

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY AS A FOUNDATIONAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Character formation among elementary school students is increasingly important in response to the challenges of the digital era. As schools, families, and communities jointly influence children's moral development, a strong philosophical foundation is required to guide character education. This study aims to analyze the role of educational philosophy in shaping moral and ethical values in elementary school students through a systematic review of recent literature. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted using the PRISMA framework, examining national and international articles published between 2022 and 2025. The results show that character education is most effective when moral values are integrated into the curriculum, teachers function as moral role models, active learning strategies are applied, and families and school environments provide consistent reinforcement. From a theoretical perspective, educational philosophy contributes a conceptual framework that clarifies the purpose, values, and approaches of character education, enabling teachers to align pedagogical strategies with students' contextual needs. In conclusion, character education gains greater coherence and effectiveness when it is grounded in philosophical principles that emphasize value internalization, reflective practice, and authentic learning experiences.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a central pillar in shaping a nation's progress (Munandar et al., 2025). At the elementary level, education is not limited to academic achievement but also plays a crucial role in developing students' character, morality, and ethical awareness (Black et al., 2021; Almalki et al., 2024). The fundamental purpose of education is to nurture intellectually capable individuals who demonstrate noble conduct and social responsibility (Heryanti et al., 2023). Because elementary school students are in a formative stage of character development, the school environment

significantly influences the internalization of values. Schools therefore function as communities of character education that promote integrity, responsibility, and empathy (Masnan et al., 2024; Rahman et al., 2023).

Rapid technological development and diverse external influences present new challenges to children's moral formation. Character development occurs through continuous interaction between the family and school environments, both of which shape students' value systems (Dinarti et al., 2024; Ahyati et al., 2024). In this context, educational philosophy provides a normative and reflective foundation for understanding moral values and guiding their internalization in ways that respect cultural and social diversity (Forster, 2024; Lainio, 2023). A philosophical perspective positions character education not merely as rule enforcement but as a reflective process grounded in dialogue, ethical reasoning, and lived experiences (Hardiyanto et al., 2024).

Previous empirical studies demonstrate that character education at the elementary level contributes positively to the development of responsibility, empathy, and integrity, particularly when values are systematically integrated into the curriculum, modeled by teachers, and reinforced by the school environment and parental support (Putri et al., 2024; Saputri et al., 2025). However, implementation challenges remain evident, including teachers' limited conceptual understanding, curriculum demands, resource limitations, and external social influences (Fadhilah, 2024; Sukarno et al., 2025).

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to provide a systematic understanding of character education in elementary schools by examining effective implementation strategies, recurring challenges, and the contribution of educational philosophy as a foundational framework for character development. To achieve this aim, the study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) using the PRISMA protocol to synthesize findings from national and international studies published between 2022 and 2025.

METHOD

The study employed a conceptual Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to examine research on educational philosophy and character development among elementary school students. Literature was sourced from national and international journals published between 2022 and 2025 and selected based on relevance to the research focus and methodological rigor. The search used the keywords philosophy of education, character education, elementary school students' character, and character development. Article selection followed the PRISMA framework, encompassing identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion of studies that met the established criteria (Sitanggang, 2025). A PRISMA flow diagram is provided to ensure transparency in the selection process.

Figure 1. Stages of the PRISMA-Based Systematic Literature Review

Identification stage

An initial search was conducted in academic databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, and DOAJ, with an initial number of 100 articles. Keywords used included: educational philosophy, student character development, elementary school character education, educational values, the role of teachers in character education, and moral education for elementary school-aged children. The goal was to find literature discussing educational philosophy as a basis for character development in elementary schools.

Screening stage

The titles and abstracts of 100 articles were screened for relevance to the context of character education in elementary schools. Irrelevant articles were filtered out, such as those discussing educational philosophy unrelated to character education, or those examining morality in general but unrelated to elementary education. The screening results indicated that 50 articles met the initial criteria of focusing on student character development.

Eligibility stage

The 50 articles that passed the screening were read in full and assessed for quality based on completeness of data, strength of theoretical foundation, and relevance to the focus of character education in elementary schools. Articles were eliminated if they lacked sufficient data, had a weak theoretical foundation, or did not address educational philosophy as a basis for character development. After this process, 25 articles were selected as worthy of in-depth analysis.

Main focus: Using 25 articles of the highest quality and relevance as the basis for in-depth analysis. These articles provide insights into how the principles of educational philosophy can be applied to character education practices, value development strategies, and the role of teachers in shaping student character in elementary schools.

