. A comparison of character education in Indonesia and Malaysia can be a valuable basis for improving these two countries' character education systems and drawing lessons that can be applied in other countries.

Keywords: indonesia, malaysia, character education, elementary school

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INTRODUCTION

Personality is part of a person's inherent nature (Achadah et al., 2022; Rakhmawati & Mustadi, 2019). Character education in Indonesia and Malaysia has the same goal: to produce students with good moral and ethical values. However, the methods and practices used in character education in the two countries differ significantly. In Indonesia, character education in elementary schools is carried out through various programs such as the Adiwiyata program, the Scout movement and the early childhood education program (Utami, 2019). In addition, the elementary school curriculum has several particular subjects related to character education, such as religion and personality (Ani, 2014). Character education in Indonesia is more normative and ethical (Lizawati & Uli, 2018). Apart from compulsory subjects, character building in Indonesia comes from reading materials such as novels and magazines (Wibowo et al., 2022). Personality development is based on psychological devices that cover all individual potential (cognitive, emotional, and psychological) and the functioning of sociocultural devices in the family, family, education, and social interactions (Latuapo, 2023).

Indonesia once introduced a compulsory subject on ethics, namely ethics. Personality is the behaviour of individuals in everyday life, whether independently, in a family, in a community or as a nation, which contains prevailing and upheld values in the form of identity and unifying and sustainable values in ethical system in everyday life to guide human behaviour in society, nation, and state which is rooted in Pancasila and religious and cultural teachings besides that In Indonesia, many schools with religious institutions offer a particular religious curriculum (Sari et al., 2020; Syaharuddin et al., 2022). In addition, in Indonesia, religious characters are often formed through music, which is heard daily. Research conducted by Supriyadi and Julia (2018) shows that YouTube has a significant role in fostering students' religious feelings through religious songs routinely played daily. In addition, it is proven that religious character is very closely related to students' level of learning motivation (Amin et al., 2022). This means that character education from various countries will shape their human resources and tend to have different behaviour habits.

On the other hand, in Malaysia, character education is carried out through moral education programs included in the national curriculum. The moral education program covers moral and ethical values based on Malaysian culture and traditions. In addition, character education is also carried out through programs such as the Prosperous School program and the 1 Student 1 Sports program (Kinjawan et al., 2020; Sumintono et al., 2012). In fact, character education in Malaysia is more integrative and focuses on forming students' personalities in general. In addition to differences in methods and practices, character education in Indonesia and Malaysia

faces different challenges. In Indonesia, one of the challenges is the lack of public awareness of the importance of character building (Kusumo, 2017). Moreover, there are differences in perceptions between teachers and students regarding moral values that must be instilled in students. In Malaysia, the challenges faced are cultural and traditional differences between students with different backgrounds, which affect the understanding and acceptance of moral values taught in schools (Rizkita & Supriyanto, 2020). Facing these challenges, the two countries must continue to innovate and adapt in implementing character education in elementary schools. The role of teachers and parents is also crucial in helping to shape the personality of students (Akbar, 2010). By overcoming these challenges, character education in elementary schools can be more effective and form young people with character and integrity.

After the COVID-19 outbreak, there were many complaints that students in various countries experienced a decrease in the quality of their social character. This problem involves a low sense of social responsibility and the diminishing value of mutual cooperation among students that matter can be seen that when the PTM-T limited face-to-face meeting program was implemented, there were many cases of students being confused in socializing (Lubis & Wangid, 2019; Ramadhani & Sagita, 2022). Students need to strengthen their character again after experiencing stress and depression when they are too long at home. This shows the need for character education that strengthens social care values, active participation in society, and cooperation in dealing with joint problems. Character education can help build a proactive attitude and empower students to contribute to society (Aktay & Mermi, 2022). So, to find out the root of the complaints of various countries, it is necessary to compare the character education curricula of each country. Researchers are interested in comparing Indonesia and Malaysia because of geographical proximity and cultural similarities. At the beginning of 2020, Malaysia was hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly changed all sectors, including education. The Ministry of Education in Malaysia has announced a Movement Control Order (MCO) from 18 March 2020, following the standards recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO) for implementing physical distancing. The education sector has completely changed from traditional face-to-face learning to virtual learning. Online learning provides differences not only related to class structure but also involves differences in two-way communication between students and instructors. It has an effect on the shift in the character of students. Previous research shows that the quality of communication is influenced by character education and individual emotional intelligence (Andriansyah et al., 2022; Wahab et al., 2022).

