

Analysis of the Joint Ministerial Decree on Character Education through Habituation in Basic Education

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Character Education, Public Policy, Habituation, Basic Education, Seb Three Ministers

Received : 5 Maret

Revised : 23 April

Accepted: 23 Mei

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Joint Circular (SEB) of the Three Ministers in 2025 regarding the strengthening of character education through the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children Movement at the elementary education level. The focus of the study is directed at four main managerial functions, namely planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling. The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative, with data collection techniques through documentation studies and in-depth interviews involving principals, teachers, students, and parents of students at SDN Lengkong, Bojongsong District, Bandung Regency. The research findings show that although the policy framework has been designed systematically, the implementation process at the school level still faces a number of obstacles. In terms of planning, a comprehensive SWOT analysis has not been carried out as a basis for formulating the program. At the organizing stage, there was an unclear division of tasks and responsibilities between stakeholders. As for the controlling aspect, the evaluation mechanism has not been running consistently and systematically. Based on these findings, this study concludes that the effectiveness of the implementation of the SEB Three Ministers policy is greatly influenced by the school's ability to make contextual adaptations to the internal and external environment. Consistency in the implementation of monitoring and evaluation is also a determining factor in the success of the program

INTRODUCTION

Character education is an essential aspect in the process of forming a young generation with integrity and competitiveness, and is the main foundation in realizing the vision of Indonesia Emas 2045 which demands the presence of superior human resources (HR) holistically. However, the world of national education is still faced with various complex challenges, including increasing cases of violence in the school environment, issues of physical and mental health of students, and the threat of addiction to gadgets, exposure to pornographic content, online gambling practices, and drug abuse.

In this context, character education cannot be positioned as a mere complementary element of the curriculum, but rather is the main mission of the national education system which aims to produce individuals who not only have intellectual skills, but are also based on moral and ethical values. The reality of the declining moral quality of students, which is reflected in behavior such as bullying, dishonesty, and low discipline, demands a systemic and comprehensive policy response. As a form of government commitment in responding to these problems, in 2025 a Joint Circular (SEB) of the Three Ministers was issued, signed by the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology; Minister of Religion; and Minister of Home Affairs. This policy is a strategic step to integrate character values into daily life in the school environment through the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children Movement. The Three Ministers' Circular does not only aim to strengthen the moral dimension in education, but also emphasizes the importance of systematic and sustainable habituation of positive values. With a structured habituation approach, this policy is expected to be able to internalize superior character in students from an early age.

The implementation of this policy is an important instrument in building a school culture based on the values of honesty, responsibility, discipline, caring, and cooperation. Therefore, the success of this program is highly dependent on the synergy between the government, schools, parents, and the community in creating an educational environment that is conducive to the growth and development of student character.

This policy emphasizes the importance of value-based education as a systemic process, not only limited to formal teaching but also integrated into students' daily behavior and school culture. Activities such as morning greetings, flag ceremonies, joint prayers, cleaning routines, and mutual cooperation are encouraged as a way to instill values such as discipline, respect, integrity, empathy, and spirituality. This repeated and consistent behavior is expected to be internalized and manifested in students' character.

However, the effectiveness of this policy is not uniform in all schools. Implementation often varies due to contextual challenges at the school level, such as differences in leadership commitment, resource availability, clarity of organizational structure, and level of stakeholder engagement. While some schools demonstrate exemplary practices, others struggle to operationalize these policies due to lack of guidance, capacity, or motivation. This disparity raises

questions about the readiness and ability of educational institutions to translate national policies into practical and sustainable programs.

Therefore, this study aims to examine how the SEB 3 Ministerial policy is implemented in basic education institutions, specifically in four key managerial functions: planning, organizing, implementing (mobilizing), and controlling (monitoring and evaluation). By analyzing these aspects, this study seeks to identify both strengths and barriers in implementing character education through habituation, as well as provide recommendations for more effective policy implementation at the grassroots level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Policy Implementation

The process of policy implementation has long been a major focus in the field of public administration. According to Dunn (2003), policy implementation refers to the transformation of policy decisions into operational programs and actions intended to realize specific policy objectives. In the context of education, implementation is not a linear process, but rather a complex interaction between various actors, resources, organizational dynamics, and socio-cultural contexts. Successful implementation requires clear guidelines, capacity building, resource availability, and stakeholder coordination. Especially in the school environment, education policies often face challenges at the operational level, where teachers and school leaders must interpret and adapt policies to local conditions, which can lead to significant variations in outcomes.

