

Jurnal of Pedagogi: Jurnal Pendidikan

ISSN: : 3046-9554 (Online)

The Role Of The Principal In Forming Students' Social Care Characters At Smpn 3 Bandar Dua Pidie Jaya

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.62872/b3zt5c63

Abstract

This study aims to explain the role of the principal in forming a socially caring character through a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation of the principal, teachers, and students. The findings show that the principal plays an active role with four main steps: (1) formulating structured policies for social programs, (2) encouraging the implementation of sustainable programs such as community service and fundraising, (3) being a role model in social activities, and (4) monitoring and providing full support so that the values of social care are internalized. The impact is seen from the increase in empathy and mutual respect behavior among students. The main supporting factors are the principal's commitment and teacher involvement, while inhibiting factors include lack of parental support and limited student time. This study recommends increasing parental involvement and strengthening character education programs to form a more optimal socially caring character.

Keywords: Principal, Formation, Character, Social Care.

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Received May 01, 2025 Accepted June 08, 2025 Published June 25, 2025

Introduction

Education has a vital role in shaping students' character, where through learning activities, values inherited from society can be instilled and practiced (Hamdani & Beni, 2013). However, there are challenges in the implementation of character education, especially in Indonesia, where more attention is paid to the cognitive aspect compared to character development or morals (Rahmawati, 2016). As a result, there is a gap between intellectual intelligence and inadequate character formation. Because in fact the value of social care has begun to fade, especially among students. This is evident from the emergence of several problems such as fights between students, attitudes of not caring about friends, disrespect for others, bullying, anti-social in society, and so on (Admizal & Fitri, 2018).

The development of the era and increasingly advanced technology makes it easier for students to interact and socialize with others. Not only interacting in real life, but also through cyberspace or social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and others, which can have a big impact and influence on students. Lack of supervision from parents and teachers can cause students to do deviant activities, such as brawls, consuming illegal drugs, free sex, and others.



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Citing the results of Boston University research, it was found that the ability of young people to feel empathy (social character) has decreased by 40% over the past ten years, along with the development of technology and the internet. This finding is in line with the news released by Suara.com on April 23, 2019, which stated that various studies show a decreasing sense of empathy or social concern among today's society. This causes more and more people to tend to be apathetic, even reaching 65% of the population. It is undeniable that the increasingly rapid advancement of technology makes humans often enslaved by smartphones and lose sensitivity and empathy for the surrounding environment (Aynur, 2011)

This phenomenon shows that public awareness to respect and care for each other is still low. Therefore, education plays an important role in instilling empathy and social care in the younger generation. Education that only focuses on providing theoretical knowledge is not enough; there must be an approach that allows students to practice empathy in everyday life (Khairunnisa & Muqaqqim, 2020). Thus, the goal of education is not only to produce individuals who are intellectually intelligent, but also have a sensitive character and care for others.

The moral crisis that is currently hitting society is a serious problem that needs to be addressed immediately, one of which is through a character education approach. Character education is expected to be a foundation in forming a generation that is not only knowledgeable, but also has noble morals. John Stuart Mill, as quoted by Barnawi and M. Arifin, stated that character education is an important breakthrough in dealing with various social obstacles that exist in society (Barnawi & Arifin, 2012)

Schools as educational institutions have a responsibility to address this issue by integrating character education into the curriculum. One proposed approach is social care character education, which involves attitudes and behaviors in helping others. Social care character is the behavior or attitude of someone who always wants to provide assistance to others. The social care character implemented in schools cannot be separated from the role of the principal, where the principal has the policy to prepare a plan for implementing social care character education both as a school vision and an implementation policy in the learning curriculum.

In addition to teachers and other educational staff, the principal has a very important role in the success of character education development in schools, especially in coordinating, mobilizing, and harmonizing all available educational resources. The principal is the highest leader who is very influential in determining the progress of the school. The leadership of the principal is one of the factors that can encourage the realization of the school's vision, mission and goals through programs that are implemented in stages and planned (Heri, 2012)

