



The Application of Tarakanita Character Values in Children: A Case Study of Children Aged 4-5 Years

Received: August 20, 2025

Revised: September 26, 2025

Accepted: September 28, 2025

Publish: September 29, 2025

Helaria Karunia Trie, Mona Ardina, Septi Fitriana, Desvi Wahyuni*

Abstract:

Background of study: Character is an attitude that should be instilled in children from an early age. Character education for early childhood education plays an important role in shaping children's moral and social foundations from an early age.

Aims and scope of paper: This study aims to determine the strategies teachers use in applying Tarakanita character values to children aged 4 to 5 years at Sint Carolus Kindergarten.

Methods: This study uses a qualitative approach involving the principal and two teachers as research participants. The data collection techniques used in this study are interviews and observation. Furthermore, the data will be analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model.

Result: The results of the study show that Sint Carolus Kindergarten systematically develops Tarakanita character values through three main strategies, namely learning through the integration of Tarakanita Character Education, foreign languages, experience-based learning, and technology; habit formation through practicing good behavior such as queuing and caring for the environment; and reinforcement through consistent role modeling by teachers and parents as the foundation for character building in children.

Conclusion: The implementation of Tarakanita character values at Sint Carolus Kindergarten is carried out through three strategies, namely learning, habit formation, and role modeling. The teachers' strategy in applying Tarakanita character values emphasizes experience-based learning and implements a cycle of reflection and sharing with parents as an effort to provide education that is consistent between home and school.

Keywords: Character Education, Early Childhood Education, Experiential Learning, Tarakanita Character Values, Teacher Strategies

1. INTRODUCTION

Character is the main foundation in shaping a child's way of thinking, feeling, and willing. Character education is an essential need that must be provided in depth, beyond mere moral learning, so that individuals have high morals and good character (Hermino & Arifin, 2020). Comprehensive character education from an early age will have an impact on other aspects, such as cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. However, current learning still focuses on cognitive and

psychomotor development (Lavy, 2020; Wahyuni & Rudiyanto, 2021a) As a result, character traits that should be developed in the affective domain, such as responsibility, cooperation, discipline, commitment, self-confidence, honesty, respect for others' opinions, and self-control, have not been formed in children from an early age.

Character education is not only taught at school, but also needs to be taught at home. Cooperation between schools, especially teachers, and parents plays an important role in instilling character values in children (Wahyuni et al., 2023). Providing more focused and consistent character education between home and school will have an impact on daily activities (Wahyuni & Novianti, 2021; Wahyuni & Rudiyanto, 2021b) Thus, character building will be integrated into the learning process at school and applied at home.

Currently, the integration of character education in schools and at home has not been implemented optimally. Learning at school emphasizes cognitive aspects, while parents at home tend to give their children freedom to express themselves physically. Over time, this will create a gap between learning at home and at school. As a result, children will develop optimally only in terms of cognition and physical aspects.

Currently, there has been a lot of research conducted on character education. However, previous studies have

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been practical in nature, aimed at improving children's character through experimental activities. For example, a study conducted by [Purwadhi et al. \(2021\)](#) stated that children's character can be improved through the Ipar learning model, as seen from the results of applying the Ipar learning model, which showed changes after treatment was given. Research conducted by [Rina et al \(2020\)](#) also shares the same view, stating that digital comic media can provide intervention for children's character, as seen from changes before and after the intervention using digital comic media

The success of teachers at Sint Carolus Kindergarten is one example of the implementation of Tarakanita character values. Tarakanita character values are life values promoted by the Tarakanita Foundation, which aims to shape students into individuals who are excellent, have integrity, and are ready to contribute positively to society. The Tarakanita character values applied at TK Sint Carolus include Compassion, Celebration, Competence, Conviction, Creativity, Community, Discipline, Honesty, as well as Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation, or more commonly known as Cc5+.

The character education provided by teachers at Sint Carolus Kindergarten has synchronized education at school and at home. This can be seen from the positive character traits exhibited by students at Sint Carolus Kindergarten. Based on observations, students at Sint Carolus Kindergarten are accustomed to showing compassion toward their peers, especially when sharing

toys. Additionally, the children at TK Sint Carolus have demonstrated good prayer habits as an expression of gratitude to God. This is not only practiced when the children are in the school environment but also in their home environment.

Nevertheless, in implementing Tarakanita character values, teachers should have various learning strategies so that children can easily understand and apply Cc5+ values in their lives. Therefore, the researcher was interested in conducting research related to teacher strategies in applying Tarakanita character to students at Sint Carolus Kindergarten.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research approach with the aim of describing the data narratively and in depth within the school environment. This study was conducted at Sint Carolus Kindergarten. Data was collected directly from the data sources, namely two teachers from Class A and the school principal, through interviews. Additionally, the researcher used observation to reinforce the interview results and documents to verify that the data obtained was authentic. Furthermore, the research data obtained will be analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model by conducting data reduction, presenting the data, and drawing conclusions from the research data. The following is the data analysis flowchart that has been conducted ([Miles & Huberman, 2014](#)).