Previous research conducted by Prakoso et al. (2023) compares the Indonesian and Japanese curricula, including character education. In Indonesia, character education is widely echoed in various curriculum changes. However, the policies and administration of character education have not yet been implemented. The progress in this independent curriculum includes a rubric for the implementation of the Pancasila student profile, which is manifested in the end-of-semester project called P5. The scientific character is also closely related to several subjects in the Indonesian curriculum, such as natural sciences and mathematics. Arwan and Ali (2023) reveals that elementary school students who experience a transition of learning culture in middle school grades experience cultural shock between the character of discipline, responsibility and honesty to be critical, thorough and high curiosity must be built independently. Widodo et al. (2023) argue that the role of parents is critical in helping students recover from learning loss after the COVID-19 pandemic. Learning loss also includes a decrease in the quality of the social character of students because the longest education is at home, including character education from parents.

Character education is essential to form a young generation with dignity and integrity (Khamalah, 2017; Solumuthu & Thambu, 2022). Thus, in Indonesia and Malaysia, character education in elementary schools has become part of the national curriculum and is implemented through various programs to form students with moral and noble character. However, despite the similar aims, there are essential differences in the methods and practices of character education in the two countries. For this reason, it is necessary to compare character education in elementary schools in Indonesia and Malaysia to see the differences in implementation and the challenges faced in character education for students. Through this article, the author will discuss the differences in character education methods and practices in Indonesian and Malaysian elementary schools and the challenges faced in the implementation process. Understanding these differences and challenges is likely to assist in optimizing the implementation of character education in elementary schools and forming a young generation with character and integrity in both countries.

METHODS

The unit of analysis observed in this study was the concept, curriculum, and implementation of character education in elementary schools in Malaysia and Indonesia. The research design used in this study was a literature review (Creswell, 2013), including an analysis of literature and references related to the concept, curriculum, and implementation of humanitarian education in elementary schools in Malaysia and Indonesia. To ensure the validity of the data, data collection was carried out systematically, namely by selecting only relevant

and trustworthy references. In addition, data analysis was carried out carefully by paying attention to the details and context of each reference used. This research concerned the principle of openness in data collection and processing. All references used in this research were freely available to ensure transparency and accountability of the research. The data collected was secondary data, which contains references to the process of personality formation in elementary schools in Malaysia and Indonesia. Data were collected by searching online databases such as Google Scholar, ResearchGate, and International Journals. Because this was a literature review study, there were no human participants directly involved (Sutopo, 2016). However, non-human participants were from various literary sources, including academic journals, books, government reports, and other electronic sources relevant to the research topic.

The instruments for this research were various literature sources that had been published and were available online or in printed form (Sukmadinata, 2013). The researchers used basic academic data, digital libraries, and other relevant literary sources to collect the data needed for this literature review. The data collection instrument was a checklist for observed scientific articles in the form of item title, author, year, journal origin, findings, and conclusions. The data analysis carried out was qualitative analysis through comparison (Sukmadinata, 2013). The analysis was conducted by comparing the concept, curriculum, and implementation of educational characteristics in elementary schools in Malaysia and Indonesia. Interpretation of the data was done by drawing conclusions about the similarities and differences in the character of education in elementary schools in Malaysia and Indonesia, as well as strengthening these findings on the development of character education in children in the two countries.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The concept of character education in elementary schools covers many aspects, including moral, social, and cultural values that students must apply to their daily lives. In Malaysia, this concept is known as "moral education", which plays a significant role in producing students expected to have the character of responsibility, ethics, and empathy. Moral education in Malaysia includes learning values such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance, respect, cooperation, fairness, and moderation. They are also taught about religious and cultural values, such as religion, religious tolerance, and love for the motherland. Character building in Malaysia is carried out through formal lessons in class and extracurricular programs such as the "Al-Quran Reading Training Program" and the "Value Improvement Program". These programs are designed to help students understand moral and religious values, develop a positive attitude, and build good character.