The success or failure of education and learning in schools is greatly influenced by the ability of the principal in managing each component of the school (who is behind the school). The ability of the principal is mainly related to their knowledge and understanding of management and leadership, as well as the tasks assigned to them, because it is not uncommon for the failure of education and learning in schools to be caused by the principal's lack of understanding of the tasks that must be carried out (Mulyasa, 2012). This condition shows that the success or failure of a school in achieving its goals and realizing its vision and mission lies in how the principal manages and leads, especially in mobilizing and empowering various components of the school. In the process, dynamic quality interactions between the principal,

teachers, administrative staff, students play a very important role, especially in adjusting various school activities to the demands of globalization, changes in society, developments in science and technology, as well as the demands of the situation, conditions, and environment. All of these things greatly demand the competence and professionalism of the principal, to enable the creation of dynamic quality interactions (Fahmi, 2012)

The principal has a central role in mobilizing all resources in the school, including teachers, staff, students, and available facilities, to create a conducive environment for achieving educational goals. As a leader, the principal is responsible not only for academic aspects, such as curriculum management and learning processes, but also for managing various non-academic aspects. This includes fostering student attitudes and behavior, character building, and managing relationships between the school and the surrounding community. When the principal is unable to mobilize all elements of the organization effectively, various aspects of the school environment can decline. Students, who should receive leadership examples, will feel less motivated to follow rules or participate in activities that support character building. As a result, individualistic attitudes and low concern for others can develop among students. The principal's inability to coordinate character education programs also often leads to low teacher involvement in efforts to form social values in schools. This can be seen from the increasing undisciplined behavior of students, such as often being late, conflicts between friends, and minimal sensitivity to social issues in the school environment (Fitriyani, 2023).

On the other hand, when the principal does not have a caring character towards others, this can affect the systems and policies implemented in the school. Principals who are less caring tend to ignore social programs and policies that support cooperation and harmony within the school community. In situations like this, the relationship between the school and the parents of students becomes strained, so that external support for educational programs decreases. Cases such as lack of attention to students who need help or failure to deal with social problems that arise in schools are common (Islamiah, 2023). As a result, the school atmosphere that should build positive character turns into an environment that is less supportive of the development of social care values among students.

The role of the principal as a leader reflects the responsibility to mobilize all resources in the school, so that a high work ethic and productivity are born to achieve goals (Souisa, 2018). The principal is not only responsible for the smooth running of the school academically, but all activities, school environment conditions, conditions and situations, and community relations are his responsibility (Astuti and Danial, 2019).

The increasing number of cases of principals holding dual positions in Indonesia also raises serious concerns about the quality of management of the schools they lead. In many cases, principals who hold other positions, either as officials in educational institutions or organizations outside the school, are often unable to give full attention to their main tasks. This condition disrupts the implementation of managerial functions that should be the responsibility of the principal, such as resource management, teacher coaching, monitoring learning, and developing character education programs (Ardiansyah et al., 2023).

When the principal cannot carry out his/her managerial role optimally, the impact extends to various aspects of school management. Program planning becomes unfocused, implementation of education policies is slow, and evaluation of teacher performance and student development becomes less effective (Setiyadi & Rosalina, 2021). Cases such as low

student participation in school activities, lack of learning innovation, and decreased student discipline often occur in schools led by principals with dual positions.

The drive and spirit of leadership possessed by a leader can move an organization in the desired direction, but vice versa if the quality and competence of a leader are not sufficient to help drive progress, it means that the leader only leads with personal goals and not for the organization's desired goals. Because the purpose of the organization means that the leader leads by implementing and realizing the vision and mission of the organization, and placing personal interests not as the main interest (Heri, 2012). As an important component of the school organization, the principal must be able to provide optimal quality services. With his independence, the principal is more empowered in developing various programs that are in accordance with his needs and potential. Likewise, participatory decision making, which directly involves the school community will increase their concern and sense of belonging to the school and its programs. Increasing the sense of belonging will increase awareness, responsibility, concern, and commitment of the school community to their school; so that it will give birth to high dedication and creativity in developing school programs (Mulyasa, 2012).

Based on the explanation above, the success or failure of implementing socially caring character education is also influenced by the role of the principal in driving the organization he leads. Based on observations made, the principal at SMPN 3 Bandar Dua Pidie Jaya showed a strong commitment in forming students' socially caring character. Researchers observed that the principal consistently paid attention to various social aspects in the school environment, such as involvement in cleaning activities, fundraising for disaster victims, and strengthening attitudes of mutual respect among school residents. However, researchers also noted several challenges, such as limited parental involvement and students' time being used more for academic activities.

The focus of this study is to explore the role of the principal in the formation of students' socially caring character. This study examines the steps taken by the principal to integrate social values into school life, the impact of these roles on student behavior, and the factors that support and hinder the implementation of socially caring character education..

Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. This approach was chosen to describe social reality in depth without relying on numerical data, but rather through narratives and interpretations that describe ongoing conditions, relationships, and processes (Noor, 2011). The location of the study was SMPN 3 Bandar Dua in Pidie Jaya Regency, which is strategically located in the center of the sub-district. A supportive school environment, including adequate facilities and local community involvement, provides a conducive atmosphere for the teaching and learning process. This study also highlights the importance of an operational curriculum based on local wisdom to develop students' life skills and cultural literacy in facing the era of globalization.

Data collection techniques were carried out through three main methods: observation, interviews, and documentation studies (Suryabrata, 2011). Participatory observation was used to directly observe the role of the principal in the formation of students' socially caring character, including the implementation of programs, schedules, and social interactions in the school environment. In-depth interviews were conducted in a structured manner with the

principal, teachers, and students to explore their views and experiences. In addition, documentation studies were conducted to complement data from observations and interviews by collecting related documents, such as school programs, principal policies, and activity records.

Data analysis was conducted based on the Miles & Huberman interactive model which includes four stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. After data was collected from various sources, irrelevant information was reduced to simplify the analysis. The condensed data was presented systematically in the form of tables or graphs to facilitate interpretation. Conclusions were then drawn based on the results of the analysis and verified to ensure the validity of the findings. This process provides a deeper and more structured understanding of the role of the principal in socially caring character education.

The variables in this study include independent and dependent variables. Where the independent variable is the use of the cooperative learning model think pair share with pop-up book media. While the dependent variable is the average value of social studies and critical thinking skills of third grade students. Before conducting a hypothesis test using the t-test, a prerequisite test needs to be carried out, namely the normality test and the homogeneity test. In the normality test using the Shapiro Wilk Test

Result and Discussion

Research Results

1. Profile of SMPN 3 Bandar Dua School

SMPN 3 Bandar Dua Pidie Jaya was established in 2007, initially occupying a temporary building at SD Alue Sane before moving to Gampong Gahru until 2017. After that, the school was moved to a strategic location on Jl. Ulee Gle Barat, Bandar Dua District. Since its establishment, the school has been led by several principals and is currently implementing the Merdeka Belajar Operational Curriculum which focuses on 21st century skills, such as literacy, critical thinking, and collaboration. The school facilities are quite adequate, although some facilities, such as the science laboratory and prayer room, still need repair due to damage from natural disasters.

This school has a vision to produce students who are educated, achievers, care about religion and the environment. The indicators of its vision include technology-based learning, student character development, application of contextual and scientific approaches, and creation of a safe, healthy, and conducive environment. To achieve this vision, SMPN 3 Bandar Dua carries out several missions, including increasing religious understanding, expanding access to education, increasing the professionalism of educators, and providing facilities and infrastructure that support competitive learning.

In terms of facilities and infrastructure, the school has adequate classrooms, although some require renovation. The science laboratory is still less representative and the sports field does not meet national standards. In addition, the school also emphasizes the importance of cultural literacy to prepare students to face global challenges, while still upholding the values of Pancasila and local wisdom. Support from various stakeholders and the surrounding community also helps the success of the education program at this school.

2. Steps to Form a Socially Caring Character.

At SMPN 3 Bandar Dua, the principal plays an important role in shaping students' socially conscious character through various strategic steps. The first step is to formulate and implement policies that emphasize character education, including in the school's vision which reads "Educated attitude, Best achievement, Caring for Religion and the Environment." Programs such as project-based learning, social activities, and collaboration with the outside community are implemented to instill socially conscious values, including attitudes of mutual assistance, tolerance, and empathy. The principal also tries to provide a direct example by participating in school social activities.

The second step is to integrate character education into the curriculum through habituation. The principal emphasized that character education should not only start at the secondary level, but must be carried out early so that social values can be deeply internalized. This habituation is realized through daily activities such as flag ceremonies, where the principal always reminds students of the importance of respecting others and living harmoniously in diversity. Teachers also play an active role in this program, such as through class discussions, individual guidance, and social visits to strengthen students' awareness of social concerns.

The main obstacle in implementing this program is the lack of involvement of parents and the outside community in supporting character education at home. The principal acknowledged that the relationship between school and family still needs to be improved. To overcome this, the school seeks to strengthen communication with parents so that character learning at home and school runs in harmony. Teachers also provide special guidance to students who have difficulty in understanding social values, so that socially caring characters can be applied more effectively in everyday life. The findings of the study on the role of the principal in shaping the socially caring character of students at SMPN 3 Bandar Dua are stated in the following table 1.

