



The Role of Teachers in Shaping Students' Character and Competence Towards a Progressive Indonesia

Verry Albert Jekson Mardame Silalahi^{1*}

verry.jekson@bpkpenaburjakarta.or.id

SMAK 7 PENABUR Jakarta

*Corresponding Author: Verry Albert Jekson Mardame Silalahi

Email: verry.jekson@bpkpenaburjakarta.or.id

ABSTRACT

Education serves as the cornerstone in shaping the next generation of quality citizens, with teachers playing a pivotal role not only in knowledge transfer but also in cultivating students' character, competence, and moral integrity. This descriptive qualitative study explores the transformative impact of educators as role models and moral guides in fostering noble values and competencies essential for addressing complex global challenges. Through an in-depth examination of innovative and adaptive learning strategies, the research highlights how teachers create conducive, student-centered learning environments that support the vision of a sustainable and developed Indonesia. Findings reveal that effective pedagogical practices—rooted in empathy, innovation, and ethical commitment—strengthen the alignment between education and national development goals. The study emphasizes that teacher professionalism, continuous training, and institutional support are critical in producing high-integrity human resources capable of driving national progress. Furthermore, integrating character education into curriculum development ensures that students are not only academically proficient but also ethically grounded. Ultimately, this article argues for a paradigm shift in education policy that recognizes teachers as central architects of national resilience and sustainable development. Strengthening their role is not merely an educational imperative but a strategic necessity for Indonesia's future.

Keywords: *Character Building, Competency Development, The Role of the Teacher*

INTRODUCTION

Education is the main foundation to form the next generation of quality nations. In Indonesia, teachers play a central role as the spearhead in the education process. Teachers are not only responsible for the transfer of knowledge, but also shape the character and competence of students as a whole (Santoso et al., 2024). The success of a teacher in educating students greatly affects the quality of human resources that will contribute to the progress of the nation. Therefore, the role of teachers must be truly optimized so that national development goals can be achieved sustainably (Amalia, 2022).

The role of teachers in shaping the character of students is very crucial considering that character is the moral and ethical foundation that will distinguish students as responsible citizens with integrity. Teachers as role models or behavioral models hold an ethical responsibility to instill the noble values of the nation through character education that is effective and adaptive to the times. This is strengthened by the results of the article showing that teachers play the role of moral facilitators through consistent habituation and coaching methods so that students become human beings who have strong personalities and noble character (Sapdi, 2023).

In addition to character education, student competency development is an important aspect that is inseparable. Student competencies in the era of globalization include academic abilities, critical thinking skills, creativity, and mastery of relevant technologies. The role of teachers is not only as a teacher, but also as a supervisor who stimulates students' potential to the maximum. An effective teacher is able to develop interactive and innovative learning strategies, so that students can compete in the national and even international arena, while supporting the vision of an advanced Indonesia based on superior human resources (Devianti et al., 2020).

The challenges faced by teachers in carrying out this role are very complex. Changes in the digital era and social dynamics require teachers to continue to adapt and improve their professional competencies in order to be able to accommodate increasingly diverse learning needs. Recent studies underscore the need for innovation in learning methods and approaches to personalize students' character in order to not only pursue academic achievement, but also a balance between cognitive abilities and character (Halim et al., 2024). Thus, the role of teachers must be strengthened through periodic training and adequate policy support.

In a broad context, the progress of the nation is highly dependent on the quality of education which leads to the development of superior and characterful human resources. A strong and holistic education will prepare the young generation not only as job seekers, but also as job creators, innovators, and leaders of the nation. Teachers as a pillar of education are the key to this transformation process. Therefore, understanding and describing in depth the role of teachers in shaping

students' character and competencies is a very strategic thing for the achievement of a sustainable advanced Indonesia (Harun, 2013).

In short, the background of this article confirms that the role of teachers is fundamental and multidimensional. Teachers play the role of educators, role models, motivators, and innovators who have a direct impact on the formation of students' character and competence. The success of the role of teachers will be one of the main factors in realizing Indonesia's progress, especially in facing various national development challenges in this modern era.

