

## Strategy for Internalizing the Value off Character Education Based on Aswaja in Elementary School

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### Abstract

The problem of attitudes and moral decadence of learners is increasingly widespread, making it important to optimize character education from an early age. This research aims to describe the strategy of planting Aswaja-based character values in students in elementary school in order to become a strong foundation. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with a case study. This research was conducted at the Integrated Primary School (SD) Jepara. Collecting data entailed methods of observation, interviews, and documentation. The results of the study show that the strategy of internalizing character values based on Aswaja can be carried out by schools with application in micro contexts and macro contexts. First, the micro

context includes: integration with each subject, planting tasamuh, tawazun, ta'adul and tawasuth through habituation of attitudes in daily life, habituation of amaliah Aswaja such as Barzanji activities, Qur'an recitations, grave pilgrimages, and tahlil. Second, the macro context refers to collaboration between schools, parents, and the community. Cooperation with parents lies in the synergy of attitude application at school and at home and doing reflections together; cooperation with the community is carried out through a partnership program to support the quality and character of educational output.

**Keywords:** Strategy, Internalization, Character Education, Aswaja

## INTRODUCTION

Education is an effort to improve the quality of human life, which in essence aims to humanize, mature, and change behavior for the better. Therefore, education occupies a very central and strategic position in order to build human life (Ziafar & Namaziandost, 2019). The central position and various challenges in various aspects, including the development of technology and information, which participate in influencing the formation of students' character, need to be resolved immediately (Kim, Choi, Sung, & Park, 2018). This is because negative external culture can be easily absorbed without a strong filter, so it affects attitudes and behaviors that are not aware of deviating from the values and noble values of the Indonesian nation (Prabandari, 2020).

Problems related to student attitudes and moral decadence are spreading into a blurry portrait for the world of education. The existence of cases of bullying in the form of physical violence to sexual violence that has occurred to students from Nalumsari Jepara who were in fourth grade SD in the Gebog sub-district in 2017 is one example and is evidence that the implementation of character education in elementary schools has not been optimal. Especially during the era of the Covid19 pandemic, the cultivation of character in students is a challenge for teachers because learning is carried

out online (Intania, 2020). Allesson's (2021) research shows that pandemics and online learning have a huge impact on social change. Such changes include shifts in students' attitudes, behaviors, personalities, and character that become very concerning.

The fact that there is a shift in the attitude of students after the pandemic online is certainly our common concern, so radicalism in the world of education in the form of violence, intimidation and forms of speech and attitudes that have the potential to give birth to violence is not higher (Muchit, 2016). The occurrence of acts of violence will have implications for the emergence of uncomfortable learning situations and conditions for children. Whereas this education is expected to be an investment for the birth of a generation of good citizens or good citizens, namely citizens who understand and are aware of their rights and obligations well, a society that lives in a state of peace, prosperity, peace, security, and stability will be achieved to have a great appreciation for differences for the sake of the integrity of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia (Fithriyah, 2018).

For this reason, it is very important to instill character education starting at an early age (Suri, 2021). This can be optimized since the child enters the basic education level because elementary school age is the golden age of the child as well as the beginning of character formation, which will later become the character provision in children at the next level of education (Marino et al., 2012). According to Marzono and Brunner, the inculcation of attitude competence should really be an emphasis and concern in elementary schools so that students have a strong basic foundation of attitudes, so that at higher levels they can focus on deepening knowledge and skill competencies (Prastowo, 2014).

Seeing the very important role of elementary schools in shaping the character of students, it is very necessary to have the right strategy in implementing and concocting the findings of a form of character education

that is in accordance with the face of education in Indonesia (Rappolt-Schlichtmann et al., 2013). This is proof of the life of the scientific tradition in the midst of the Indonesian nation, especially among education practitioners (Aminin, Huda, Ninsiana, & Dacholfany, 2018). There are various kinds of character education that are taken from the values of certain groups, teachings, or customs. One of them is the idea of character education based on the values of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah (Aswaja) (Wibowo, 2018). Internalization of the value of Aswaja Character Education is effective and can be part of the formation of a good national personality. In a practical measure this character education can be revealed from all the noble values of teachings (religion and customs), including the values of the Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah ideology which has great values, such as amar ma'ruf nahi munkar, fair and elegant (ta'adul and tawassuth), tolerant (tasamuh), and balanced (tawazun). The target of ASWAJA values-based character education is to produce virtuous individuals (having al-karimah character) and beneficial for all (khairunnas anfa'uhum linnaas).

