



The Role of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence in Improving Character Education of Students at SLB N Kota Jantho

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of teachers' emotional intelligence in improving character education for students at SLB N Kota Jantho. The research method used is a qualitative method with a case study approach. Data collection was carried out through interviews, observations, and documentation. The participants in this study were the school supervisor, principal, and teachers at SLB N Kota Jantho. The results of the study indicate that teachers' emotional intelligence plays an important role in improving character education for students at SLB N Kota Jantho. Teachers with high emotional intelligence are able to create a conducive learning environment, build positive relationships with students, and become role models in character development. Components of emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, have been shown to contribute significantly to the improvement of aspects of student character education, such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, and caring. The findings of this study indicate that training and development of emotional intelligence for SLB teachers needs to be a priority for schools and local governments. Investment in improving teachers' emotional intelligence can contribute to improving the quality of character education for students with special needs at SLB N Kota Jantho.

Keywords: Teacher, Emotional Intelligence, Character Education, SLB Students.

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1. Introduction

Credibility shows how important the role of teachers is in empowering and educating the nation. Teachers in optimizing the learning process and carrying out their primary duties and responsibilities impact student character [1]. Character education is a deliberate effort to help individuals understand, care, and act based on core ethical values. The main objective of character education is to shape individuals with understanding, care, and commitment to applying virtues in everyday life. Character education is further defined as a deliberate approach to developing positive character in individuals. It focuses on the development of social-emotional competencies, prosocial behavior, and moral values that are essential for both individuals and society [2].

A recent study conceptualized character education as a systematic process to facilitate cognitive, emotional, and behavioral development toward understanding and applying positive life values [3]. Based on several definitions above, it can be concluded that character education is a planned and systematic

effort to help individuals develop understanding, care, and commitment to the values of virtue that are important for themselves and their social environment. One important component in the formation of personality and student development is character education, especially for students with special needs at Special Education Schools (SLB). SLBs provide services to children with physical and mental disabilities, so that they can receive education just like other regular children. SLBs provide education from kindergarten to high school levels. The main goal of children with special needs attending SLB is to receive treatment according to their talents, interests, abilities, and disabilities. SLB students face more complex learning and emotional development problems than regular students, so the teacher's role is vital in helping students learn character [4].

Teachers' emotional intelligence is a key factor in creating a positive learning environment and supporting character development in SLB students. Teachers with high emotional intelligence are able to understand and manage their own emotions and have empathy to understand the feelings and needs of students. This allows teachers to build stronger

relationships with students, create a comfortable classroom atmosphere, and provide the emotional support needed by students with special needs [5]. Additionally, teachers' emotional intelligence helps in the learning process and in modeling positive behaviors. Teachers with good emotional intelligence can manage stress and conflict more effectively and provide role models for students in managing emotions and behaving appropriately [6]. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize one's own emotions and the emotions of others, motivate oneself, and manage emotions effectively in oneself and in relationships with others. Emotional intelligence consists of five main aspects: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills [7]. Furthermore, emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, manage, and express emotions effectively. It includes the ability to identify, use, understand, and regulate emotions both in oneself and in interactions with others [8].

Recent research visualizes emotional intelligence as a set of skills that allow an individual to understand, use, and manage emotional information in ways that support personal and others' well-being [9]. Therefore, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence is a multidimensional construct involving the ability to recognize, understand, regulate, and effectively utilize emotions both in oneself and in social interactions.

Character education emphasizes the importance of developing positive character in students through education. Character education includes the development of qualities such as honesty, responsibility, self-discipline, respect, and care for others. This theory emphasizes that character formation occurs not only cognitively but also through modeling and real-life practices in daily life. This is crucial in forming SLB students' character, such as self-confidence, responsibility, and the ability to interact positively with others [10]. Thus, teachers' emotional intelligence plays an important role in enhancing character education for SLB students. Teachers with good emotional intelligence can create a conducive learning environment, provide emotional support, and become role models in positive behavior, helping SLB students develop strong character and a positive personality [11].

In implementing character education at SLB, teachers must understand the characteristics of students with special needs and adapt appropriate learning strategies. Teachers must also be able to identify and address internal and external barriers that may hinder the development of student character, such as obstacles from parents, the community, and the government [12].

Character education is a critical aspect of student development at all educational levels, especially in Special Education Schools (SLB) that educate students with special needs. SLB teachers often face unique challenges in developing the social and emotional values important for the social integration and personal independence of these students. Teachers play a central role in this character education, not only as instructors but also as models, mentors, and mediators for students' social and emotional experiences [12]. SLB N Kota Jantho is one of the selected SLB educational units in Aceh Besar Regency as a School Driver Batch 3, consisting of students with characteristics such as deafness, intellectual disabilities, autism, physical disabilities, and blindness from elementary school to high school. In the context of SLB N Kota Jantho, initial observations showed that not all teachers had adequate emotional intelligence to effectively handle their students' special needs. In practice, there are still challenges in improving teachers' emotional intelligence as an effort to enhance character education for students at SLB N Kota Jantho.

