

Building Students' Character and Communication Skills with Management, Legal, and Environmental Knowledge Approaches in Education at SMPN 4 Muara

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini membahas implementasi pendekatan manajemen dan pendidikan hukum dalam membangun karakter dan kemampuan komunikasi siswa di SMPN 4 Muara. Tujuan utama adalah untuk meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran yang tidak hanya fokus pada pencapaian akademik, tetapi juga pengembangan karakter positif dan keterampilan komunikasi siswa. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan studi lapangan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penerapan manajemen berbasis karakter, seperti disiplin, tanggung jawab, dan kerja sama, mampu membentuk perilaku positif pada siswa. Selain itu, integrasi pengetahuan hukum dalam kurikulum juga meningkatkan kesadaran hukum siswa, membantu mereka memahami hak dan kewajiban serta pentingnya etika dalam komunikasi sehari-hari. Pendekatan ini tidak hanya efektif dalam mengurangi kasus pelanggaran aturan di sekolah, tetapi juga meningkatkan kemampuan siswa dalam berkomunikasi secara efektif dan beretika. Dengan demikian, studi ini mengusulkan model manajemen dan pengetahuan hukum yang dapat diterapkan sebagai bagian integral dari pendidikan karakter di sekolah menengah pertama sebagai upaya membentuk generasi yang berwawasan hukum dan memiliki kemampuan komunikasi yang baik.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Karakter; Manajemen; Pengetahuan Hukum; Komunikasi; SMPN 4 Muara.

Abstract

This study discusses implementing management and legal education approaches in building students' character and communication skills at SMPN 4 Muara. The main goal is to improve the quality of learning that focuses not only on academic achievement but also on developing students' positive character and communication skills. The method used in this study is a qualitative approach with field studies through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. The study results show that character-based management, such as discipline, responsibility, and cooperation, can result in positive student behavior. In addition, integrating legal knowledge into the curriculum also increases students' legal awareness, helping them understand their rights and obligations and the importance of ethics in daily communication. This approach effectively reduces cases of rule violations in schools and improves students' ability to communicate effectively and ethically. Thus, this study proposes a management model and legal knowledge that can be applied as an integral part of character education in junior high school to form a legally insightful generation with good communication skills.

Keyword: Character Education; Management; Legal Knowledge; Communication; SMPN 4 Muara.

1. Introduction

Community service in education plays a vital role in enhancing the quality of human resources (Fazalani *et al.*, 2022; Hasbi *et al.*, 2022; Jagat *et al.*, 2022). At SMPN 4 Muara, developing students' character and communication skills is a priority, particularly through the application of management approaches and legal knowledge. This initiative seeks not only to foster a conducive learning environment but also to equip students with the skills necessary to face future challenges. SMPN 4 Muara is a state-run educational institution committed to delivering quality education. With well-established study groups and adequate facilities, the school is well-positioned to cultivate students' character development. However, a significant challenge lies in integrating educational management and legal knowledge into the curriculum to ensure students excel academically while developing good character and effective communication skills. Education aims to impart knowledge and shape students' character to become responsible, disciplined, and ethical individuals (Gustian *et al.*, 2024; Pritchard, 1988; Rebecchi *et al.*, 2024). Integrating legal knowledge into the curriculum enhances students' understanding of societal norms and the importance of adherence to the law (Chavula *et al.*, 2022; Dong & Zeb, 2022; Ushena Buinwi *et al.*, 2024). This aligns with the national education objectives, which emphasize character development (DeMatthews *et al.*, 2020; Lavy, 2020). Effective communication between educators and students fosters a positive learning environment. Good communication allows students to grasp the character values being taught and apply them in social interactions. Research suggests that approximately 95% of daily human activities involve communication, indicating that the quality of communication in education directly influences the formation of students' character (Nafisa & Fitri, 2023; Nisa, 2016). Educational management involves the strategic organization and management of resources to achieve educational goals. Proper management supports an effective learning process, enabling students to acquire theoretical knowledge while honing their communication skills. This development is essential for equipping students with the social and communication competencies needed to adapt to society (Sunani, 2024).