All values from the understanding of Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah can be instilled in children through habituation of attitudes and behavior in everyday life (Wiyani, 2020). Behaving with tasamuh can be taught at the elementary school level through concrete actions by loving fellow friends without discriminating (Yasyakur, Sirojuddin, Julmanan, & Pendahuluan, 2021). *Tawazun* takes place through the cultivation of not overdoing one's actions. *Ta'adul* is through planting and upholding the truth. Acting with *tawasuth* is done through always maintaining unity and always living in harmony without any hate speech. This is one of the basic educations in Jepara that equips students with Aswaja educational values is SDUT Bumi Kartini. This school has a special strategy in instilling the values of Aswaja's teachings in students, both through real practice that is carried out every day at school and character strengthening through the material contained in the

lesson content. As for *amaliah Aswaja*, it is carried out as needed when commemorating certain days, such as doing *tahlil* together, visiting graves, and *Barzanji* activities (Ernawati, 2021).

Based on this, character education strategies applied to students at SDUT are important to be analyzed and mapped. The results of this study can enrich data on the form of *Aswaja*-based character education planting strategies that can be implemented in elementary schools so that students can become a generation of good citizens. The unique characteristic about this study that has not been widely studied in several previous studies is the strategy applied in this school in implementing character education that contains *Aswaja* values. The results of this study are expected to find strategy formulations in implementing *Aswaja*-based character education and what forms of activities can be carried out in elementary schools in order to strengthen the foundation of children's character according to the teachings of *Ahlu Sunnah waljama'ah an nahdliyyah*. This becomes important as an illustration of the solution to the problem of implementing character education in Indonesia.

## METHODS

This study uses a case study method with a qualitative descriptive form that aims to analyze and explore in depth the programs, events, processes, and activities regarding the implementation of *Aswaja*-based character education applied by teachers to students at SDUT Bumi Kartini Jepara. This is in accordance with what was stated by Creswell (2017); case studies are one type of qualitative research, where researchers conduct in-depth exploration of programs, events, processes, activities, against one or more people. The location of this research is SDUT Bumi Kartini, Kuwasen Village, Jepara District. The school was chosen because SDUT Bumi Kartini is an elementary school that implements character education for students by

referring to the values of the teachings of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah an Nahdliyah such as tasammuh, tawassuth, tawazzun, and i'tidal.

Data collection techniques used in this study were interviews, observation, and document analysis. There are 2 teachers, 1 principal, who is the object of research, students, and parents who will be the object of observation. Interviews can be understood as two-way communication with the aim of obtaining information (Piaw, 2016). Interviewers and respondents interact directly and information is obtained orally. The interview technique used in this research is a structured interview where the interview questions have been designed beforehand and the interview questions for all respondents are the same. Observation techniques were also carried out to collect data from the implementation of *Aswaja*-based character education at SDUT Bumi Kartini. In this study, one of the researchers is also a parent or guardian of the student at SDUT, who will be an observer in the activity.

The data analysis technique in this study uses inductive qualitative analysis, which is an analysis based on the data obtained, then a certain relationship pattern is developed. The steps that must be passed in data analysis are data reduction (summarizing choosing the main things, focusing on the important things according to the theme) and discarding unimportant data. Each data line is coded with each research question. Furthermore, data display and verification are carried out (Sugiyono, 2015).

## DISCUSSION

Character education is the hallmark of an educated community. At this level, character education can be entered into various kinds of cultural peculiarities and good teachings (Tannir, Abir; Al-Hroub, 2013). The positive values of Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah can be part of the development of this character education. The breakthrough in incorporating the noble values of this nation's culture will be able to process the character of students

according to expectations (Tan, 2011). Therefore, it is necessary to have a basic foundation from an early age for students in providing the cultivation of *Aswaja*-based character education both in attitude habituation and through learning that is structured and designed with the right strategy in order to provide understanding and exemplary behavior to students.

The Integrated Primary School of Bumi Kartini Jepara was established on April 21, 2010. The concept of this school is to carry out full-day school learning that is integrated with TPQ learning or *madrrasah diniyah*. The thing that is characteristic and unique of this school is the habituation of attitudes based on the values of the teachings of *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah*, which is carried out every day through the real practice of the actions of students. In addition, the strengthening of *Aswaja* values is also carried out through learning activities, both theory and practice. The founders of this school, who are NU leaders in Jepara, hope that the next generation of this nation will have a strong understanding of *Aswaja* from an early age so that they become a generation that is good care or good citizen (Susilo, 2021).