Source: (Sitanggang, 2025)

RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

This review examines the relevance of educational philosophy as a foundational basis for the character development of elementary school students. To support a clearer understanding of this theme, a table of international journal reviews is presented, highlighting studies related to the application of philosophical values, character formation, and the strengthening of students' personal dispositions within elementary education settings.

Table 1. Article Review

No	Author(s) and Year	Article Title	Main Findings	Relevance to the Article Title
1.	Anisa et al. (2024)	The Role of Educational Philosophy in the Character Development of Elementary School Students	Educational philosophy provides a conceptual foundation for the development of students' character.	Demonstrates educational philosophy as the primary foundation for the character development of elementary school students.
2.	Sabil et al. (2024)	Pancasila Educational Philosophy: Building Superior Character in Elementary Schools	The integration of Pancasila values into character education fosters the development of discipline, responsibility, and cooperation.	Supports philosophical foundations and character values as guiding principles for character development in elementary schools.

No	Author(s) and Year	Article Title	Main Findings	Relevance to the Article Title
3.	Aminah et al. (2022)	Strengthening Students' Character Education through a Contextual Learning Approach in Elementary Schools	Students' character is shaped through authentic experiences and everyday contexts.	Emphasizes a contextual approach that is aligned with educational philosophy.
4.	Saomah, O. (2024)	Enhancing Students' Character through Project-Based Islamic Religious Education at MI PUI Kaliaren	Project-based active learning enhances social and emotional skills, creativity, and collaboration.	Demonstrates the application of active methods in accordance with educational philosophy.
5.	Mohd Amin et al. (2024)	Exploring The Role Of Storyline, Characters, And Interactive Storytelling Techniques In Fostering Socio-Emotional Learning	Interactive storytelling and role-playing enhance empathy, cooperation, and communication skills.	Supports active learning methods for character development.
6.	Salsabilla, H. N. (2023)	Developing Environmental Care Character through Role-Playing Methods in Elementary School Students	Role-playing fosters responsibility, leadership, and caring attitudes.	Supports active methods in philosophy-based character education.
7.	Hafis et al. (2022)	Interactive Multimedia Based on Scientific Literacy and Character Education for Elementary School Students	Digital media enhance collaboration, creativity, and character learning.	Demonstrates digital media as a means for implementing educational philosophy.
8.	Nur, M. (2024)	The Role of Teachers in Developing Character Education for Students in the Digital Era	Teacher guidance is essential to ensure that technology supports character learning.	Emphasizes the role of teachers as facilitators in the application of educational philosophy.
9.	Parwati & Suastra (2024)	Critical Study Of Educational Philosophy: Implementation Of Character Education In The Pancasila Student Profile	Character education should be reflective and contextual.	Demonstrates that educational philosophy supports reflective and contextual approaches.
10.	Rakhmania & Pratiwi (2024)	The Implementation Of Self-Assessment In Character Pillar Activities Of Elementary School Students	Self-assessment enhances students' self-awareness and behavioral evaluation.	Supports the application of reflective educational philosophy for character development.
11.	Panggabean (2022)	Reflecting The Value Of Character Education In Lesson Planning	Teachers adapt strategies in accordance with students' characteristics, classroom	Emphasizes value-based learning adaptation in accordance with educational philosophy.

No	Author(s) and Year	Article Title	Main Findings	Relevance to the Article Title
12.	Lessu et al. (2024)	Family School Partnerships in Strengthening Students' Independent Character in Elementary Schools	conditions, and community values. Family and community support strengthens the internalization of character values.	Demonstrates the importance of synergy among schools, families, and communities.
13.	Muktiali et al. (2024)	The Role of Parents in Character Education for Fostering Reading Interest among Elementary School Age Children	Parents reinforce character learning through reading habits.	Emphasizes family involvement in character development.
14.	Putri et al. (2024)	The Implementation of Character Education in Elementary Schools: Challenges and Solutions	Challenges include limited teacher training, curricular workload, and a lack of assessment instruments.	Demonstrates the need for strategies and policies grounded in educational philosophy.
15.	Abdullah, A. (2025)	Elementary School Teacher Training in Integrating Character Education across All Subjects	Teacher training emphasizes active and reflective learning, as well as character integration.	Practical strategies for teachers in applying educational philosophy to character development.
16.	Anantama, R. (2024)	Character Development Of Elementary School Students Through Values Education: A Literature Review	The integration of values education into subject matter shapes students' character.	The application of educational philosophy as a guide for integrating character values.
17.	Handoko et al. (2024)	The Implementation Of Character Education In Elementary School: The Strategy And Challenge	Character development strategies include active methods, value integration, and collaboration among schools, families, and communities.	Supports educational philosophy as a practical guide for character development strategies.
18.	Tarusu et al. (2025)	Strengthening Children's Character through Social Emotional Learning: School Family Collaboration at SD Negeri 7 Tondano	School family collaboration enhances the internalization of character.	Emphasizes the synergy among schools, families, and communities in line with educational philosophy.
19.	Ayu et al. (2024)	A Holistic Approach To Character Education: Integration Of Governance, Islamic Values, And School Culture	A holistic approach integrates religious values, school culture, and governance.	A comprehensive approach grounded in educational philosophy for character development.