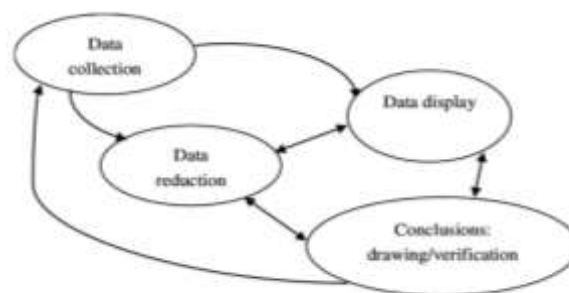


Figure 1. Data Analysis Diagram

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

This study identified a number of findings that provide an in-depth understanding of the implementation of Tarakanita character values and teachers' teaching strategies in implementing character education at Sint Carolus Kindergarten. Based on observations of 4-5-year-old children at Sint Carolus Kindergarten, several teaching strategies were identified in fostering Tarakanita character values, including preparing relevant teaching materials related to the character values to be taught, motivating children, providing age-appropriate explanations for issues children face, demonstrating classroom management skills, employing

varied teaching methods, and conducting individualized assessments of learning outcomes.

The researchers observed 24 children aged 4-5 years. The observation activities carried out by the researchers took ethical issues into consideration and respected the children's decisions in responding to the researchers' presence. The observation activities were carried out while the children were playing without any intervention in order to respect their basic right to play. The researchers also acted as playmates for the children during the data collection process. In addition to children, the data sources for this study were classroom teachers and school principals. In the process of obtaining information from teachers and principals, the

researchers confirmed the willingness of research participants to provide information. In addition, the researchers also respected the answers given by participants without intervening to focus on specific answers.

The learning provided by teachers at Sint Carolus Kindergarten is tailored to children and adapted to the characteristics of 4-5 years old, with an emphasis on habit formation and hands-on practice. Children aged 4-5 tend to imitate the activities around them and act according to their intuition (Sanderan, 2020). This can be seen in several learning activities where teachers provide direct examples to children in solving the problems they face.

“If a child is putting on shoes, at first they may not be able to do it. The teacher might assist initially, then observe by providing guidance or instructions on whether the shoes are being put on correctly. The teacher may also occasionally demonstrate the process themselves and then give the child time to try it on their own.”

This approach is effective because, for children, the teacher serves as a model they can imitate. Santrock (2004) mentioned that children aged 4-5 years old are humans who like to imitate the activities of adults around them. Therefore, giving direct examples will be more effective than giving orders.

In addition to providing direct examples, teachers at Sint Carolus Kindergarten always give appreciation and motivation to children. Positive reinforcement, such as applause or a “Aku Anak Hebat” stamp, can build children's fighting spirit so that they always have the motivation to try and appreciate the efforts they have made (Antara, 2019).

“When children participate in competitions, Miss will explain beforehand that in competitions there will always be winners and losers, so they need to understand this first. Then, if they do not win, Miss will continue to motivate them by telling them that they can try again another time”.

Giving positive reinforcement to children when they succeed or fail is an effort to instill character that should be taught from an early age (Sudirman et al., 2024). With the understanding that failure is part of the learning process, it will shape a never-give-up character in children (Devianti et al., 2020).

Emphasis on the application of Tarakanita character values is one of the main points in teaching children. Integrating learning with character values through various simple activities will help children develop good habit. In addition, good cooperation between schools and parents will also provide consistency in various activities carried out by children (Ritonga, 2022). In addition to the strategies mentioned above, teachers at TK Sint Carolus also integrate Tarakanita character values with an experiential learning approach. The experimental learning approach is an approach that provides children with the opportunity to be directly involved in learning (Khaidir & Suud, 2020). This

allows children's knowledge to be formed through the experiences they gain from various activities they have done.

In addition to experimental learning approaches, teachers' strategies in applying Tarakanita character values are positive habits. Habituation is a crucial strategy in shaping children's character at TK Sint Carolus, involving routine and repetitive activities that instill Tarakanita values. All habituation activities at TK Sint Carolus are designed to shape children's character through consistent direct experiences and require patience, as character formation is a long-term process that begins at an early age (Holley et al., 2020).

Furthermore, as an effort to apply Tarakanita character values, Sint Carolus Kindergarten also implements role modeling for children by adults around them. At school, children will observe and imitate how teachers interact with others, how they solve problems, and their level of concern. At home, parents will set an example in communication, showing affection, respecting others, and practicing daily life values. Consistency in behavior between teachers and parents will form the foundational basis for character development in children (Bergman Deitcher et al., 2021). All educational elements, whether at school or at home, are responsible for providing concrete examples through words, actions, and attitudes in daily life (Cahyani & Joko Raharjo, 2021).