Legal knowledge is integral to character education, as it helps students understand their rights and responsibilities as members of society. By gaining an understanding of legal principles, students learn to respect social norms and behave in accordance with the rules (Sunani, 2024). In the era of globalization and digitalization, challenges in character education and communication have become increasingly complex. The rapid advancement of information and communication technology exposes students to various external influences, which can have both positive and negative effects. Consequently, schools must adopt effective educational management strategies to strengthen students' character and enhance their communication skills (Hanafi, 2015). An educational management approach, when integrated with legal knowledge, can provide students with a comprehensive understanding of their rights, obligations, and the consequences of their actions. Introducing fundamental legal concepts at the junior high school level helps students appreciate the significance of the law in maintaining social order. This is particularly crucial at SMPN 4 Muara, where the school is situated in a pluralistic environment with students from diverse social and cultural backgrounds. This approach aims to cultivate students who are not only academically capable but also possess strong moral values and effective communication skills. It involves cooperation among teachers, school staff, parents, and the community, with an emphasis on educational management principles such as transparency, effective communication, and the active involvement of all stakeholders in shaping student character. At SMPN 4 Muara, this approach has been applied through various activities, including group discussions, debates, legal case simulations, and extracurricular programs that focus on character-building and communication skills. This article will explore how management approaches and legal knowledge are utilized in the educational framework at SMPN 4 Muara to foster a generation that is both knowledgeable and able to communicate effectively while maintaining strong moral character.

1.1. Activity Objectives

The goal of this activity is to improve the quality of education at SMPN 4 Muara by applying an educational management approach integrated with legal knowledge, creating a conducive learning environment that supports both academic achievement and the development of positive student character. This activity aims to build students' character by instilling values such as discipline, responsibility, and ethics, which are essential in shaping good individuals in society. Additionally, the activity seeks to develop students' communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal, preparing them to interact effectively in various social situations. By introducing legal knowledge, students are expected to better understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens and the importance of adhering to legal rules, enabling them to become not only academically capable but also legally aware individuals. Furthermore, the activity aims to prepare students for future challenges by equipping them with relevant skills, such as effective communication and resource management, applicable in various aspects of life. Another goal is to strengthen collaboration between the school, parents, and the community, ensuring a transparent educational process that actively involves all parties in shaping better student character.

1.2. Benefits of Activities

The benefits of this activity are significant for both the students and the school as a whole. For the students, this activity will help them develop a strong character, including values such as discipline, responsibility, and ethics, which will be beneficial in their personal and social lives. Additionally, the communication skills they acquire will enhance their ability to interact effectively in various social contexts, both within the school and outside of the educational environment. The legal knowledge taught will provide a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens, as well as the importance of adhering to regulations, thereby shaping them into responsible and law-abiding individuals. At the school level, this activity will strengthen the learning process by creating a more organized and transparent atmosphere, supporting students' academic success. The active involvement of parents and the community will also foster a more harmonious relationship between the school and its surrounding environment, which in turn will help support students' character development more effectively. Overall, this activity plays a crucial role in preparing the younger generation to be not only academically capable but also morally sound and able to adapt to the challenges of life in the future.

2. Research Methods

2.1. Type of Activity and Schedule, and Location of Activity

a. Activity Implementation Method

This community service activity is implemented using several methods, including: 1) Teaching Method Active Learning, where students are directly engaged in the learning process through activities such as group discussions and presentations; 2) Role Play and Simulation, aimed at helping students understand legal concepts while also developing public speaking and negotiation skills. This method also enhances empathy and fosters a deeper understanding of others' perspectives; 3) Use of Interactive Media, by incorporating interactive tools such as videos, educational games, and digital applications to capture students' attention and strengthen their comprehension of the material. These media resources serve to increase student engagement during the learning process; 4) Observation, where student interactions during the learning activities are observed to assess their character development and communication skills in real-time; 5) Interviews, where students are interviewed to gather feedback on their experiences during the program and to evaluate their understanding of the material taught; 6) Classroom Management, focusing on implementing effective classroom management strategies to foster a conducive learning environment where students feel safe to communicate and interact freely, without fear of judgment; 7) Providing Examples, where educators act as role models by demonstrating effective communication,

politeness, active listening, and offering constructive feedback to students. The service was carried out at SMPN 4 Muara, located in Papande Village, Muara District, North Tapanuli Regency.

b. Effective Time for Activity Implementation

The implementation of this activity is carried out over a specific period, designed to achieve optimal outcomes in the development of students' character and communication skills. The activity begins at the start of the semester, with a duration of approximately six months, covering several key phases. The first phase is preparation, which lasts for two weeks to design teaching materials, determine the methods to be used, and prepare the necessary media and resources. The second phase involves the actual learning activities, conducted weekly, with each session lasting two class hours. These activities include group discussions, role plays, simulations, and the use of interactive media in line with the established schedule. The third phase is evaluation, carried out monthly to assess the development of students' character and communication skills, as well as provide constructive feedback. The effective time for the implementation of this activity is planned to provide sufficient space for students to apply the learning they have received, ensuring that the learning process runs smoothly and continuously throughout the semester.