Character Education

Character education is defined as a systematic approach to cultivating moral and civic values in students. Lickona (1991) argues that character education must include three interrelated components: moral knowing (cognitive understanding), moral feeling (emotional attachment), and moral action (practical application). It is not enough for students to simply know what is right; they must feel committed to it and act on it in their daily lives. Schools play a critical role in this process by creating an environment that models and reinforces ethical behavior. Character education becomes very relevant in a pluralistic society like Indonesia, where national unity and social harmony depend heavily on the cultivation of shared values such as tolerance, discipline, honesty, and respect for diversity.

Habituation Theory

Habituation theory offers a psychological basis for how character can be developed through consistent practice. Bandura (1977), through his social learning theory, emphasized that behavior is shaped through observation, imitation, and reinforcement in structured environments. When students repeatedly engage in positive behavioral routines—such as greeting teachers, maintaining cleanliness, and participating in religious activities together—these actions can become internalized as part of their moral character. Habituation is most effective when accompanied by reflection and reinforcement, allowing students to connect actions to values. This emphasizes the importance of daily routines and structured school activities as tools for moral formation.

Policy Implications in the Context of the Joint Circular of the Three Ministers

The Joint Circular of the Three Ministers (SEB 3 Menteri) is a national-level policy designed to integrate character education into the daily life of schools through habituation. Its success depends not only on the clarity of the policy content, but also on how effectively the policy is implemented in various educational settings. The integration of character values must be supported by strategic planning, organizational readiness, stakeholder involvement, and consistent evaluation.

Previous Research

Implementation of Character Education in Schools Through Habituation

This study emphasizes the importance of habituation methods applied by teachers in the process of forming student character. Habituation is carried out through programmed activities in learning and daily activities, such as morning greetings, joint prayers, and maintaining the cleanliness of the school environment.

The similarity between this study and your journal lies in the emphasis on the importance of habituation in forming student character. However, the difference is that this study focuses more on the role of teachers in implementing habituation, while your journal analyzes the implementation of the SEB 3 Ministerial policy as a whole, covering aspects of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling.

Implementation of Character Education Through the 3S Program (Smile, Greeting, Greeting) at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Yogyakarta

This study focuses on the implementation of the 3S program (Smile, Greeting, Greeting) as an effort to habituate to form student character. This program involves the entire school community and is implemented consistently every day. The similarity between this study and your journal lies in the emphasis on the importance of consistent habituation in forming student character. However, the difference is that this study is more specific to one program and one school, while your journal analyzes the implementation of national policies in several schools with a broader approach.

Analysis of Character Education Policy

This study analyzes character education policies in Indonesia by emphasizing the importance of a vision and mission that are in line with the values of Pancasila and religion, and highlights the challenges in implementing the policy. The similarity between this study and your journal lies in the focus of the analysis on character education policies and the challenges in their implementation. However, the difference is that this study focuses more on general policy analysis, while your journal specifically analyzes the implementation of the SEB 3 Ministerial policy at the elementary school level.

This journal is unique in analyzing the implementation of the SEB 3 Ministerial policy as a whole with the POAC approach (Planning, Organizing, Implementing, and Controlling). Meanwhile, previous studies tend to focus on certain aspects or local contexts. Therefore, this journal provides a more comprehensive picture of the challenges and recommendations in implementing character education policies at the elementary school level.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to systematically and accurately describe the phenomenon being studied without manipulating variables. This approach is suitable for answering research questions that focus on an in-depth understanding of the implementation of character education policies through habituation in elementary education units. According to Sandelowski (2000), this approach allows researchers to present rich and direct descriptions of participants' experiences in their natural contexts.

Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and participant observation. Semi-structured interviews were chosen because they provide a balance between structure and flexibility, allowing researchers to explore important topics while remaining open to new information that emerges during the interview process (Ruslin et al., 2022). Document analysis involves reviewing relevant policies, school programs, and activity records, while participant observation allows researchers to understand the social dynamics and daily practices in the school environment.

Participants in this study included principals, vice principals, teachers, students, and parents from several elementary schools in the Bandung area, West Java. The selection of participants was carried out purposively, considering their involvement in the implementation of the SEB 3 Ministerial policy. This purposive sampling technique is in accordance with the objectives of qualitative research that focuses on in-depth understanding from individuals who have direct experience related to the phenomenon being studied (Palinkas et al., 2015).

The research instrument was developed based on the POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) management functions. The POAC framework is used to analyze the extent to which planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling character education policies through habituation are carried out at the school level. Each of these management functions is explored through questions designed to explore the practices and challenges faced in implementing the policy.

The data obtained were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach, which involves the process of coding data, identifying key themes, and interpreting the meaning of the data collected. This analysis allows researchers to organize data systematically and identify patterns that emerge in policy implementation in various schools. Data validity is maintained through source and method triangulation techniques, as well as conducting member checking with participants to ensure the accuracy of data interpretation.

RESULTS

The results of this study are presented based on the analysis of POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling) in school management.

Planning: Most schools already have a documented program and are in accordance with SEB 3 Ministers. However, SWOT analysis is often not carried out comprehensively, so that potential internal strengths and weaknesses are not properly identified. In addition, clear and measurable performance indicators are

often not established, resulting in difficulties in evaluating the achievement of goals and the effectiveness of the program.

Organizing: The school's organizational structure generally exists, but the division of tasks and allocation of resources are often inconsistent. This can lead to overlapping responsibilities or gaps in the implementation of certain tasks. The mismatch between the organizational structure and the operational needs of the school can hinder efficiency and effectiveness in achieving educational goals.

Actuating: Program implementation shows significant variation between schools. Some schools succeed in following well-planned routines, while others experience a lack of participation from stakeholders. Low involvement of parents, students, and the community in the education process can reduce the quality and relevance of the program being run.

Control: Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in schools are still weak. Feedback processes are rarely formalized, so that corrective actions on emerging problems cannot be taken in a timely manner. The lack of a systematic and ongoing evaluation system hampers efforts to continuously improve school management.

Several factors that support the effective implementation of POAC include strong leadership, good coordination between departments, and good classroom management skills of teachers. Conversely, inhibiting factors include inadequate infrastructure, limited funding, and low quality of educators. These factors interact with each other and affect the success of the implementation of management functions in schools. To improve the quality of school management, it is recommended that schools conduct SWOT analysis regularly and set clear performance indicators. In addition, it is important to strengthen the organizational structure with a clear division of tasks and efficient allocation of resources. Increasing stakeholder participation through effective communication and building a culture of continuous evaluation are also important steps in achieving the goal of quality education.

Table 1. Summary of Implementation Challenges

Phase	Issue Identified
Planning	Incomplete documentation
Organizing	Unclear role division
Actuating	Low parental involvement
Controlling	Lack of feedback and evaluation tools

Planning (Incomplete Documentation)

Most schools already have documented programs that are in accordance with SEB 3 Ministers. However, SWOT analysis is often not carried out thoroughly, so that potential internal strengths and weaknesses are not properly identified. In addition, clear and measurable performance indicators are often not established, resulting in difficulties in evaluating the achievement of goals and the effectiveness of the program.

Organization (Unclear Division of Roles)

The school's organizational structure generally exists, but the division of tasks and allocation of resources are often inconsistent. This can lead to overlapping responsibilities or gaps in the implementation of certain tasks. The mismatch between the organizational structure and the operational needs of the school can hinder efficiency and effectiveness in achieving educational goals.

Mobilization (Low Parental Participation)

Program implementation shows significant variation between schools. Some schools successfully follow well-planned routines, while others experience a lack of participation from stakeholders. Low involvement of parents, students, and the community in the education process can reduce the quality and relevance of the program being run.

