

Enhancing Academic Achievement through School–Tutoring Collaboration: A Case Study from Rural Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the role of collaboration between a public elementary school (SD Negeri 1 Pokoh Kidul) and a local tutoring institution in improving academic achievement among third-grade students. Employing a qualitative case study design, the research collected data through semi-structured interviews with a third-grade teacher, non-participant observations, and document analysis over a three-day period. Data were validated using triangulation and member checking, and analyzed thematically with reference to Bronfenbrenner’s mesosystem theory. The results reveal that semi-formal collaboration characterized by curriculum alignment, joint evaluations, and consistent communication positively impacts students’ academic performance, with average score increases of 5–10 points in Mathematics and Indonesian. Students also exhibited greater confidence, participation, and engagement. Parental and community involvement further enhanced these outcomes. Nonetheless, challenges persist, including the absence of formal agreements, limited access for disadvantaged students, and risks of academic burnout due to extended study hours. The study underscores the potential of operationalizing mesosystem interactions in school policy to enhance student learning. Recommendations include formalizing school–tutoring agreements, integrating effective tutoring practices into mainstream curricula, and implementing equity measures such as subsidies and targeted outreach. This research contributes to the limited body of literature on structured school–tutoring collaboration at the elementary level in Indonesia. It offers practical and policy-oriented insights for building sustainable, inclusive educational partnerships that address both academic and holistic student development.

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1. Introduction

The acceleration of technological advancements in the era of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 has transformed education systems worldwide, presenting both unprecedented opportunities and complex challenges for primary education. Among the most critical concerns is how schools can foster robust character development in children while simultaneously equipping them with technological and academic competencies (Putri, Artini, & Wahyuni, 2020; Susanti & Sukaesih, 2021; Syah, 2017). Contemporary models of character education increasingly emphasize integration across curricula, requiring not only effective pedagogical frameworks but also a holistic alignment with institutional management and community engagement. In this regard, teachers' understanding of character values and their ability to translate these into classroom practices become decisive factors in achieving sustainable outcomes.

Despite these innovations, challenges persist. The integration of technology into learning environments may unintentionally weaken moral development when not grounded in strong ethical frameworks (Jhon & Zubaidah, 2021; Syafi'i & Yusuf, 2021). Inconsistencies in how educators interpret and apply character education principles further contribute to uneven student outcomes (Maryani, Cholidah, Sulistyaningsih, Utama, & Achmad, 2024). Additionally, limited school resources, ranging from infrastructure to professional development, often constrain the successful implementation of comprehensive programs. These limitations underscore the importance of collaboration between educators, families, and the wider community to create supportive ecosystems that foster character education (Herlina, Arismunandar, & Tolla, 2024; Rahayu et al., 2023).

Within the Indonesian context, Civic Education (Pendidikan Kewarganegaraan, PKN) and Social Studies (Ilmu Pengetahuan Sosial, IPS) occupy central roles in cultivating students' civic awareness, patriotism, and sense of responsibility as citizens. These subjects are integral to embedding national identity and moral values into students' daily lives. Existing research highlights that effective civic education strengthens students' sense of belonging and devotion to their country, fostering not only knowledge but also active engagement in civic life (Ivanec, 2023; Ramdani et al., 2024). For example, the application of problem-based learning models has shown potential in heightening students' engagement with historical and civic content, encouraging them to critically reflect on their roles in a diverse yet unified society (Hidayani, 2024).

Emerging educational strategies, particularly in multicultural and digital contexts, demonstrate further possibilities. Models such as service-learning and culturally responsive teaching enable students to apply civic knowledge in real-world settings, reinforcing character values through practice. Moreover, the incorporation of digital technologies has expanded opportunities for civic participation, allowing students to narrate their identities and cultural experiences through creative and interactive media (Afriliyadi, Sumadi, & Nadiroh, 2025; Tinambunan et al., 2025). Nevertheless, schools must contend with tensions between global cultural influences and local traditions, ensuring that national values remain strong while engaging students in global dialogues (Rani, Rezeki, Nazla, & Syamsiah, 2025; Rinda et al., 2025). The challenge lies in adopting innovative approaches that harmonize global perspectives with local wisdom to nurture both civic identity and moral integrity (Poli & Samsuri, 2024; Wenni, Situmeang, Sitompul, Nurhayati, & Siregar, 2024).