The formulation of the problem in this article focuses on an in-depth understanding of how teachers play a central role in shaping students' character and competence. The question that arises is how the process of character formation by teachers can take place effectively in the context of education that is constantly changing and dynamic. In addition, this article also wants to explore how teachers develop student competencies that not only include academic aspects, but also critical thinking skills, creativity, and social abilities that are urgently needed in today's era of globalization. Strengthening students' character and competence is very important because both are the main foundation for creating the next generation of the nation who are qualified and ready to face various future challenges. An article by Hidayah et al., (2025) emphasizes the need for a holistic approach in education that unites the moral and intellectual aspects of students so that they can produce individuals who are not only academically intelligent but also have high integrity.

In addition, the problem formulation also highlights the strategic role of teachers in supporting the achievement of the vision of an advanced Indonesia. Teachers not only play the role of ordinary teachers, but also as agents of change who directly contribute to the development of superior human resources as the main capital for the progress of the nation. Another question that wants to be answered in this article is how the position and contribution of teachers in the national education strategy to create globally competitive human resources with strong character. The latest article from Silalahi et al., (2025) shows that the role of adaptive and innovative teachers is essential in realizing the national development goals. This includes the application of relevant curriculum, creative learning methods, and consistent and continuous character development. Therefore, the formulation of this problem requires an in-depth study so that the role of teachers as a pillar of education can be optimized for the realization of a sustainable advanced Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of the Role of Teachers in Education

The role of teachers in education is a fundamental aspect that is not only limited to the delivery of subject matter, but also includes functions as a guide,

motivator, and agent of change in the learning process. Teachers are the main pillars in shaping the character and competence of students, which ultimately contributes to the achievement of national education goals. According to Alliant International University, teachers are important in developing critical thinking skills, emotional intelligence, and students' adaptability to the changing times, a role that cannot be replaced by technology (Quinn, 2025). Teachers also serve as models of ethics and leadership that shape an inclusive learning environment that supports diversity, which is indispensable for fostering a sense of social responsibility and positive attitudes in students.

In addition, a study from the International Task Force on Teachers for Education (2022), states that the role of teachers continues to evolve according to the needs of the times, not only as educators in the classroom but also as digital literacy trainers, facilitators of learning innovation, and drivers of holistic character development. The strategic role of teachers is very important to ensure an effective learning process that is relevant to global demands. Teachers must be able to integrate academic content with the strengthening of moral and social values to produce graduates who are not only intellectually intelligent but also have strong character. Thus, teachers have a crucial position as the spearhead in an effort to create superior human resources that are the foundation of the nation's progress. These complete references and insights can be found in the document.

Character and Competence of Students

Student character refers to the unity of values, attitudes, and behaviors that make up a person's personality and distinguish them from others. The definition of character in the context of education emphasizes the formation of ethics, morals, and social responsibility that are the foundation for students to become ethical and adaptable individuals in their communities. Hoshino (2024) stated that character includes aspects of honesty, discipline, hard work, and concern for others, which must be systematically fostered through the learning process and teacher-student interaction at school. Thus, character education becomes an integral part that not only prioritizes academic achievement, but also the strengthening of sustainable moral values. This is supported by a study that explains that strengthening student character can be done through a holistic and collaborative approach between teachers, families, and the community (Sukatin et al., 2022).

Student competence, on the other hand, is defined as the ability that students have to apply knowledge, skills, and attitudes in completing tasks or facing challenges in various life contexts. Competence not only includes cognitive aspects, but also involves social and emotional competencies that are crucial for learning and life success. Students' competencies include critical thinking skills, creativity, collaboration, and communication, all of which are essential demands in today's digital and globalization era. The Merdeka Curriculum, for example, emphasizes the comprehensive development of students' competencies so that they are ready to

adapt and innovate in the midst of rapid changing times, with teachers being key in facilitating this development process.

The Relationship Between Character and Competence with Indonesia's Progress

The relationship between students' character and competence and Indonesia's progress is very close and mutually supportive. Strong characters such as discipline, responsibility, and integrity are important moral foundations for the younger generation to play an active role in nation building. In addition, competencies that include critical thinking skills, creativity, and adaptability prepare students to face global challenges and changing job market dynamics. The development of students' character and competencies simultaneously contributes significantly to the improvement of quality human resources, which is the main capital for Indonesia to achieve an advanced and sustainable vision (Suwartini, 2017). Thus, character and competency education is not only the goal of education itself, but also a strategic instrument in accelerating the nation's social, economic, and technological progress.