No	Author(s) and Year	Article Title	Main Findings	Relevance to the Article Title
20.	Warlim et al. (2025)	The Integration of Character Values in the Elementary School Curriculum	Character integration enhances discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and creativity.	Supports educational philosophy as the foundation for character development within the curriculum.
21.	Sukarni & Marsini (2025)	Development Of Social Studies Curriculum Integrating Local And Global Contexts For Character Strengthening	A local global based curriculum strengthens character values in a sustainable manner.	Supports educational philosophy in guiding character development through the curriculum.
22.	Rizkiyana et al. (2024)	The Role of Teachers in Developing Work Ethic Character within the School Environment	Teachers, as role models and facilitators, shape students' positive character.	Demonstrates the role of teachers as an implementation of educational philosophy.
23.	Julismawati & Eliana (2024)	The Role of Teachers in Shaping Students' Character	Consistency in teachers' behavior supports the formation of positive character.	Demonstrates the importance of teachers as role models within educational philosophy.
24.	Maulina & Lingga (2025)	The Role Of Teachers In Shaping The Disciplinary Character Of Fifth-Grade Students At SD Negeri 141 Pekanbaru	Teachers play a role in guiding students' discipline and responsibility.	Emphasizes educational philosophy as enacted through teachers' exemplification.
25.	Fazalani, et al. (2024)	The Implementation of Character Values in School and Home Environments	Character values are more effective when aligned between school and home and when local culture is respected.	Emphasizes the importance of integrating character values through educational philosophy and school home synergy.

This section presents a classification of the main themes derived from various national and international journals that examine the role of educational philosophy as a foundation for the character development of elementary school students. The following classification table is designed to provide a concise overview of research focuses and their relevance to the formation of character, values, and attitudes essential to the educational process at the elementary school level.

Table 2. Classification of Main Themes

No	Main Theme	Sub-Focus	Relevant Articles	Summary of Relevance to the Title
1.	Educational philosophy as the foundation for character development.	Conceptual foundations, theories, and values of character education.	Anisa et al. (2024), Sabil et al. (2024), Aminah et al. (2022), Warlim et al. (2025), Sukarni & Marsini (2025)	Demonstrates educational philosophy as the foundation guiding the direction, values, and objectives of character development in elementary school students.
2.	The role of teachers as role models.	Teachers as behavioral models and facilitators of character learning.	Rizkiyana et al. (2024), Julismawati & Eliana (2024), Maulina &	Teachers play an active role in instilling character through concrete examples, in accordance

No	Main Theme	Sub-Focus	Relevant Articles	Summary of Relevance to the Title
3.	Active learning methods.	Storytelling, role-playing, dramatization, mini projects, and digital media.	Lingga (2025), Nur (2024) Saomah (2024), Mohd Amin et al. (2024), Ramadhani et al. (2024), Salsabilla (2023), Hafis et al. (2022)	with the principles of educational philosophy. Active methods cultivate students' social and emotional skills, creativity, and collaboration through authentic experiences.
4.	Reflective and contextual approaches.	Student reflection, relevance to everyday life, and strategic adaptation.	Parwati & Suastra (2024), Rakhmania & Pratiwi (2024), Panggabean (2022)	Character development is effective when students reflect on learning experiences and teachers adjust strategies in accordance with local contexts.
5.	The role of families and communities, as well as evaluation strategies.	Parental support, community involvement, cross-subject integration, and assessment instruments.	Lessu et al. (2024), Tsania & Riganti (2023), Fazalani et al. (2024), Muktiali et al. (2024), Putri et al. (2024), Tarusu et al. (2025), Abdullah (2025), Anantama (2024)	Harmonious support from families and communities, along with valid assessment instruments, enhances the internalization of character, making character education an integral part of the learning experience.

