Original Research Paper

Implementation of Character Education from the Perspective of Philosophy of Science: Science, Ethics, and Morals as the Foundation of Holistic Education Value

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Article Info

Abstract

The understanding of ethics and morality in education is an inseparable element in the application of knowledge. On the other hand, the philosophy of science serves as a discipline that fosters essential life values such as ethics and morality, examining the nature and purpose of knowledge as well as its practical applications. The aim of this article is to analyze how the value of knowledge utility can contribute to character development among students in educational settings. This study employs a qualitative research method with a literature review design. The findings of this study indicate that the integration of ethics, morality, and the utilitarian value of knowledge, along with their implementation in character education and a holistic approach, constitutes a fundamental foundation in shaping well-rounded, knowledgeable, and dignified individuals. Therefore, the synergy between ethics, morality, and knowledge stands as a key pillar in achieving transformative and sustainable education.

Introduction

Character education is a crucial aspect of modern education, particularly in shaping individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also possess strong moral and ethical integrity. According to Kurniati & Syefriani (2023), character

education serves as the fundamental foundation in the educational process, acting as the soul that breathes life into the entire learning experience. It must therefore be implemented at all levels of education, providing a strategic platform for instilling character values in order to nurture a generation that is both morally upright and professionally competent. Similarly, Nuraida (2022) and Susmita et al. (2023) argue that character education lies at the heart of Indonesia's educational system, playing a central role in achieving the national education goals. Thus, producing a generation that is not only intellectually skilled but also ethically sound and professional must begin with a strong foundation in character education to achieve the envisioned educational objectives.

In the educational domain, an understanding of ethics and morality is inseparable from the application of knowledge. Basri et al. (2024) highlight that ethics and morality are fundamental elements of knowledge, guiding human behavior, forming the basis for scientific development, and serving the public good. They ensure that the knowledge acquired and applied aligns with human values and social responsibility. Moreover, Lestari et al. (2024) emphasize that ethical and moral understanding is not only concerned with individual behavior but also encompasses social interactions among various stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and the wider community. Therefore, ethical and moral awareness is essential in guiding individual behavior within their environment and as a basis for the advancement of knowledge.

Meanwhile, the philosophy of science emerges as a discipline that cultivates essential life values such as ethics and morality. It examines the nature and purpose of knowledge and offers a broad perspective on how knowledge can be applied to enhance human understanding of the world. According to John Dewey, the philosophy of education aims to shape essential foundational abilities—both intellectual and emotional—as the basis for character development (Susmita et al., 2023). Bechtel (2009) adds that the philosophy of science contributes significantly to cognitive science by offering insights into its conceptual foundations. In this context, the philosophy of science plays a role in deepening our understanding of the utility value of knowledge and ensuring it is applied in accordance with prevailing ethical and moral standards.

The implementation of character education through the lens of the philosophy of science offers a more comprehensive and holistic approach. According to Wulf (2024), education involves four fundamental processes: first, learning to acquire knowledge; second, learning to act through practical knowledge; third, learning to live together with others; and fourth, learning to accept and become oneself. These four processes are essential in developing individuals who are balanced in knowledge, social interaction, and personal identity. Thus, education should not only focus on academic achievement but also on how knowledge is shaped and directed to build good character, uphold ethics, and promote morality in society.

In light of this, the present study aims to analyze how the utility value of knowledge can contribute to character formation among students in educational settings. This analysis is crucial for addressing modern challenges in education, where mastery of knowledge must be balanced with the strengthening of solid character values.

Materials and Methods

This study employs a qualitative research method with a literature review design. The data in this research were obtained from various scholarly sources, including books, journal articles, and other valid and relevant references. The selected sources are specifically related to the implementation of character education from the perspective of the philosophy of science. The first stage of this research involves collecting references related to the research topic, followed by analyzing and summarizing the content of the gathered sources. Finally, the findings are compiled in a comprehensive and structured manner to present the research results clearly and coherently.

Results and Discussion

The Implementation of Character Education

The term *character* originates from the Greek word, meaning "mark" or "engraving." An individual's character signifies a lasting mark that reflects consistency and predictability in behavior. Character represents a fundamental aspect of personality that integrates consistent behavior, attitudes, and values into a cohesive whole (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2007). In Indonesia, the concepts of *Pendidikan Budi Pekerti* (Character Education) and *Pendidikan Moral Pancasila* (Pancasila Moral Education) have long been utilized with the aim of enhancing intelligence, developing moral integrity, and shaping individuals into ethically sound citizens (Imban, 2022). Today, character education is a critical issue in the educational landscape. Beyond shaping moral character in the younger generation, it is expected to serve as a key foundation for achieving the goals of Indonesia Emas 2025 (Widodo, 2021).