Figure 1. Moral Education Curriculum in Malaysia

Following are some literature reviews on character education programs in primary schools in Malaysia:

Authors	Title	Journal	Outlines
Verasamy and Balakrishnan (2020)	Aktiviti di Luar Waktu Pengajaran dan Pembelajaran Pendidikan Moral Contents Contents di Malaysia: Satu Pengenalan	MP, 5(2), 131-142	This study analyzes the moral education curriculum in Malaysia, including at the elementary school level. Researchers conducted document analysis and implementation of the moral education curriculum in several secondary schools in Malaysia. This study shows that the moral education curriculum in Malaysia is directed at building strong character and morals in students and developing positive values such as honesty, decency, and a sense of responsibility.

Hamid and Jaharudin (2018)	Islamic Education in Malaysia	Policies and Politics in Malaysian Education, Desember, 31-35	This study explores the practice of Islamic moral education in elementary schools in Malaysia. The researcher interviewed several teachers and education staff at several elementary schools in Malaysia. The study results show that Islamic moral education in elementary schools in Malaysia involves teaching moral values through formal lessons and extracurricular programs such as the "Al-Quran Reading Practice Program".
Mahanani et al. (2022)	Educational Analysis to Develop Character in Malaysia and Indonesia	IJI, 15(3), 377-392	This study is a case study regarding implementing the character education curriculum in elementary schools in Malaysia. Researchers interviewed several teachers and education staff at an elementary school in Malaysia. The results of the study show that the character education curriculum in primary schools in Malaysia is implemented through formal lessons and extracurricular programs and involves teaching moral and religious values and developing students' social and emotional skills.
Puspitasari and Akbar (2021)	Comparative Analysis of Government Policies Indonesia and Malaysia About Character Education in Primary Schools	ICET, 61, 123-130	This study examines the implementation of the Whole School Approach (WSA) in shaping character education in elementary schools in Malaysia. Researchers used qualitative methods by interviewing teachers and education staff in three elementary schools implementing WSA. This study shows that WSA influences students' character and increases a positive school climate.
Chang (2013)	Revisiting the values in Moral Education for Malaysian schools	Journal of Research, Policy & Practice of Teachers & Teacher Education, 3(2), 49-59	This study examines the moral education curriculum in elementary schools in Malaysia. Researchers interviewed several teachers and education staff in elementary schools in Malaysia. This study shows that the moral education curriculum in elementary schools in Malaysia has been well developed and emphasizes the formation of strong character and morals of students.
Komariah et al. (2021)	Implementation of Character Education in Elementary Schools in Indonesia and Malaysia	Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education, 12(8), 248-259	This study is a case study on strengthening character education in an elementary school in Malaysia. Researchers conducted observations and interviews with several teachers and education staff at the school. This study shows that innovative and collaborative learning methods can increase the effectiveness of character education in elementary schools in Malaysia.

Indonesia has conducted several programs to boost character education in elementary schools. Those programs include 1) The 2013 curriculum; This 2013 curriculum is the newest program in Indonesia, which focuses on building students' character. This program is based on the four pillars of character education: religion, nationality, independence, and mutual cooperation. In this program, character education is integrated into all aspects of learning and assessment in elementary schools; 2) Character Education Program (PPK); The Character Education Program (PPK) is a program established by the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) to shape the character of elementary school students in Indonesia. PPK involves all elements of the school, including teachers, education staff, and parents. PPK also emphasizes a holistic approach to shaping the personality of students; 3) Character education pocketbook; Character Education is a practical guide for

integrating character education into elementary school learning. This paperback book covers 18 protagonist values: honesty, discipline, and responsibility. This pocketbook is designed to be easily used by teachers and elementary school students. The newest concept of character education in elementary schools in Indonesia is known as 'pelajar pancasila', as seen in Figure 2.



Figure 2. Character Education in Elementary Schools in Indonesia

Table 2. Literature reviews on character education programs in elementary schools in Indonesia