The reviewed studies indicate that integrating character values into the curriculum functions as a structural mechanism that enables the continuous development of discipline, responsibility, cooperation, creativity, curiosity, and social awareness through routine learning activities (Warlim et al., 2025; Sukarni & Marsini, 2025). This integration becomes effective when teachers consistently enact character values through interaction and behavioral exemplification, positioning them simultaneously as role models and learning facilitators (Rizkiyana et al., 2024; Julismawati & Eliana, 2024; Maulina & Lingga, 2025). These findings suggest that educational philosophy operates not merely as an abstract framework but as a guiding foundation that aligns curricular content, pedagogical practice, and teacher behavior in supporting holistic character development (Aminah et al., 2022).

From a progressivist perspective, active learning emerges as a key pedagogical mechanism for character formation. Methods such as storytelling, role-playing, dramatization, experience-based mini projects, and collaborative tasks consistently promote students' social and emotional competencies, including empathy, cooperation, leadership, and communication skills (Saomah, 2024; Mohd Amin et al., 2024; Ramadhani et al., 2024; Salsabilla, 2023). Rather than functioning as isolated activities, these methods reflect progressivism's emphasis on learning through experience and social interaction, thereby reinforcing character values through meaningful participation.

Digital media can support character learning when it is designed and implemented within a pedagogical framework that emphasizes interaction, collaboration, and reflection (Hafis et al., 2022). However, its effectiveness depends on purposeful instructional use rather than passive consumption. In this context, teacher guidance is essential to ensure that technology functions as a medium for value internalization and positions teachers as ethical mediators in digital learning environments (Nur, 2024).

Reflective and contextual approaches are also identified as essential elements of philosophy-based character education. Encouraging students to reflect on learning experiences and relate them to everyday life fosters self-awareness, moral reasoning, and behavioral responsibility (Parwati & Suastra, 2024; Rakhmania & Pratiwi, 2024). At the instructional level, these approaches require teachers to adapt strategies to students' characteristics, classroom conditions, and community values, ensuring that character education remains culturally responsive and contextually meaningful (Panggabean, 2022).

Beyond the school context, family and community involvement significantly strengthens the internalization of character values. Alignment between school-based character education and practices at home enhances consistency and reinforces value formation in daily life (Lessu et al., 2024; Tsania & Rigianti, 2023; Fazalani et al., 2024; Muktiali et al., 2024). Nevertheless, recurring challenges persist, including limited sustained teacher training, curricular constraints that marginalize character education, and the absence of comprehensive assessment instruments (Putri et al., 2024). These challenges indicate a gap between philosophical ideals and institutional implementation.

To address these issues, the reviewed literature underscores the need for strategic interventions grounded in progressivist philosophy, including systematic teacher training focused on active, reflective, and contextual learning, cross-subject integration of character education, and the development of valid assessment tools (Abdullah, 2025; Anantama, 2024). Sustained collaboration among schools, families, and communities further emerges as a decisive factor in embedding character education into students' lived learning experiences (Tarusu et al., 2025; Handoko et al., 2024; Ayu et al., 2024).

The findings show that educational philosophy, particularly progressivism, underpins the integration of curriculum design, teaching strategies, learning methods, and stakeholder collaboration in character education. The reviewed studies indicate that these philosophical principles are reflected in instructional practices aimed at addressing character development in elementary schools. Character education is implemented through structured learning activities that emphasize coherence, reflection, and contextual relevance in supporting students' moral and social development.

CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review, it can be concluded that effective character development among elementary school students requires a holistic approach that is integrative, reflective, and contextual, with educational philosophy serving as a conceptual foundation for designing relevant strategies, methods, and policies. Character is formed through authentic daily learning experiences in which teachers act as both role models and facilitators, utilizing active learning methods such as storytelling, role-playing, collaborative projects, and teacher-guided digital media, while encouraging students to reflect on their experiences, relate them to everyday life, and adapt learning to classroom conditions, cultural contexts, and community values. The success of this process is also strongly determined by harmonious family and community involvement that reinforces the internalization of values, despite persistent challenges such as limited teacher training, curricular constraints, and inadequate assessment instruments. Through the implementation of such comprehensive strategies, character education moves beyond a formal program to become an integral and meaningful part of students' learning experiences, enabling character development to occur in a holistic, sustainable, and impactful manner.

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