The integration of Pancasila the philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state into primary education provides a guiding framework for aligning civic and moral education. Studies show that embedding Pancasila values into learning activities significantly improves students' behavior, enhancing respect for diversity, cooperation, and civic responsibility (Dewantara, Suhendar, Rosyid, & Atmaja, 2019; Saputro, Winarni, & Indriayu, 2021). Such approaches promote tolerance and mutual respect, both of which are essential in Indonesia's pluralistic society (Tjandra, Ginting, & Rahmat, 2023). In this sense, Pancasila serves not only as a national ideological anchor but also as a practical instrument for shaping ethical behavior and citizenship in young learners.

Furthermore, schools are vital environments where social and emotional competencies are cultivated. They provide structured contexts in which students develop emotional regulation, empathy, and interpersonal skills that are indispensable for both civic engagement and personal well-being (Castillo et al., 2021; Nachtigal, Zetlin, & Shen, 2024). Civic education programs that integrate participatory learning and community service contribute positively to students' emotional intelligence and social awareness, encouraging them to become active contributors to their communities (Cahyadi & Wakhudin, 2023; Dahliana, Budimansyah, Nurdin, Suryadi, & Cahyati, 2023; Makmur, 2023). Schools also play a critical role in fostering students' sense of belonging, which research suggests is a predictor of civic participation and academic motivation (Mirra & Garcia, 2020; Sulistyarini, Dewantara, & Adha, 2023).

Taken together, the integration of character education through PKN and IPS anchored in Pancasila provides a comprehensive approach to nurturing both cognitive and moral competencies in primary school students. The current study aims to analyze how SD N 2 Sumberharjo operationalizes this integration, identifying strategies, methods, and challenges in cultivating students' character. In doing so, it contributes to the broader discourse on how elementary schools can address the dual imperatives of technological adaptation and character formation in the rapidly evolving educational landscape of the Industrial Revolution 4.0.

1. Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative exploratory design to examine the role of SD N 2 Sumberharjo in developing students' character and manners through the subjects of Civic Education (PKN) and Social Studies (IPS). The exploratory approach was deemed suitable due to its capacity to generate nuanced insights into educational processes that are often complex and context-specific. By focusing on a single case study, the research captures in-depth perspectives on how character education is integrated into daily school practices, while also identifying both enabling and constraining factors in implementation.

1.1 Research Design

The qualitative exploratory design enables the researcher to investigate phenomena that are not yet fully understood in existing literature, particularly the integration of Pancasila values and character formation within primary education in the digital era. Unlike quantitative studies, which emphasize generalizability and numerical measurement, qualitative research prioritizes context, meaning, and lived experiences (Sari, 2018). This design allows an in-depth exploration of how students internalize values of discipline, empathy, tolerance, and civic responsibility within their natural school environment. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that qualitative research faces limitations, such as potential researcher bias, subjective interpretation, and non-generalizability of findings (Sulaimani & Ozuem, 2022). These limitations were mitigated through methodological rigor, triangulation, and reflexivity during data collection and analysis.

1.2 Research Site and Participants

The study was conducted at **SD N 2 Sumberharjo**, an elementary school recognized for its emphasis on character and civic education. Participants included school leaders, PKN and IPS teachers, and students across upper grade levels. Teachers were selected for their direct involvement in designing and implementing curricula, while students were chosen to provide perspectives on how character education was experienced in daily learning. Additionally, parents and community representatives were engaged to explore external influences on character formation, reflecting the ecological approach to education as outlined by Bronfenbrenner's theory.

1.3 Data Collection Techniques

Three complementary data collection methods were employed: **interviews, observations, and document analysis**. This triangulated approach enhanced the validity and reliability of findings.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with teachers, school administrators, and selected parents to gather detailed narratives regarding strategies, challenges, and perceived outcomes of character education. These interviews encouraged participants to articulate personal experiences and reflections, offering insider perspectives on the integration of PKN and IPS. In addition to interviews, classroom observations were carried out to capture authentic interactions, pedagogical practices, and student engagement during PKN and IPS lessons. Observations also extended beyond formal instruction to include extracurricular activities, school routines, and peer interactions, thereby providing a holistic understanding of how character education was embedded in the broader school environment. Furthermore, curriculum documents, lesson plans, school policies, and student work samples were analyzed to contextualize interview and observation findings. These documents offered evidence of how character values were formally planned and embedded within teaching practices, while also highlighting the school's alignment with national education policy and the Grand Design of Character Education.

Triangulation across these three sources strengthened the credibility of the findings, ensuring that interpretations were grounded in multiple forms of evidence (Swavely et al., 2022; Tesfaye & Hailu, 2024).