Character education is a conscious effort to instill and cultivate core values to develop well-rounded individuals, improve character, and sharpen students' intellectual capacities — ultimately producing knowledgeable, virtuous individuals capable of contributing positively to society (Ma'rufah, 2022). According to Lickona (1992), character education involves three key components: moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action. These components collectively shape a morally upright individual. Effective character education, according to Lickona, should be implemented both inside and outside the classroom and requires a supportive environment.

Ma'rufah (2022) outlines the implementation of character education in the teaching and learning process through three primary stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. During the planning stage, teachers identify foundational principles and design a comprehensive instructional process from start to finish. The first step in integrating character education is to develop a character-oriented syllabus and lesson plan (RPP). Teachers must identify specific character values to be instilled, which are then translated into measurable learning indicators.

During the implementation stage, instruction is carried out in line with the lesson plan across three key segments: introduction, core activities, and conclusion. In the introductory phase, character values can be integrated through actions such as: (1) starting lessons on time to instill discipline; (2) greeting students warmly to foster politeness and care; (3) beginning with prayer; (4) taking attendance to encourage diligence; (5) praying for absent students, reflecting religious and caring values; and (6) connecting lesson content with practical applications in daily life. Throughout the core and concluding activities, teachers consistently internalize character values

through all learning engagements. For evaluation, a self-assessment approach is employed, allowing students to reflect on and align their perceived character traits with their actual behavior during learning activities. This serves as a reflective tool for ongoing character development.

At the micro level, the school environment, teachers can employ three strategies to embed character values in students: first, by integrating these values into classroom instruction; second, through extracurricular activities; and third, through habitual positive practices in daily school life (Rahman, 2002, as cited in Cahyani & Raharjo, 2021). Ahsanulkhaq (2019) and Rachmawati et al. (2025) argue that routine practices (*pembiasaan*) are among the most effective methods for developing religious character in students. Cahyani & Raharjo (2021) emphasize that such routines serve as practical approaches for cultivating character and morals. Results from the implementation of character education through these practices indicate positive development among children, evident in improved behavior, effective socialization with peers, greater independence, and enhanced moral and ethical alignment with the four core pillars applied at PAUD Alam Ungaran.

In conclusion, the implementation of character education is a systematic and comprehensive process involving the integration of moral values into all aspects of teaching—from planning and delivery to evaluation—with the goal of nurturing individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also morally grounded and socially responsible. Character, as a reflection of internalized behavioral consistency and values, is cultivated through a holistic approach that encompasses moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions, supported by both instructional practices and a conducive environment. In practice, character development is reinforced through curriculum integration, direct teaching, extracurricular engagement, and habitual school routines. Among these, daily routines are especially effective in embedding character values, particularly religious values, yielding improvements in students' social conduct, independence, and moral behavior. Therefore, character education should not be treated as an ancillary component of schooling but rather as a foundational pillar in preparing future generations to be holistically excellent and globally competitive.

Ethics, Morality, and the Utilitarian Value of Knowledge

Ethics and education are two interrelated aspects, where an educated individual is reflected not only through knowledge but also through behavior, lifestyle, and respectful language—elements that form the foundation of ethical conduct (Lestari et al., 2024). Trisakti et al. (2023) emphasize that ethics is present in every aspect of individual and organizational life, and from early childhood to old age, people strive to live in harmony. Ethics is generally recognized as a benchmark for evaluating whether an action is right or wrong, or good or bad, and serves as a guide in determining appropriate conduct.

Muktapa (2021) further explains that ethics can be understood as a normative branch of philosophy concerned with the values and norms that regulate human behavior in daily life. Ethics is a reflection of morality; both play similar roles in providing guidance for virtuous behavior and dignified living. However, while morality focuses more on a system of values that directs individuals to live righteously,

ethics emphasizes critical reflection on individual or group actions in applying moral principles.

Morality, on the other hand, refers more directly to the values associated with the rightness or wrongness of human actions, while ethics is understood as a discipline that studies the principles of good and bad in human conduct (Mukti, 2022; Kamaludin & Alfan, 2010). Moral values are crucial in personality development and are shaped by the prevailing societal norms. Mukti (2022) identifies several characteristics of moral action: (a) it is deeply ingrained and becomes part of an individual's personality; (b) it is performed spontaneously without complex deliberation; (c) it arises from personal will and choice; (d) it is done sincerely and not superficially; and (e) it is carried out with pure intentions, for the sake of God.

Dewi et al. (2023) assert that the goal of moral education in schools is to equip young generations with an understanding of moral principles, the ability to make ethical decisions, and the skills to address social issues rationally, while fostering responsible and beneficial behavior. Astuti et al. (2022) argue that moral education involves all stakeholders in shaping students with noble character and high moral standards for the betterment of the nation. Therefore, moral education must be purposefully designed to build students' awareness of the importance of morality in social interaction. Hafidz et al. (2022) found that effective moral education can be implemented through both school-based curricular programs and religious education that explicitly incorporate moral values.