Table 1 Steps of the Principal's Role in Forming Students' Socially Caring Character

No.	Steps	Explanation
1	Developing	The principal establishes clear and sustainable policies and
	Structured and	procedures, so that each social program has a concrete
	Sustainable Policies	direction and target.
2	Promoting	The principal facilitates activities such as community service,
	Sustainable Social	fundraising, and environmental cleanliness programs to foster
	Programs	empathy and responsibility in students.
3	Be a Role Model for	The principal is actively involved in every social activity,
	Students and	providing a real example of the socially caring attitude that he
	Teachers	wants to instill in all members of the school community.
4	Monitor and Provide	The principal routinely checks the implementation of the
	Full Support	program and provides assistance, ensuring that every activity
		runs according to plan and the goals of social care are
		achieved.

3. The Role of the Principal in the Formation of Socially Caring Character

The principal at SMPN 3 Bandar Dua Pidie Jaya has a central role in the formation of students' socially caring character through policies and programs that focus on the values of empathy, social responsibility, and respect for the environment. Programs such as community service, social service, fundraising, and religious activities are designed to instill an attitude of mutual assistance and mutual cooperation. The principal not only provides direction but also becomes a role model in instilling these values. Teachers also play an active role in integrating character learning into daily activities at school, both through class discussions and individual guidance.

The impact of the principal's role is seen in the increasing social awareness among students. Students begin to show caring behavior by helping friends in need, keeping the environment clean, and getting involved in various social projects. The principal ensures that this socially caring character is not only taught in theory, but is practiced through habituation and direct interaction in the school environment. In addition, teachers hold dialogues on social issues to strengthen students' understanding of the importance of positive social action.

Although these programs are effective, there are challenges in the form of lack of parental and family involvement in supporting character education at home. Principals strive to strengthen communication and cooperation with parents so that the values taught in schools can be reinforced in the family environment. With support from various parties and a collaborative approach, the social care character building program is expected to create a generation that not only excels academically, but also has a high sense of concern for others and the environment.

Based on findings in the field, SMPN 3 Bandar Dua Pidie Jaya can be said to have succeeded in internalizing various social care values through integrated school programs and policies.

- a. Empathy values are developed through community service activities, fundraising, and social visits, where students are trained to understand and feel the conditions of others. The attitude of helping each other is instilled through activities such as community service and helping friends in trouble, encouraging students to provide assistance actively without being asked.
- b. Social responsibility through direct involvement of students in maintaining cleanliness and participating in social projects, teaches them the importance of being responsible as part of a community.
- c. The value of caring for the environment is manifested in school greening and cleaning activities which aim to raise students' awareness of the importance of protecting nature.
- d. Tolerance is taught through interactions between students from different backgrounds and activities that encourage respect for religious and cultural diversity.
- e. The value of mutual cooperation is applied in group activities such as community service and social projects, building a spirit of cooperation and togetherness among students.
- f. The value of social justice is introduced through discussions and social activities that help students understand the importance of sharing and supporting those less fortunate. All of these values are integrated into various school programs to shape

the character of students who care about others and the environment, creating a generation that not only excels academically but also has a high social awareness.

4. Factors Influencing the Formation of Socially Caring Character

a. Supporting Factors

The success of the principal in forming a socially caring character at SMPN 3 Bandar Dua Pidie Jaya is supported by various factors. The principal's policies that include social programs, such as community service, fundraising, and environmental cleaning activities, provide students with direct experience in contributing to the community. In addition, the active involvement of teachers in social programs strengthens the implementation of socially caring values through daily activities at school, including discussions of social issues in class. A conducive school environment is also an important element, providing students with the opportunity to continue to be involved in social activities, so that these values are increasingly internalized in them.

b. Inhibiting Factors

Although various efforts have been made, several factors still hinder the effectiveness of the formation of socially caring characters. Minimal parental support is one of the main obstacles, so that school efforts in forming student character are not optimal. In addition, time constraints and academic pressures make it difficult for students to fully participate in social activities. Another challenge is the lack of consistency in the implementation of social programs, which makes it difficult for socially caring values to become part of students' routines. These factors need to be addressed through increased family involvement and more structured and sustainable social program planning.