The theoretical foundation of character and competency education is based on the view that education ideally develops cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects simultaneously. Kohlberg's theory of moral development and Gardner's theory of double intelligence are important references in the formation of students' character and competence. Kohlberg (in a recent study by Hasanah, 2019) explains the stages of moral development that must be directed by teachers in the educational process to form mature and ethical character. Meanwhile, Gardner emphasized the importance of developing different types of intelligence, including interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, which are strongly related to strengthening students' character and social competence. The combination of these two theories results in a holistic approach that places teachers as facilitators who integrate moral values and practical skills in the learning curriculum so as to be able to produce a generation of competitiveness and integrity.

In addition, the concept of character and competency education is also supported by constructivist theory that emphasizes an active learning process in which students build knowledge and values through hands-on experience. According to Vygotsky, social interaction and a supportive learning environment are essential in character formation and competency development (Tamrin et al., 2011). Teachers must create an inclusive, creative, and reflective learning atmosphere so that students can internalize character values while honing academic and social competencies (Run et al., 2025). The foundation of this theory is a foothold for the development of an educational model that not only produces graduates who are able to compete intellectually, but also have integrity and a positive attitude that contributes directly to the progress of the Indonesian nation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research carried out by the author uses a type of descriptive qualitative research method. Qualitative research methods are one of the research methods that are widely used in social science research (Creswell, 2015). Sugiyono (2022), explains that qualitative research is a research method used in social, behavioral, and other sciences research that involves an in-depth understanding of people, society, or complex phenomena. Qualitative methods are used to study various social phenomena, opinions, perceptions, motivations and beliefs of individuals and organizations in their life settings (Chandra & Shang, 2019). This research method involves researchers directly by conducting interviews and/or observations of research objects and making a series of notes on the observation activities carried out and other research findings (Flick, 2023).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Teachers play an important role in shaping students' character through a variety of effective and contextual strategies and approaches. An approach that is often used is value-based learning that integrates moral and social aspects into everyday subject matter. Through learning models such as contextual learning and project-based learning, teachers can instill character values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility in real-life situations experienced by students. In addition, teachers use a dialogical and reflective approach that encourages students to internalize these values through discussion, hands-on experience, and self-observation. In this way, character formation becomes more comprehensive, not only taught in theory but felt and practiced by students.

In an effort to develop students' competencies, teachers are required to apply innovative learning methods that adapt to technological developments and 21st century needs. Teachers focus on developing students' critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills through interactive and participatory learning activities. Digital technology is one of the important tools used by teachers to improve competence, such as the use of interactive learning media, digital simulations, and online collaboration platforms. Furthermore, teachers also develop students' social and emotional competencies through extracurricular activities and self-development programs so that students not only excel academically but also mature emotionally and socially. Thus, teachers serve as facilitators who prepare students for a dynamic and challenging world.

However, the teacher's efforts are not without obstacles and challenges. One of the main obstacles is the limitation of resources, both learning tools and available time, so teachers have to innovate in limited circumstances. In addition, the variability of students' backgrounds, including differences in motivation and socioeconomic conditions, makes it difficult for teachers to apply an effective approach uniformly. Another significant challenge is the lack of ongoing training

and mentoring for teachers related to 21st century character and competency development, which has led to some teachers not being optimal in adopting the latest approach. Administrative pressures and curriculum targets also sometimes reduce teachers' focus on building students' character in depth, so teachers must be able to balance academic and non-academic roles effectively.

In addition, external challenges such as rapid technological developments and socio-cultural changes require teachers to continuously adapt and develop their professional competencies. In this context, the lack of facility support and responsive education policies are a major obstacle. Teachers also have to deal with various social phenomena that affect students, such as bullying, uncontrolled use of gadgets, and psychological distress, which require special approaches and interventions. Therefore, teachers need systemic support from the government, schools, and the community so that they can play an optimal role in dealing with these various obstacles.

The implications of the role of teachers in education are very broad and have a direct effect on Indonesia's progress. The role of teachers in shaping the character and competence of students is one of the main foundations in creating a generation of quality and globally competitive nations. Teachers who are able to integrate moral aspects and practical skills in learning will produce graduates who not only master science but also have integrity and strong social attitudes. This has an impact on improving the quality of human resources which are the main capital for national development in the social, economic, and technological fields. Thus, teachers are the spearhead in creating an advanced, just, and civilized society.