Based on an interview with the SDUT Principal on February 19, 2021, he stated that the implementation of character education in elementary schools is adjusted to the values of the teachings of *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah an Nahdliyyah*, where these values are the foundation of virtue for students to become the next generation of the nation who has personal and social competence so that they become good citizens (good care or good citizen) with the following characteristics: dare to take a positive attitude to uphold social norms, noble moral values or good character always respect and respecting others, being wise, fair, and always maintaining the unity and integrity of the nation towards a *baldatun thoyyibatun* country .

The importance of inculcating character values based on *Aswaja* since elementary school is because the elementary school age is an important stage for the implementation of character education; it is even fundamental to the

success of the character development of students. Sigit (2007) states that elementary school children experience physical and motor development, including the development of personality, emotional, intellectual, language, character, and moral developments that are growing rapidly.

*Aswaja*-based character education applied at SDUT is in accordance with the face of education in Indonesia so that students become the next generation of the nation that is protected from radicalization. The internalization of *Aswaja's* values in the implementation of education can be an investment for the birth of a good citizen.

Based on the results of an interview with one of the sixth-grade teachers, Ibu Ernawati, stated that *Aswaja*-based character values in SDUT are applied in various ways and strategies so that they can be firmly embedded in children. The concept of character values is implemented through two contexts, namely micro and macro contexts. The micro context is implemented into integration of learning content, habituation of attitudes that contain *Aswaja* values in daily life, and habituation of *amaliah Aswaja*, which is applied in schools both routinely every day or at certain events. The macro context is characterized by synergy between families, schools and communities. The following is a strategy for implementing the cultivation and habituation of *Aswaja*-based character values in micro and macro contexts in integrated primary schools.

Integration in lesson content through the curriculum, the curriculum used by SDUT is referring to the 2013 curriculum set by the Ministry of Education and Culture for elementary schools, namely with an integrated thematic approach where learning between fields of study is integrated in a theme, coupled with a special program of Islamic religious education based on the values of *Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'ah*. At SDUT there is local content for NU lessons using the *Aswaja* and NU Education books from LP. Ma'arif



with the aim that students from an early age have a strong foundation on the teachings of *ahlu sunnah wal jama'ah* and good character (morality).

One of the flagship programs in this elementary school is the cultivation of *Aswaja* values which are practiced in the daily life of children at school. Among them are by incorporating *Aswaja*-based character values into the content of lessons at school, making slogans or yells that can foster the habit of all school communities to behave well, get used to positive behavior among school residents, carry out monitoring regularly, continuous, as well as giving gifts (reward) to students who are always of good character.

The implementation of *tasamuh* in an integrated primary school is carried out by providing reinforcement through a variety of activities carried out by teachers every day, both storytelling, parody games, sociodrama during learning and direct practice during the selection of discussion groups, practice speaking politely, being gentle. Affection for fellow friends, controlling their lusts and self-reflection with classmates when someone is doing picky friends. It aims to instill in students a forgiving spirit. This is in accordance with Saliyo's (2018) opinion, which states that the cultivation of *tasamuh* education in understanding religion from an early age is the basic capital to build a harmonious inter- and inter-religious country in the future.

*Tawazun* maintains balance and harmony; the balance here is a relationship that is not one sided, or benefits certain parties and harms others. Balance makes humans flexible, not in a hurry to conclude something, but through a careful and balanced study. Thus, what is expected is the most appropriate action, according to the needs and interests (Helmawati, 2018).

At SDUT the attitude of *tawazun* is instilled through habituation of politeness in speech and manners in acting to anyone. Salim, when he meets a teacher or an older person, gets used to the four magic words such as *please*,

*thank you, sorry, and excuse me* and gets used to the culture of queuing when taking ablution water, going to the bathroom, or other activities that require students to wait their turn while doing it.

*I'tidal* means to be fair in all things, fair means to be impartial, equal, and not partial to one or the other. This attitude can be cultivated in the classroom, outside the classroom and even at home. The cultivation of *i'tidal* attitude in SDUT is carried out by familiarizing students with upholding truth and justice. All students are treated the same regardless of social status or otherwise. This is also instilled by teachers through concrete attitudes such as when making decisions on the results of class agreements based on the majority vote, not specific interests. When solving problems between students, it is also done wisely not taking sides with one of the students. In addition, the teacher also strengthens the cultivation of an *i'tidal* attitude by telling stories of inspirational figures or demonstrations/role playing during the learning process.