Discussion

This discussion will analyze the findings in the field related to the values of social care applied in SMPN 3 Bandar Dua Pidie Jaya and compare them with the indicators of social care according to the Ministry of Education, which include the aspects of "Providing assistance to others" and "Respecting others." In this discussion, the findings in the field are in accordance with these indicators.

1. Providing Assistance to Others

According to the Ministry of Education's indicators, social care values include responsive behavior to other people's difficulties and the implementation of social actions. At SMPN 3 Bandar Dua Pidie Jaya, programs such as social services, fundraising, and environmental cleaning activities have been implemented to encourage students to help others. The principal emphasized the importance of integrating social programs into school life, which strengthens the habit of caring behavior among students.

The research findings show that the implementation of social action has become a routine practice in schools, supported by policies that provide students with the opportunity to participate directly. This is in line with the indicators of the Ministry of Education, which emphasizes the importance of providing assistance to others as part of socially caring character education.

2. Respect Others

The second indicator of social care values includes cooperative behavior between friends, empathy, and harmonious attitudes towards school residents. At SMPN 3 Bandar Dua, these values are seen in various activities that encourage positive interactions among students. Through class discussion activities and guidance from homeroom teachers, students are trained to develop empathy and cooperation. The school actively facilitates learning the values of empathy and cooperation in daily activities.

Empathy at SMPN 3 Bandar Dua is instilled through direct experience in social activities such as community service and social projects. Students' involvement in social programs makes them appreciate others more and the importance of contributing to helping others. These activities strengthen empathy and cooperation among students, in accordance with national curriculum indicators that emphasize the values of respecting others and collaboration (Hidayatullah, 2010).

These social programs are supported by the policies of the principal and teachers, which encourage the habituation of social care behavior in students' daily lives. These findings indicate that the indicators of social care values from the Ministry of Education, such as empathy, cooperation, and responsiveness to the difficulties of others, have been implemented effectively in schools. The role of the principal at SMPN 3 Bandar Dua, Levinson's role theory in Soekanto (2010) which includes norms, tasks, and behaviors is very relevant.

- 1. The norms related to the principal's position require the principal to create an educational environment that supports socially caring characters by implementing social policies and programs. As a role model, he motivates teachers and students to actively play a role in character formation.
- 2. Duties and responsibilities extend beyond administrative functions. Principals design programs such as community service and environmental cleaning activities to internalize the values of social care in the curriculum, and work with teachers to overcome challenges such as time constraints and parental support.
- 3. The principal's behavior is reflected through direct involvement in the implementation of social programs, providing support and motivation, and monitoring their implementation. With this, the principal shows commitment to building a culture of social care in the school.

Lickona, Scharp, and Lewis's character education principles are also applied. The school promotes core values such as empathy, responsibility, and helping each other that are integrated into the curriculum and activities. A proactive approach through social programs, class discussions, and group work creates a culture that supports students' continued involvement in social action. Opportunities for moral action, such as fundraising for disaster victims, provide students with hands-on experience in the application of social care values.

The school curriculum is designed to enhance students' understanding of social issues. Appreciation and recognition of students who participate in social activities motivates them to continue contributing. The principal acts as a moral leader, while teachers and students actively participate in character development. Although parental involvement remains a challenge, schools continue to strive to improve their communication and participation to support character building. Character education evaluations are conducted to ensure that the program is effective and can be adjusted to evolving needs.

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Conclusion

The conclusion of this study is that the principal has taken strategic steps in the formation of students' socially caring character by formulating structured policies, implementing sustainable social programs such as community service and fundraising, providing examples through direct involvement in social activities, and conducting consistent monitoring and support. The combination of these policies creates a conducive environment for the development of students' socially caring character. The role of the principal has a positive impact on student behavior, as seen from their increasing awareness and involvement in social action. Students become more sensitive, motivated to help others, and active in social activities in the school environment and the community. The principal acts as a facilitator of positive change through leadership that encourages collaboration and social action.

Supporting factors include clear principal policies, active teacher involvement, and a conducive school environment. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include lack of support from parents and limited student time. This study found that the role of the principal in the formation of students' socially caring character at SMPN 3 Bandar Dua not only involves conventional social policy and program steps, but also innovations in the form of integrating social values into school culture through direct role models, cross-party collaboration, and a sustainable community-based approach. This approach broadens the scope of the principal's responsibilities from being merely an administrator to an active agent of moral change. This strategy provides a leadership model that can be adapted in other school contexts to create a sustainable educational community based on social values..

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