In addition to individual student development, the role of teachers also contributes to changes in the education system as a whole. Professional and innovative teachers can be agents of change that encourage reform of curriculum, learning methods, and education policies that are more responsive and adaptive. They play a role in building an inclusive, creative, and sustainable education ecosystem, so that they are able to respond to global challenges such as globalization, digitalization, and the industrial revolution 4.0. A role like this has a significant long-term impact in improving the nation's competitiveness on the international stage.

The impact of the role of teachers also extends to social and cultural aspects through the formation of ethical and values-oriented student characters. Teachers are role models as well as drivers in fostering a positive culture and tolerance in the school environment and society. This is important to maintain social cohesion and strengthen national identity in the face of shifting values and existential challenges of the nation. Through the formation of solid character, teachers help create a generation that is not only intelligent but also has high social awareness and is responsible for the progress of the nation.

The role of teachers in shaping character and developing student competencies is a very crucial aspect for the progress of education and development

in Indonesia. Teachers' strategies and approaches must continue to be developed in an innovative and adaptive manner, while support from various parties needs to be strengthened to overcome various existing obstacles. Thus, teachers are not only educators, but also agents of change who are able to bring Indonesian education towards equitable and sustainable progress.

This study reaffirms the findings of Harun (2013) and Halim et al. (2024), who state that effective character education management requires teachers as moral role models. Field findings show that teachers implementing value-based learning (e.g., contextual and project-based learning) successfully foster attitudes of honesty, discipline, and responsibility among students—consistent with Hasanah (2019) survey on elementary school students' moral development. By incorporating reflective and dialogic activities, teachers have created a "learning ecosystem" that strengthens the internalization of these values, extending Harun's understanding of the importance of emotional engagement in character education.

This study extends the contribution of Silalahi et al. (2025), who explored digital leadership of school principals and teachers in preparing the Golden Generation of 2045. This research found that adaptive learning strategies leveraging e-learning platforms, gamification, and data analytics not only enhance learning motivation but also strengthen students' critical and collaborative skills—dimensions not extensively explored in Silalahi's study. These findings are consistent with the recommendations of the International Task Force on Teachers for Education (2022), which emphasizes the integration of technology in teacher training, while also providing empirical evidence that digital approaches can simultaneously improve both character quality and technical competencies.

This study's findings align with the holistic education concept proposed by Hidayah et al. (2025), which integrates academic, character, and skill development. We note that the implementation of interdisciplinary project-based learning fosters problem-solving abilities and social responsibility—directly supporting Sapdi (2023), Society 5.0 framework. On the other hand, this study refutes the perspective of Tamrin et al. (2011), who argue that Vygotsky's theory alone is sufficient to enhance mathematical achievement. Our data indicate that without a character-value approach, cognitive gains are not sustainable. Thus, this study not only reinforces but also extends the literature on integrated education, contributing to Indonesia's sustainable development goals.

CONCLUSION

Teachers have a very central and crucial role in character formation and student competency development. Teachers not only serve as transmitters of knowledge, but also as moral guides and skill developers in accordance with the needs of the 21st century. Through a learning strategy that is integrated between character values and practical skills, teachers are able to form students who are not only academically intelligent, but also have strong personalities, discipline,

responsibility, and are able to adapt to changing times. This is very important to produce human resources who are able to contribute directly to the progress of the nation and face global challenges effectively. Cooperation between teachers, schools, families, and the community is the key to success in this process, as well as adequate education policy support so that teachers can carry out their roles optimally.

SUGGESTION

A multi-faceted approach is essential to advance character and competency-based education. The government and educational institutions must optimize teacher training and professional development, focusing on evolving 21st-century skills, while schools are advised to provide supportive facilities and environments that leverage innovative learning technologies. Concurrently, teachers should continually develop creative and adaptive learning methods to meet diverse student needs, all underpinned by strong synergy between educators, parents, and the community to create a conducive educational ecosystem. To ensure these efforts are effective, further research is needed to delve deeper into the success of various learning strategies, particularly examining how digital technology and innovative methods impact student development. This will provide valid, applicable data for creating more adaptive and relevant educational models that can keep pace with rapid social and technological change.

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