Authors	Title	Journal	Outlines
Aisy et al. (2021)	Implementation of the 2013 Curriculum at the Elementary School Level	URECOL, 14, 127-134	This study discusses the implementation of character education in the 2013 general education program. The study results show that character education implemented in the 2013 education program has formed good character, integrity, and purity in students.
Pala (2011)	The Need For Character Education	International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanity Studies, 3(2), 23-33	This study aims to evaluate the implementation of character education in the 2013 elementary school program. The evaluation results show that the implementation of personality education in the 2013 program still needs to be improved to achieve the stated goals.
Fathinnaufal and Hidayati (2020)	The Implementation of Character Education in Elementary School	JEML, 1(2), 31-38	This study analyzes the implementation of character education in the 2013 basic education curriculum. The analysis results show that the implementation of personality education in the 2013 program is not entirely optimal and needs further improvement.
Cahyono and Riyadi (2017)	Carrying out character education in elementary schools: Comparative study between Indonesia and Australia	Journal of Education and Learning, 6(1), 43-50	This study compares the implementation of character education in primary schools in Indonesia and Australia. The results of the study show that character education in Indonesia still needs to be improved so that it is in line with national and international policies.
Kurniasih et al. (2017)	Character Education Policy and Its Implications for Learning in Indonesia's Education System	RISE, 1-7	This study evaluates character education policies and practices in elementary schools in Indonesia. The results show that personality education policies have been implemented in Indonesia, but the practice still needs to be improved to make them more effective.

Irawan and Windarti (2023)	The Case of Character Education Implementation in Elementary Schools: How are Promotions and Its Problems?	IJVSS, 2(1), 196-209	This research examines the implementation of character education programs in elementary schools in Indonesia. The results show that the program has been implemented in most elementary schools in Indonesia but still needs improvement in understanding, implementation and follow-up.
Warul et al. (2023)	The implementation of character education during the COVID-19 pandemic in state islamic senior high schools in Indonesia	Multidiscip. Rev, 1-7	This study evaluates the implementation of character education in elementary schools in Indonesia during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study results show that using technology in character education can improve students' academic achievement and social skills
Sugiyo and Purwastuti (2017)	Local Wisdom-Based Character Education Model in Elementary School in Bantul Yogyakarta Indonesia	Sino-US English Teaching, 14(5), 299-308	This study explores the integration of local wisdom into the character education curriculum in elementary schools in Indonesia. The findings show that incorporating local wisdom can increase students' understanding of personality.
Graff (2012)	The effectiveness of character education programs in elementary schools	Spring, 1-60	This study evaluates the effectiveness of the character education curriculum in elementary schools in Indonesia. The results show that the character education curriculum can improve students' social skills, morals, and positive behaviour.
Lubis and Wangid (2019)	Augmented Reality-Assisted Pictorial Storybook: Media To Enhance Discipline Character Of Primary School Students	Mimbar Sekolah Dasar, 6(1), 11	This research creates AR Media to improve the discipline attitude of elementary school students with the result that AR-assisted storybooks were considered effective in improving the disciplinary character of elementary school students. Therefore, the use of AR can be increased and disseminated to achieve school learning goals for students, especially in improving the character of discipline.
Rosala and Budiman (2020)	Local Wisdom-Based Dance Learning: Teaching Characters To Children Through Movements	Mimbar Sekolah Dasar, 7(3), 304-326	This study shows that character education also comes from art subjects. Character education developed in dance learning based on local wisdom can be carried out through various learning activities such as appreciation and introduction to traditional dance art material, planting values, independent and group learning to build self-reliance and mutual cooperation, and get students used to praying before and after learning. This is to instil local wisdom values through learning dance movements.

Based on the data obtained, the differences and similarities in character education in Indonesian and Malaysian elementary schools can be seen from character education, program implementation, implementation challenges, and program evaluation. However, the two countries share the same goal: to form students with good character and morals. Therefore, this comparison can help improve character education implementation in both countries to achieve the same goal. The differences and similarities in the formation of personality in elementary schools in Indonesia and Malaysia can be explained as follows:

Character education in Indonesian and Malaysian elementary schools has several similarities and differences. One similarity is the emphasis on learning moral and ethical values as an essential part of the educational curriculum. In both countries, subjects such as Moral Education in Malaysia (Rashid, 2023) or

Religious Education in Indonesia are often used to teach students character values. However, there are differences in the approach and implementation of character education in the two countries. Malaysia has a more concise approach to integrating character values into the national curriculum (Kamarudin, 2021). In contrast, Indonesia could have a more concise approach to character education due to factors such as the country's diversity of religions and cultures.