3.2 Discussion

Values such as honesty, compassion, fairness, and discipline are abstract concepts that are difficult for preschoolers to understand cognitively. Children understand things that are concrete and that they can see, touch, or experience directly. Tarakanita's character values into meaningful actions and understanding for children requires creative teaching methods, repeated through daily activities, stories, games, and real-life examples from teachers. Learning occurs through observation, imitation, and modeling the behavior of others (Komariah & Nihayah, 2023; Reksamunandar & Hadirman, 2022) Children learn by watching what others do and the consequences of those actions (Hermino & Arifin, 2020). Children find it easier to understand instructions and concepts when they are presented through concrete demonstrations that children can see and imitate (Ritonga, 2022; Yaqin et al., 2022). For example, children will understand how to tidy up their toys better if they see the teacher doing it directly, rather than just being told.

In character education, children may have problems recognizing and controlling their own emotions. Tarakanita's character values, which emphasize compassion and service to others, require the ability to feel and understand the feelings of others. Therefore, the challenge is how to help children recognize various emotions, learn to express them, and begin to develop sensitivity to their friends' feelings through guidance. This is in line with the characteristics of children aged 4 to 5 years who are in the pre-operational stage, where

their thinking is still egocentric, meaning that children tend to see the world from their own point of view and find it difficult to understand other people's points of view (Petrides et al., 2024; Wahyuni & Novianti, 2021). Therefore, children aged 4-5 years still need help in putting themselves in other people's shoes and understanding that other people have feelings that are different from theirs.

Children of kindergarten age naturally tend to focus on their own needs and desires, so learning through the application of Tarakanita character traits can help children recognize their social environment (Bajpai & Pandey, 2022). Learning through habitual activities is the basis for developing Tarakanita character values such as humility, sharing, and cooperation with peers. Children aged 4-5 years old learn through experience and direct practice (Sakban & Sundawa, 2023).

3.2.1 Implication

The implications of this study for learning at Sint Carolus Kindergarten focus on character development in children, especially those aged 4-5 years. This is because repeated learning and real-life examples will create meaningful experiences for children. The implications of this study suggest that the teaching of Tarakanita character values should be conducted in the simplest manner possible, including consistent modeling and examples between home and school. Character education using Tarakanita character values can be a solution in teaching and developing school curricula related to moral education. Although Tarakanita character values are generally applied in schools under the Catholic Foundation, they can be widely applied in public schools to teach children social skills.

3.2.3 Research Contribution

This study is expected to contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of early childhood education related to strategies for instilling character values in children aged 4 to 5 years, particularly in teachers' strategies for instilling Tarakanita character values. In addition, this study is expected to improve teachers' ability to design interesting learning activities that are tailored to the characteristics of students, especially young children. Lastly, this study is expected to assist parents in aligning character education at home and at school, thereby increasing awareness of the importance of collaboration in shaping children's character.

3.2.4 Limitation

Although this study provides an overview of the application of Tarakanita character values at Sint Carolus Kindergarten, there are still several limitations, including the small number of public early childhood education institutions that apply Tarakanita character

values due to the diversity of beliefs and religions in society. This limitation is due to the many religions and beliefs of the community as regulated in the laws of the Republic of Indonesia. Therefore, learning by applying Tarakanita values is only focused on Catholic schools, especially those under the Tarakanita Foundation, as it is part of the school's beliefs and curriculum.

3.2.5 Suggestion

As a suggestion for the future, researchers hope that the application of character values will not be limited to a specific group. Character education should be the right of all children to improve their personality and mental abilities.

4. CONCLUSION

TK Sint Carolus implements Tarakanita character values through three strategies, namely learning, habit formation, and role modeling. In learning, values are actively instilled through the integration of Tarakanita character education, language skills, experiential learning, and information technology through various concrete activities. Routine habits such as queuing, greeting others, living simply, tidying up toys, and caring for plants consistently cultivate responsibility, independence, compassion, and patience in children. Collaboration between teachers and parents is a crucial foundation to ensure consistency between words and actions in demonstrating these values for the continuous development of children's character. Values such as Compassion, Celebration, Competence, Conviction, Creativity, Community, and KPKC (Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation) are internalized through practical activities such as sharing snacks, visiting nursing homes, thanksgiving prayers, research-based learning, daily independence, imaginative exploration, sharing iftar meals, and environmental cleanliness programs.

5. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our deepest gratitude to the teachers at Sint Carolus Kindergarten for giving us the opportunity to conduct research in the implementation of the Tarakanita character at school. We would also like to thank all the children at Sint Carolus Kindergarten for participating in the research and for their cooperation in providing the necessary information.

6. AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

All authors in this study contributed according to their respective areas of expertise. HKT served as the field researcher, collecting field data directly. MA was responsible for instrument development and data management. DW contributed to the preparation of the final report so that this research could be read by the public.

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Corresponding Authors

Desvi Wahyuni, University of Bengkulu, Indonesia

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3425-4004>

Email: dwahyuni@unib.ac.id

Authors

Helaria Karunia Trie, University of Bengkulu, Indonesia

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0008-1392-433X>

Email: helaryellaa13@gmail.com

Mona Ardina, University of Bengkulu, Indonesia

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0000-6685-9131>

Email: monaardina@unib.ac.id

Septi Fitriana, University of Bengkulu, Indonesia

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8084-8655>

Email: septifitriana@unib.ac.id

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