The cultivation of the nature of *tawasuth* in superior integrated primary schools is carried out by applying the habit of mutual respect, impartiality, or leaning towards certain things. This is at the time of deliberation to make a class agreement, which is the result of this agreement through the opinions of all students who have been agreed with classmates. This is in line with the opinion of Nikmah which states that the emergence of mutual respect for others will indirectly appear to respect pluralism in children. The growth of a sense of respect for pluralism in children will always be embedded in the nature of impartiality or fanaticism in certain things and also not blaming or assuming wrong things that they do not like (Nikmah, 2018).

Based on the results of interviews with Ernawati stated that the cultivation of *Aswaja*-based character values is carried out through the habituation of students' deeds in integrated primary schools.

Habituation of reading the Qur'an regularly will affect the character of students. This is reinforced by Masruroh from the results of his research stating that the teachings contained in the Qur'an are guidelines for behavior so that they can form character in students, with the habituation the Qur'an gradually brings (Masruroh, 2017).

The recitation of the Qur'an is a training program for reading the Qur'an by emphasizing the correct method of reading, reading fluency, and the beauty of reading. At SDUT this recitation program is carried out every day with the Koran teacher as a mentor who has been divided into each class. This program is continuous from grade 1 to grade 6.

Barzanji activities at SDUT are carried out every commemoration day of the prophet Muhammad's birthday as a means of instilling students' love for the figure of the Prophet as the leader of his religion as well as to imitate the noble qualities of the Prophet Muhammad SAW. In addition to being carried out during the Prophet's birthday, SDUT also has tambourine extracurricular activities where this activity is used to instill the love of students in the Prophet Muhammad through chanting prayers. Tambourine extracurricular activities are attended by students who have an interest in talent only. However, it is displayed during the commemoration of Islamic holidays such as *Isra' Mi'raj*, *halal bihalal* and the graduation ceremony for sixth grade.

According to Librianti, in *tahlilan* there is also a good habituation process that is passed down from generation to generation. Therefore, SDUT has a program of *tahlilan* activities that are taught to students every time there is a commemoration of the haul of NU figures/ulama and is carried out when a member of the SDUT extended family dies. This is done as a means to instill the character of caring for others through the habit of doing *amaliah Aswaja* (Librianti, 2019).

The activity of visiting the grave is a manifestation of the religious feelings and needs of every human being that arises from the religious feeling within him. Moreover, the intended pilgrimage is the tomb of the saints; this is part of the manifestation of love for people who are loved by Allah SWT (Asmaran, 2018). Therefore, SDUT as an elementary school with an *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah* orientation has a grave pilgrimage program. This activity is carried out as a means to ground spiritual culture as well as to instill religious character values in students from an early age. Grave visits are carried out every 1 year 2 times at the end of odd semesters and even semesters to the graves of the mantingan (Sultan Hadlirin & Ratu Kalinyamat) and the tomb of Sayid Hasan bin Ibrahim Al Hasni which are in the same location as SDUT, namely the village of Kuwasen.

Synergy is one of the strategies that schools can use in building the character of students in accordance with the goals of Indonesian education. The synergy of schools, parents, and the community in strengthening the character of students can be applied in programs that have been prepared together. A strong synergy between schools, parents, and the community can have a big influence in forming strong characters in students (Zainudin, 2018).

Integrated Primary Schools also carry out synergies with parents and the community in implementing and strengthening character based on *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah*. Among the synergies carried out by SDUT with parents of students are: 1) providing information to parents about school programs at the time of parent class at the beginning of the new school year, 2) providing a parent liaison book containing information about activities carried out at school and strengthening that parents need to do at home, 3) creating a Whatsapp group for each class to facilitate communication between teachers and parents and at the same time as a shared reflection room, 4) providing worship watchbooks to parents at home, 5) and

cooperating with parents in participating in supporting children's carnival/parade activities celebrating the independence day of the Republic of Indonesia as an effort to instill a sense of love for the homeland.

Furthermore, synergy with the community is carried out by forming a school committee that functions as supporting agency, which lies in the role of the school committee as a supporting body for the implementation and efforts to improve the quality of education at SDUT in the form of financial support, energy, and mental support such as participating in preparing consumption for the implementation of recitation activities in the context of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and facilitating the transportation of grave pilgrimage activities. Second, an advisory agency, which is a SDUT Committee as a partner of the school principal, has given its consideration in every plan and program prepared by the school, for example in terms of rehabilitating damaged infrastructure, constructing prayer rooms, procuring equipment. 3Third, as a controlling agency, the school committee at SDUT exercises control over decision making and education planning in schools, in addition to the allocation of funds and resources for program implementation in schools. The school committee also carries out its control function on the success of education in schools as seen from the quality of education output. Fourth, a mediator is the school committee at SDUT, which provides many benefits, which with the existence of a school committee, the aspirations of students and parents can be channeled and represented.