In Indonesia, character education in elementary schools is emphasized in various ways, one of which is through the subject of Religious Education or Pancasila and Citizenship Education (PPKn). Character education is also integrated into the national curriculum. Character education content in Indonesia includes "values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and caring attitude towards others" (Haryanto & Darsono, 2020). In Malaysia, Moral Education subjects are the most relevant for character education in elementary schools. "The goal is to teach students moral values, ethics and good behaviour" (Chang, 2013). In Malaysia, "character education also includes values such as integrity, longevity, and social obligation" (Solumuthu & Thambu, 2022). The two countries have different approaches when it comes to religion. In Indonesia, religions are very diverse, and students can choose religious subjects according to their beliefs. In Malaysia, Islam is the predominant religion and Islamic Education is implemented for Muslim students, while non-Muslim students can choose Moral Education.

The concept of character education in Indonesia emphasizes the formation of moral and religious values, such as honesty, hard work, tolerance, cleanliness and discipline. Whereas in Malaysia, the concept of character education includes broader values, such as love for the motherland, love for the environment and a sense of social responsibility. According to expert opinion, changing individual and societal needs requires the development of individuals who can generate and use information, solve problems, and communicate effectively (Tural, 2020). This effective communication requires a foundation of character education that each individual practices well. Character education in elementary schools is carried out through a program called "National Character Education" and "Character Development", which includes religious, artistic and cultural studies. On the other hand, in Malaysia, character education in elementary schools is carried out through the national curriculum, which includes ethics, religion and morality lessons, as well as extracurricular programs such as the "Quran Reading Training Program" and "Values Intensification Program". Obviously, in Indonesia, with an independent curriculum supported by Prakoso et al. (2023), there is currently an intensive character education in the profile of Pancasila students.

Challenges in implementing character education in elementary schools in Indonesia include the lack of human resources trained in character education, limited funds, and different understandings of personality values. The informant's parents also emphasized that most were already busy with office work. Meanwhile, in Malaysia, the challenges faced include the lack of parental involvement in building children's character, cultural and religious differences, and a lack of proper assessment and measurement to assess the effectiveness of character education programs. Previous research emphasized that the vital role of parents in dealing with learning losses, especially post-pandemic, is significant because the longest education takes place at home (Widodo et al., 2023). The application of character education in Indonesia has been greatly assisted by jointly understanding the local wisdom of each region (Parhan et al., 2023). In Indonesia, the evaluation of character education programs in elementary schools is usually carried out through teacher observation, transcript evaluation, and parent satisfaction surveys. Whereas in Malaysia, program assessment is carried out through assessing student learning outcomes, aptitude tests and character project assessments. Confirmed by (Wahab et al., 2022) that emotional intelligence indirectly affects the results of character education given to students. In summary, the differences and similarities in personality education in Indonesian and Malaysian elementary schools can be seen from the concept of character education, curriculum implementation, implementation challenges and program evaluation. However, the two countries aim to educate a generation of students with good character and character. Therefore, this comparison can help improve the implementation of character education in both countries to achieve the same goal.

CONCLUSION

A comparison of character education in Indonesian and Malaysian elementary schools reveals several interesting findings and relevant implications. One of the main findings is the difference in approaches to character education in the two countries. Indonesia tends to emphasize character education more in its curriculum, emphasizing values such as mutual cooperation, honesty, and tolerance. On the other hand, Malaysia tends to pay more attention to academic aspects in their curriculum. This difference implies that students in Indonesia may have greater opportunities to develop character and moral values from an early age, which can help form citizens who are more responsible and care about their environment. On the other hand, Malaysia may need to consider incorporating character education more into its curriculum to ensure that its students receive sufficient training. Overall, this comparison underlines the results of a literature review

regarding character education in elementary schools in Malaysia and Indonesia, showing similarities and differences in concepts, programs, and implementation of character education in the two countries. Both of them consider that character education in elementary schools is important in educating the younger generation with good character. The differences lie in the programs used, the methods used and their application in the field. In Malaysia, character education in elementary schools is implemented through Islamic values and ethics. Apart from that, the method used is a direct teaching method that upholds moral and ethical values. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, character education in elementary schools was carried out through learning through activities inside and outside the classroom and religious and moral lessons. This research implies that both countries consider character education in elementary schools essential in educating the younger generation with good character. Therefore, both countries must continue developing and perfecting elementary school character education programs and methods to create a brave and honest young generation. It can be concluded that personality education in elementary schools in Malaysia and Indonesia has similarities and differences in concept, program, and implementation. However, both had the same goal: educating the younger generation with dignity and integrity. Therefore, both countries must continue to develop and improve character education in elementary schools to produce a young generation who is brave and honest.

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