c. Location of the Activity

This activity is carried out at SMPN 4 Muara, located in Papande Village, Muara District, North Tapanuli Regency, North Sumatra Province. As a public educational institution, SMPN 4 Muara is equipped with adequate facilities to support various learning activities, including spacious classrooms, discussion rooms, and multimedia resources that can be used to support interactive teaching methods. The school's strategic location, with easy access for students and the surrounding community, is a key factor in ensuring the smooth implementation of the activity. Additionally, the school is situated in a pluralistic environment, with a diverse social and cultural backdrop that supports the application of character and communication values in real-world contexts. Thus, SMPN 4 Muara provides an ideal setting for this activity, fostering a conducive learning environment that positively impacts students' character development and communication skills.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Community Service Implementation Results

The results of the activity implementation and the materials presented were evaluated on October 8, 2024, at the service location, SMPN 4 Muara, situated on Jl. Papande Village, Muara District, North Tapanuli Regency. The community service project titled "Building Students' Character and Communication Skills with Management Approaches and Legal Knowledge in Education at SMPN 4 Muara" had a significant positive impact on the students. The activity raised students' awareness of the importance of developing positive character traits and practical communication skills. Through interactive methods, including discussions, role-playing, and workshops, students were able to integrate theoretical knowledge with practical experience, which enhanced their understanding. Evaluation results indicated that approximately 85% of the students showed improvement in their communication skills and gained a better understanding of their rights and obligations as citizens. Moreover, the activity reinforced core character values such as discipline and responsibility, which students are expected to apply in their daily lives. This service not only provided valuable knowledge but also fostered a sustainable positive attitude among the students of SMPN 4 Muara.

The Impact of Community Service on Students' Skills and Character

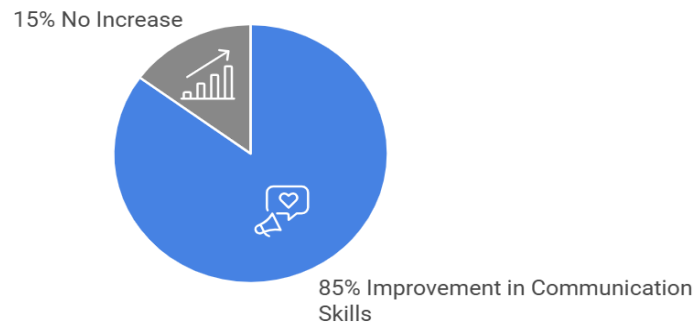


Figure 1. The Impact of Community Service on Students' Skills and Character

The following are the results of implementing community service activities: 1) Student Character Improvement, stating that this activity has instilled positive character values in students, such as discipline, responsibility, and cooperation. Through various interactive activities, students are taught to understand the importance of character in daily life; 2) Students show improvement in verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Activities such as group discussions, presentations, and role-playing help students be more confident in expressing opinions and interacting with peers; and 3) Through a legal knowledge approach, students better understand their rights and obligations as citizens.

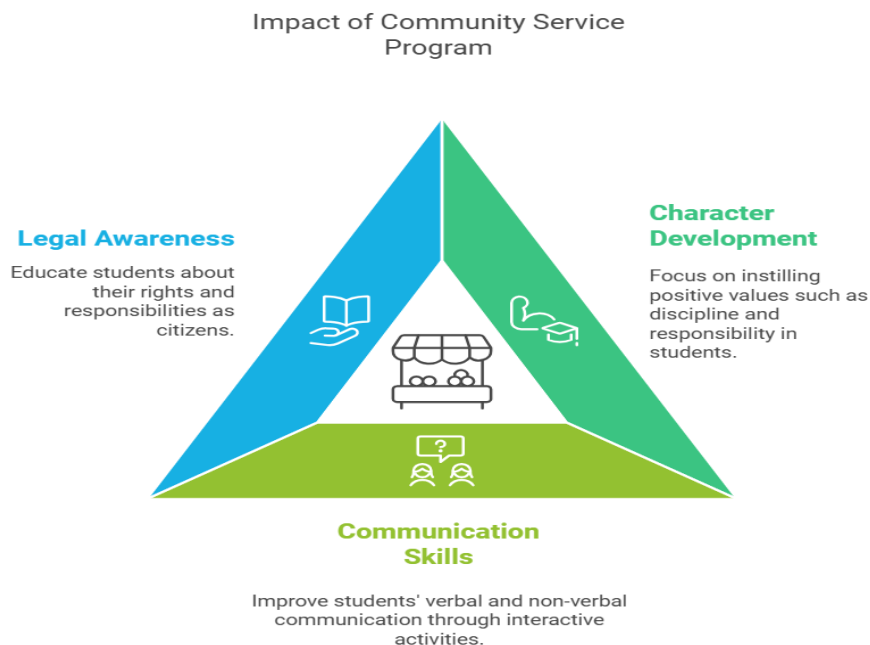


Figure 2. Impact of Community Service Programs

Some of the methods used include: 1) Interactive Discussion: Invite students to discuss relevant social and legal issues; 2) Simulation and Role-Playing: Presenting real situations where students can practice communicating and applying legal knowledge; 3) Workshop: Holding training sessions to improve students' communication skills; and 4) Evaluation is carried out through