Based on interviews with several SDUT teachers on February 6, 2021, they stated that implementing and strengthening children's attitudes with *Aswaja*-based character values in elementary schools was not easy because almost all teachers stated that there were problems and that they faced several obstacles.

SDUT teachers have a high enthusiasm for learning, so teachers often innovate learning activities and various forms of methods in providing reinforcement of *Aswaja*-based character education every day.

The full day school concept applied in this school has a positive impact on teachers because they can see firsthand the development of attitudes or behaviors of students who have been taught in school longer.

As for some of the obstacles encountered by SD Semai and also the solutions carried out in distance learning during the Covid-19 pandemic (Massie & Nababan, 2021), they are as follows:

Table 1. Barriers and Solutions Implementation of *Aswaja*-Based Character Education

| Dimension | Resistance  | Solutions made by the school   |
|-----------|---|--|
| Learners  | The attitudes and moods of elementary school students are still changing every day                                      | Provides continuous reinforcement with various methods                                     |
| Parent    | Parents are busy working so they cannot always accompany their children at home or provide reinforcement like at school | Provide a liaison book for teachers and parents regarding records of children's attitudes  |
| Teacher   | Not all teachers understand deeply the values of <i>Aswaja</i>  | Conducting training related to understanding the values of <i>Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah</i> |

*Source: processed from primary data 2021*

From the data in table 1 above, it can be concluded that every school has obstacles in implementing teaching and learning programs, especially in instilling character education. However, schools can try to provide solutions to minimize these obstacles so that the implementation of character education in elementary schools can be successful. One of them is by habituation of attitudes through internalization of *Aswaja* values, integration into learning from each content and habituation of *amaliah Aswaja*, which is a school program such as recitation of the Qur'an, Barzanji, tahlil, and pilgrimage to the grave.

This is in line with the results of Sustam's research, which shows that the conscious, directed, and sustainable cultivation of *Aswaja* characters can provide students with provisions to always be ready to face the challenges of the times (Sustam, 2019). In line with the results of Efendi's research, it is important to instill character in elementary school students to prevent negative impacts from a pluralistic environment. Meanwhile, character building in elementary schools can be done through learning strategies, habituation, exemplary, partnerships, and evaluated for its success so that it runs optimally (Efendi, 2021).

The contribution of planting *aswaja*-based character values at SDUT Bumi Kartini is first, the establishment of harmonious relationships between teachers, parents, and students. Second, the creation of a safe, comfortable, and happy learning atmosphere. Third, there is an attitude of mutual respect, care, and empathy towards others. Fourth is the potential of children to develop optimally due to the support system at school and at home. Fifth, the ingrained habit of mutual respect for the opinions of friends and the main thing is the ingraining of religious attitudes in children because of the habituation carried out every day in school.

## CONCLUSION

The findings from the research on strategies for inculcating character values based on *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah* at the Integrated Superior Elementary School (SDUT) Jepara can be carried out by applying them to the micro and macro context. The cultivation of *tasamuh*, *tawazun*, *ta'adul* and *tawasuth* through habituation of attitudes in everyday life. Practices vary from *Barzanji* activities, recitation of the Qur'an, to pilgrimage to the grave. In the macro context, the synergy between families, schools and communities is an important factor in instilling the values of character education based on *Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah*. Suggestions from the results

of this study are three recommendations that need to be applied in several elementary schools to answer the problem of the less than optimal implementation of character education in the field. The first recommendation is that schools can instill character values according to the teachings of *Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jama'ah*, namely *tasamuh*, *tawazun*, *ta'adul* and *tawasuth* through integration in each subject, habituation of attitudes in everyday life, habituation of *amaliah Aswaja* such as Barzanji activities, recitation of the Qur'an, pilgrimage to the grave, and *tahlil*. Second, schools can collaborate with parents regarding the synergy of implementing attitudes at school and at home by making connecting books and doing joint reflections regarding children's activities at home through Whatsapp groups or other media. Third, schools can cooperate with the community in inculcating character values in students through partnership programs, because these three are the main factors supporting the achievement of student success.

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