1.4 Data Analysis

The data analysis process followed thematic analysis principles. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were coded inductively to identify recurring patterns and themes. The analysis focused on three dimensions: (1) strategies and methods used by teachers in PKN and IPS to foster character education, (2) challenges and constraints encountered, and (3) observable impacts on students' behavior and social interaction. To minimize bias, codes were compared across data sources and validated through member checking with participants, ensuring that interpretations accurately reflected their perspectives.

1.5 Trustworthiness and Rigor

To ensure trustworthiness, the study applied Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility was strengthened through triangulation and prolonged engagement in the field. Transferability was addressed by providing thick descriptions of the context, enabling readers to judge applicability to other settings. Dependability was supported by maintaining detailed methodological documentation, and confirmability was achieved through audit trails and reflective journaling by the researcher.

2. Results

The findings of this study reveal that incorporating character values into Civic Education (PKN) and Social Studies (IPS) curricula plays a significant role in shaping elementary students' civic awareness and moral development. Globally, core values such as respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship have been identified as foundational in nurturing responsible citizens (Dewantara et al., 2019; Narimo, Utama, & Novitasari, 2019). Within the Indonesian context, these values are further reinforced through the integration of Pancasila principles, which emphasize unity in diversity, democratic engagement, and social justice (Dewantara et al., 2019; Sumardjoko, 2018). At SD N 2 Sumberharjo, these values were consistently embedded within teaching and learning practices in PKN and IPS, supporting the holistic development of students as morally responsible and civically engaged individuals.

The study also found that instructional strategies significantly influenced the success of character education. Teachers at SD N 2 Sumberharjo employed interactive and participatory methods, moving away from rote memorization towards more experiential learning. Approaches such as service projects, community involvement, debates, and problem-based learning enhanced students' ability to internalize civic values and apply them in real-life contexts (Felton, Middaugh, & Fan, 2023;

Sumardjoko, 2018). The use of locally contextualized materials, such as local history and cultural narratives, deepened students' appreciation of their cultural heritage while simultaneously fostering stronger civic identities (Narimo et al., 2019). In addition, the integration of digital tools, including videos, online simulations, and educational games, was shown to improve engagement, broaden perspectives, and prepare students for civic participation in contemporary, technology-driven societies (Felton et al., 2023).

Another key finding relates to the challenges of character development in the digital era. Observations and interviews highlighted that students faced increasing exposure to negative online behaviors, such as cyberbullying, misinformation, and excessive screen time. Cyberbullying, in particular, was reported by teachers and parents as detrimental to students' mental health, undermining their self-esteem and leading to social withdrawal (Amrullah, Wardana, Hikmah, Cahyanti, & Fatikha, 2023). Prolonged screen use was associated with reduced attention spans and weakened interpersonal relationships, while the proliferation of misinformation raised concerns about students' critical thinking skills and ethical decision-making (Kurniasih, 2023; Nanda & Budimansyah, 2020).

In response to these challenges, SD N 2 Sumberharjo implemented a series of digital character education initiatives that were designed to cultivate responsible online behavior. These included structured digital literacy lessons focusing on safe internet use, respect in online communication, and strategies to identify and counter misinformation. The school also adopted elements from established programs such as "Digital Citizens," which emphasized the dual goals of technological competence and ethical responsibility (Zahrah & Dwiputra, 2023). Classroom practices such as guided discussions, role-playing, and interactive simulations encouraged students to reflect critically on their online behavior and the broader implications of digital citizenship. Teachers reported that students demonstrated increased awareness of online risks and exhibited more responsible behaviors in digital contexts following these interventions.

The results also highlighted the importance of broader community involvement in sustaining character education efforts. Collaboration with parents and community leaders reinforced the lessons learned in school, providing real-world applications of digital etiquette, civic engagement, and ethical standards (Yulia, Henita, Gustiawan, & Erita, 2022). For example, school-parent partnerships enabled coordinated responses to cyberbullying cases, while community-based projects offered students opportunities to apply values of empathy, cooperation, and social responsibility beyond the classroom. These practices contributed to the cultivation of a school culture that prioritized character education as a shared responsibility.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the integration of character education into PKN and IPS at SD N 2 Sumberharjo was effective in strengthening students' civic awareness and moral behavior. Through interactive pedagogies, contextualized content, and digital literacy initiatives, the school successfully navigated the dual challenge of fostering character while adapting to the demands of the digital age. The results suggest that sustainable character education requires not only innovative instructional practices but also strong partnerships between schools, families, and communities.

3. Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the pivotal role of teacher modeling in the internalization of moral and civic values among elementary students. Consistent with social learning theory, children tend to emulate behaviors and values demonstrated by adults they interact with regularly, particularly teachers. When educators consistently model honesty, respect, empathy, and responsibility, students are more likely to develop these attributes themselves, thereby reinforcing both classroom harmony and peer relationships (Sanderse, 2024; Zhang, Saharuddin, & Aziz, 2022). At SD N 2 Sumberharjo, the role of teachers extended beyond instruction; their daily conduct served as lived examples of Pancasila

values. This practice not only influenced immediate student behavior but also contributed to the long-term cultivation of moral integrity and civic awareness.

The evidence aligns with prior research that highlights the impact of teachers' perceptions and practices on students' moral development. (Liao, Liao, Chen, Tseng, & Ho, 2022) demonstrated that teacher behaviors significantly affect students' sense of responsibility, especially in environmental contexts. Similarly, our study revealed that intentional integration of moral discussions within PKN and IPS curricula created spaces for students to reflect critically on ethical issues. This reflective process helped children navigate dilemmas relevant to their age and social context, fostering deeper understanding of moral principles (Gui, Yasin, Abdullah, & Saharuddin, 2020). These findings affirm that teachers, through deliberate and consistent modeling, act as primary architects of students' civic and moral character.

Another major theme emerging from the findings is the importance of collaboration among schools, parents, and communities in sustaining character education. Research consistently shows that character formation is most effective when supported by a coherent ecosystem (Najmuddin & Aprilianty, 2020; Wandu, Gistituati, & Rusdinal, 2022). At SD N 2 Sumberharjo, parental involvement in school programs reinforced the values taught in classrooms, while community-based activities allowed students to practice empathy, cooperation, and social responsibility in authentic contexts. Such collaboration mirrors findings from Zhou and Gao (2023), who emphasize the role of community integration in strengthening moral learning. By aligning the efforts of teachers, parents, and communities, the school created a comprehensive support system that enhanced students' civic engagement and overall well-being (Salleh & Francis, 2023).

The discussion also highlights the dual role of technology in character education. On one hand, interactive platforms and gamified tools provided innovative means to engage students with moral dilemmas and civic issues, enhancing critical thinking and collaborative learning (Alamin & Sauri, 2024). Students at SD N 2 Sumberharjo responded positively to such tools, which were often integrated into lessons on digital citizenship and ethical decision-making. These findings align with studies that emphasize the potential of digital resources to support participatory and value-based learning. On the other hand, excessive or unbalanced reliance on digital tools can pose challenges. Observations revealed instances where technology distracted students or reduced opportunities for interpersonal engagement, echoing concerns raised by (Darici, 2022). Moreover, the simplification of complex ethical issues in gamified formats may risk limiting students' ability to handle nuanced real-world dilemmas (Santoso, Mulyoto, Djono, & Hanif, 2020).

Balancing the benefits and risks of technology is therefore critical. Schools must ensure that digital tools are used as complementary resources rather than substitutes for authentic human interaction. In this respect, digital literacy education at SD N 2 Sumberharjo proved particularly valuable, equipping students with the skills to critically assess online content, manage digital interactions responsibly, and resist harmful influences. By embedding digital character education within broader PKN and IPS frameworks, the school succeeded in aligning moral formation with the realities of the digital age.

In sum, the discussion highlights that effective character education depends on three interrelated factors: consistent teacher modeling, strong school-parent-community collaboration, and strategic integration of technology. Together, these elements create an educational environment where civic and moral values are not only taught but also lived and reinforced across multiple contexts. The experience of SD N 2 Sumberharjo illustrates that character education in the Industrial Revolution 4.0 era must be dynamic, context-sensitive, and grounded in both local values and global competencies.

4. Conclusion

This study concludes that the integration of character values into Civic Education (PKN) and Social Studies (IPS) at SD N 2 Sumberharjo effectively fosters students' civic awareness, moral integrity, and

social responsibility in the context of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Through teacher modeling, interactive pedagogical strategies, and the integration of Pancasila values, students developed respect, empathy, responsibility, and active civic participation. The school's efforts to embed character values into both formal curricula and extracurricular activities created a holistic environment conducive to character formation. Challenges, such as cyberbullying, misinformation, and limited resources, highlight the necessity of digital literacy education and careful use of technology. Moreover, collaboration among schools, parents, and communities proved essential in reinforcing values beyond the classroom. The findings suggest that sustainable character education in elementary schools requires a dynamic approach that combines ethical instruction, contextualized learning, technological awareness, and collective stakeholder engagement. Future research should examine scalable models that incorporate these elements to strengthen character education across diverse school settings

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