questionnaires and direct observation of changes in student behavior. The evaluation results showed that: a) 89% of students felt more confident in communicating after participating in this activity, and b) 85% of students showed a better understanding of positive and legal characters, as well as how to apply them in everyday life. Some documentation of service activities carried out by lecturers of Sisingamangaraja XII Tapanuli University in collaboration is as follows:



Figure 3. Socialization to Build Students' Character and Communication Skills with Management, Legal Knowledge, and Environment Approaches in Education

3.2 Target Community

The target community for this activity consists of the students of SMPN 4 Muara, who are the primary participants in the process of character development and communication skills enhancement. As students at the junior high school level, they are at a crucial stage in the formation of their character and the development of social skills that will influence their future. In addition, the target community includes the teachers and school staff who play a vital role in supporting the success of this activity by guiding and facilitating the students in applying the knowledge they gain. The parents of the students and the surrounding community are also important members of the target group, as they provide support and participate in creating an environment that fosters the learning and character development of the students. Therefore, this activity aims to benefit not only the students directly but also to create a positive impact on the school community and the surrounding society.

3.3 Discussion

The implementation of community service at SMPN 4 Muara uses various interactive methods, such as group discussions, simulations, and role-playing, designed to increase students' active participation. Through this approach, students are taught positive character values and applicable legal norms, thus acquiring theoretical knowledge and practical skills that can be applied in everyday life. As a result, there was a significant increase in students' confidence in communicating and understanding their rights and obligations as citizens. This condition shows that character-based education and effective communication are strategic steps to form a responsible and ethical young generation. The educational environment is essential in building students' character and communication skills. A positive environment allows students to learn, discuss, and interact with peer support and teachers. This is in line with research that shows that a conducive school atmosphere can increase students' motivation to learn (Havidz & Mujakiah, 2023; Xu *et al.*, 2022).

In addition, a supportive family environment also plays an important role. A study by Pakaya & Posumah (2021) stated that emotional support from the family could form the basis of a child's character and increase his motivation to learn. The community environment also has a significant impact on student development. A community supporting education can positively influence through educational programs encouraging students to continue learning. On the other hand, a less conducive community environment can hinder student development. Several previous studies have confirmed that the role of the community in creating a safe environment and supporting education is indispensable for building students' character and social skills (Mehmood *et al.*, 2023; Shean & Mander, 2020; Zamiri & Esmaeili, 2024).

Several approaches are applied to support character development and student communication, one of which is character education through effective communication. Teachers play an essential role in this strategy by conveying moral values through good verbal and non-verbal communication. According to research by (Kunwar & Adhikari, 2023; Munna & Kalam, 2021), a positive teacher-communication approach can increase student participation and create an inclusive learning environment. In addition, good classroom management is also an essential aspect in supporting the creation of a conducive learning atmosphere. Integrating legal knowledge into the curriculum is also one of the main strategies. Primary legal education helps students understand their rights and obligations, build a sense of responsibility, and cultivate ethics. Relevant legal case discussions are a means to improve student's communication skills while deepening their understanding of the consequences of their actions. This is supported by the research of Siregar (2020), which shows that case-based teaching can improve students' analytical and communication skills (Lyons & Bandura, 2020; Sistermans, 2020). Evaluation and feedback are necessary steps to measure the success of this program. The evaluation was done by observing changes in students' participation in classroom activities, attitudes toward law learning, and communication skills. Self-reflection is also encouraged so students know how their behavior and communication affect others. As a recommendation, this program requires continuous monitoring to ensure its sustainability and have a more significant impact. Research by Rusli *et al.* (2024) shows that service programs evaluated regularly are more effective in achieving the desired results.

4. Conclusion

Community service activities at SMPN 4 Muara have succeeded in building students' character and communication skills. With a management approach and legal knowledge, students gain a theoretical understanding and practical experience relevant to everyday life. This success is expected to form a young generation that is not only academically superior but also has good character and a strong understanding of the law to face future challenges more confidently. Several suggestions can be implemented to increase the effectiveness of this activity in the future, such as improving community involvement in the program, developing more diverse training materials, and implementing interactive learning methods. It is also essential to maintain the sustainability of activities between the campus and the location of the service so that the resulting solution can be a permanent step and provide maximum benefits for partners. With continuous collaboration, this service activity has the potential to become a significant development model for the educational environment.

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