Control (Lack of Feedback and Evaluation Tools)

Monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in schools are still weak. The feedback process is rarely formalized, so that corrective actions on emerging problems cannot be carried out in a timely manner. The lack of a systematic and sustainable evaluation system hinders efforts to continuously improve school management.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of the Joint Circular Letter (SEB) of the Three Ministers at SDN Lengkong Bojongsoang, Bandung Regency reflects a classic challenge in education reform, namely the gap between policy formulation and practice in the field. In this school, there is no apparent comprehensive planning document, while coordination between stakeholders, such as teachers, principals, parents, and school committees, is still limited. This has an impact on the implementation of programs that tend to be symbolic and have not touched on the dimension of character transformation substantively.

This finding is in line with Fullan's (2007) view, which emphasizes that meaningful educational change requires the active involvement of stakeholders and strong systemic support. Fullan also emphasizes the importance of creating a sense of ownership from all parties in the change process. At SDN Lengkong Bojongsoang, the active involvement of teachers and education personnel in designing and evaluating habituation programs is still minimal, so that the process of internalizing character values has not taken place optimally.

Furthermore, the results of observations and interviews support Lickona's view that character education requires a sustainable and integrative strategy, involving the community as a whole. At this school, the habituation of the seven habits of great children is often carried out mechanically and is not integrated into all school activities. The absence of a systematic monitoring system weakens the effectiveness of the implementation of character values. This strengthens Lickona's idea of the need for a deliberate, proactive, and comprehensive approach to character education, which includes the learning environment, social interaction, and parental participation.

In addition to technical issues, SDN Lengkong Bojongsoang also faces challenges in cultural and social aspects. Support from parents for the implementation of the program is still low, both in the form of direct involvement and in building a home atmosphere that supports character values. The absence of intense communication between the school and the family is an obstacle to the creation of synergy in the formation of student character on an ongoing basis.

Therefore, it is important to build a strong moral community in the SDN Lengkong Bojongsoang environment. This includes efforts to create an inclusive, supportive, and value-oriented school climate, so that students feel valued, respected, and have a responsibility towards their community. This approach not only strengthens the character education process, but also increases students' sense of ownership of their learning environment, which ultimately contributes to the success of the comprehensive and sustainable implementation of the policy.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Joint Circular (SEB) Policy of the Three Ministers in 2025 concerning the strengthening of character education through the Seven Habits of Great Indonesian Children Movement has a solid theoretical basis, referring to the holistic and transformative character education paradigm. However, the results of the study at SDN Lengkong Bojongsoang, Bandung Regency indicate that there is a significant gap between policy formulation at the central level and implementation at the school level. Although the objectives of this policy are strategic and visionary, its implementation faces various obstacles, such as the absence of comprehensive planning documents, the division of roles and responsibilities that have not been well defined, minimal parental participation, and a weak monitoring and evaluation system.

These findings indicate that the success of the implementation of character education policies is not only determined by the quality of their formulation, but is highly dependent on the ability of local actors to translate the policy into contextual and effective practices. In the context of SDN Lengkong Bojongsoang, the implementation of the Three Ministers' SEB policy still requires strengthening in various managerial and participatory aspects.

To increase the effectiveness of policy implementation, several important strategies can be recommended. First, a systematic planning process is needed by conducting a comprehensive SWOT analysis to map strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the school context. Careful planning also needs to be accompanied by the determination of specific, measurable, and outcome-oriented performance indicators.

Second, the division of roles among stakeholders needs to be emphasized through a clear organizational structure and proportional allocation of resources, so that each party understands their responsibilities and contributions in supporting character education. Third, the development of a sustainable evaluation culture is an important prerequisite for long-term success. This evaluation is not only administrative, but must be a reflective process that involves all parties in identifying obstacles, finding solutions, and perfecting program implementation.

With this approach, it is hoped that the Three Ministers' SEB policy will not only be a normative document, but will be able to realize real transformation in the formation of student character in elementary schools, especially at SDN Lengkong Bojongsoang, and more broadly can contribute to achieving the national education vision towards Indonesia Emas 2045.

FURTHER STUDY

Every research is subject to limitations; thus, you can explain them here and briefly provide suggestions to further investigations.

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