Some challenges that may be faced include a lack of understanding among teachers about the importance of emotional intelligence in the character education process for SLB students, minimal training or development programs for teachers to enhance their emotional intelligence, limited special educational backgrounds, and a lack of collaboration between teachers, parents, and other related parties in supporting character education for students. The thoughts above form the basic concept for conducting research on the issue of **The Role of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence in Enhancing Character Education of Students at SLB N Kota Jantho**.

This study aims to investigate how teachers' emotional intelligence can affect the effectiveness of character education at SLB N Kota Jantho, which will ultimately assist in the development and implementation of better character education methods in special education environments.

Several aspects distinguish this research from previous studies. This research focuses on the role of teachers' emotional intelligence in enhancing character education for students at Special Education Schools (SLB), whereas previous studies may have focused on other aspects related to character education for SLB students.

2. Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach which is often called a naturalistic research method because the research is conducted in natural conditions (natural setting). Qualitative research is research that is completely or comprehensively intended to understand the phenomenon of what the research subject experiences, be it their behavior, perception,

motivation or actions, and in a descriptive form in the form of words and language, in a specific natural context by utilizing various natural methods [12].

The subjects in this study were several, namely the Supervisor, Principal, 3 Teachers of SLB N Kota Jantho. The object of this study is the emotional intelligence of teachers in improving the character education of students of SLB N Kota Jantho.

Data collection techniques were carried out in several ways, namely: (1) interviews; (2) observation; (3) documentation. Interviews were conducted with the Principal as the person in charge and who knows the most about SLB N Kota Jantho and the teachers as implementers of character education, as well as students. From the interview, the researcher recorded and took data as needed.

The researcher also conducted observations during the learning process inside or outside the classroom. In addition to interviews and observations, the researcher also reviewed documents related to the object of the study. The data analysis used by the researcher is interactive data analysis starting with the data collection stage with interviews, observation and documentation, data reduction by summarizing important data, after the data reduction process is complete, the researcher will present the data in the form of a brief description, and the final step in data analysis is drawing conclusions that will answer the existing problem formulation so that the research objectives are achieved [13].

3. Results and Discussions

Based on the formulation of the problem and research methods that have been discussed previously, the results of the qualitative analysis of the study entitled "The Role of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence in Improving Character Education of Students at SLB N Kota Jantho" can be explained as follows:

3.1. Description of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence at SLB N Kota Jantho

The results of observations and in-depth interviews show that most teachers at SLB N Kota Jantho have good emotional intelligence, in line with research findings stating that emotional intelligence is an important factor in the teaching profession, especially in the context of special education [14].

However, it was also found that some teachers still had difficulty managing negative emotions, such as stress and frustration, especially when dealing with challenging behavior from some students. This is in accordance with the research of Mérida-López et al. (2022) which found that special education teachers face higher levels of stress than regular teachers [15].

3.2. Character Education Overview of Students at SLB N Kota Jantho

The results of observations and document studies show that character education has become one of the main focuses at SLB N Kota Jantho, in line with previous studies that emphasize the importance of character education in the context of special education [2].

However, there are still some students who show less than good behavior, in line with the findings of previous studies that state that students with special needs often face challenges in character development [17].

3.3. The Role of Teachers' Emotional Intelligence in Improving Students' Character Education

- The results of interviews and observations revealed several important roles of teachers' emotional intelligence in improving students' character education, including:
- Building positive and trusting relationships with students, emphasizing the importance of teachers' emotional intelligence in building positive relationships with students [18].
- Providing examples and being role models in controlling emotions and behaving in the right way, in line with previous studies that state that teachers' emotional intelligence plays a role in modeling positive behavior [19].
- Creating a conducive classroom atmosphere that supports students' character development, emphasizing the role of teachers' emotional intelligence in creating a positive learning environment [20].
- Providing emotional support and helping students manage challenging emotions and behaviors, where teachers with good emotional intelligence can help students manage emotions and behaviors [15].
- Involving students in activities that encourage character development, emphasizing the importance of student involvement in activities that support Character Education.

4. Conclusions

Based on the results of the qualitative research analysis above, it can be concluded that: Teachers' emotional intelligence plays an important role in improving students' character education at SLB N Kota Jantho. Teachers with high emotional intelligence are able to create a conducive learning environment, build positive relationships with students, and be role models in character development. The components of teachers' emotional intelligence, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills, have been shown to contribute significantly to improving aspects of students' character education, such as

discipline, responsibility, honesty, and caring. Teachers at SLB N Kota Jantho who have good emotional intelligence tend to be more effective in implementing character education programs in schools. They are able to manage classes well, guide students, and create a learning atmosphere that encourages positive character development. The findings of this study indicate that training and development of emotional intelligence for SLB teachers needs to be a priority for schools and local governments. Investment in improving teachers' emotional intelligence can contribute to improving the quality of character education for students with special needs at SLB N Kota Jantho.

Author Contributions Statement

Name of Author	C	M	So	Va	Fo	I	R	D	W
Firmawati	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Sari Rizki		✓				✓		✓	✓
Tasya Humaira	✓		✓	✓			✓		

Conflict of Interest Statement

Authors state no conflict of interest.

Informed Consent

We have obtained informed consent from all individuals included in this study.

Ethical Approval

The research related to animal use has been complied with all the relevant national regulations and institutional policies for the care and use of animals.

Data Availability

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author, [F], upon reasonable request.

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