Moreover, knowledge has a utilitarian value — known as axiology — that plays a significant role in solving practical problems in daily life and delivering

positive impacts on society, whether socially, economically, or environmentally. According to Santi et al. (2023), it is crucial to treat knowledge with moral responsibility, ensuring that it does not harm others, and to internalize it in behaviors that reflect one's level of understanding. Indeed, knowledge is manifested in one's actions and attitudes. Thus, useful knowledge is knowledge that contributes positively and provides solutions to the challenges faced by humanity and the environment.

In conclusion, ethics, morality, and the utilitarian value of knowledge are interconnected and form an inseparable triad in shaping individuals who are knowledgeable, virtuous, and socially responsible. Ethics serves as a reflective foundation guiding individuals to think critically about actions based on moral principles. Morality represents the internalization of good and bad values embedded in one's behavior, expressed spontaneously and sincerely. Moral education plays a vital role in instilling these values early on through a curriculum that involves the entire school community. Within this framework, knowledge cannot be separated from ethics and morality, as its axiological value can only be realized when used with a high degree of ethical and moral awareness. In other words, meaningful knowledge does not only solve practical problems but also reflects social responsibility and humanitarian values. Therefore, ethics as reflective guidance, morality as the foundation for actions, and knowledge as a means of benefit must go hand-in-hand to cultivate individuals who are not only intelligent but also wise and dignified.

The Value of Knowledge, Ethics, and Morality as the Foundation of Holistic Education

Holistic education is an approach that emphasizes the comprehensive development of individuals, encompassing cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. In the context of modern education, Susmita et al. (2023) assert that ethical principles serve as a crucial foundation guiding educational practices, policy formulation, and interactions within the learning environment. The realization of a holistic and adaptive educational system requires collaboration among teachers, governments, communities, and all stakeholders to shape a generation that is competent, ethical, and prepared to face global challenges (Susmita et al., 2023).

The holistic approach in education is an effective strategy for shaping students in a comprehensive manner by integrating intellectual, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual aspects to support their development into balanced and responsible individuals (Purba et al., 2021). Through this approach, students are taught to understand and internalize the values underlying their actions, thereby enabling them to make responsible and well-considered decisions. Holistic education encourages students to think critically and reflectively—skills that are essential for moral and ethical development.

The values of knowledge utility, ethics, and morality are three interrelated pillars within holistic education aimed at nurturing the whole person. According to Ekosiswoyo et al. (2019) and Kasingku & Gosal (2024), holistic education not only focuses on cognitive development but also seeks to shape individuals who are adaptive to the rapidly changing world and who possess emotional and spiritual awareness of their integral role within a broader whole. In this context, ethics serve as a reflective framework that guides students to think

critically about their actions, while morality forms an internalized value system that manifests in sincere, spontaneous, and responsible behavior. Meanwhile, knowledge functions as a means to develop intellectual capacity, yet it yields meaningful contributions only when employed with moral and ethical awareness. The value of knowledge, therefore, lies not merely in its ability to solve practical problems, but in how responsibly and beneficially it is applied for the betterment of humanity and the environment.

Thus, holistic education must integrate scientific knowledge with moral and ethical values in order to produce individuals who are not only intellectually capable but also wise in their actions. Ethics provide a guide for critiquing and evaluating the implications of knowledge, while morality lays the foundation for fostering actions aligned with the socially recognized norms of goodness. When knowledge is practiced without ethical and moral awareness, it risks causing greater social and environmental harm. Conversely, knowledge driven by ethical and moral responsibility fosters individuals who are not only competent but also actively contribute to building a just and civilized society. Therefore, the synergy between the utility of knowledge, ethics, and morality is an essential foundation for the success of holistic education—one that aspires to nurture knowledgeable, virtuous, and globally resilient individuals with dignity and integrity.

Conclusion

Based on the examination of ethics, morality, the utility of knowledge, and their implementation in character education and holistic approaches, it can be concluded that these three elements form the essential foundation for shaping individuals who are

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well-rounded, knowledgeable, and dignified. Ethics serve as a reflective guide in evaluating actions; morality forms an internal value system that is manifested through concrete behavior; and knowledge becomes a means of intellectual development that holds significance only when applied responsibly and ethically. Character education plays a strategic role in integrating these aspects through systematic learning processes and consistent habituation within the school environment. Meanwhile, the holistic educational approach integrates cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions to cultivate a generation that is not only intellectually proficient but also wise in action and able to contribute positively to society and the environment. Therefore, the synergy between ethics, morality, and knowledge stands as a foundational pillar in realizing transformative and sustainable education.

Thank-you note

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