Redefining Character Education: A Review of Essential Goals and Values

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INFO ARTICLE	ABSTRACT
	In one decade lastly, education character experience shift significant conceptual along increasing complexity challenge social, cultural, and global. This article aim for reconstruct understanding education character through review systematic to goals and values growing essentials in literature academic cutting-edge research this use approach systematic literature review to article journal reputable and source policy relevant education, with analysis thematic for identify patterns, tendencies, and redefinitions conceptual education character contemporary. Findings study show that education character no again understood as planting individual moral values that are normative and static, but rather as approach education holistic that integrates moral, social, emotional and civic dimensions in a way simultaneously. Core values such as honesty, responsibility responsibility, fairness, caring, respect, and citizenship show consistency cross context culture and country, but redefined as competence behavior that can developed through experience planned learning, culture supportive schools, as well as practice pedagogical reflective. This study also confirms convergence between education character and social-emotional learning, which strengthens view that character nature dynamic, relational, and evolving through interaction sustainable social. With thus, the article this offer framework conceptually broadening understanding education character as an educational process contextual and adaptive sustainability, at the same time give implications theoretical and practical for development curriculum as well as policy education characters in the 21st century.

1.   Introduction

Character building has appear as focus main in policy global education as well as national in two decades lastly, along with with challenge social and progress increasingly advanced technology complex. Character understood as a group moral disposition, ethics, and values social which includes consistent behavior, attitudes, and habits in life individual (education character in a way general covers values education, moral education, and approaches integrative other in curriculum). Silay (2014) shows that education character own connection close with education values and moral education, so often the approach this become runway important in form ethical and responsible citizens answer social.

In context formal education, goals education character has develop far beyond just traditional moral formation. Research The latest by Yuan, MacDonnell, Poliakova, Hatchimonji, Linsky, Selby & Elias (2025) emphasizes that education character is also an

educational strategy holistic in purpose develop ability social-emotional like empathy, sense of responsibility answer, and work the same or crucial competencies for participant educate for participate in an increasingly global society pluralistic and dynamic. In line with that, Hadi, Kholis, Remanita & Harta (2025) stated that approach based grades at school can strengthen learning character through teacher involvement, environment schools, and integration mark to in contextual curriculum.

More further education character viewed as runway for future generations who do not only intelligent in a way cognitive but also have integrity, resilience, and adaptability to demands of the times (Arthur, Kristjánsson, Harrison, Sanderse & Wright, 2016). In the digital and globalization era, the challenges to moral integrity of the generation young the more complex, so that education character considered as business strategic in implant values ethics and competence adaptive social, for example skills soft skills like solution problem, communication effective, and leadership. Implementation education effective character not only form moral behavior but also facilitates internalization mark in various aspect life participant educated (Rasyid, Fajri, Wihda, Ihwan & Agus, 2024).

Character building face various significant facts and problems in the environment school. For example: lack teacher's understanding of draft education comprehensive character, limitations source power and support facilities, as well as influence environment social that is not always support desired moral values; things this cause implementation education character often not optimal and not integrated in a way effective in the learning process daily. Studies scientific show that challenge this is also exacerbated by the lack of parental and community involvement, as well as impact negative progress global technology and culture that influence behavior students, so that formation strong character still become issue necessary center handled in a way collaborative between school, family, and maker education policy (Albet et al., 2024).

In addition, literature latest confirm that education character no just individual realm, but also has implications for the quality connection social and structural more community broad. According to Dewi, Mutiara, Husna, Reywanda, Purnomo, Rahmat & Nurlaili (2025) education strong character can support aspirations education national and objectives further development wide, including in context Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where increasing quality individual characterful can contribute to development a just, tolerant and responsible society responsible for the environment social.

With thus, redefinition education character required for unite objective pedagogical with challenge contemporary and needs global society. This study take approach literature for serve analysis integrative about how objective education character and values has reconceptualized in study academic during ten year lastly, and how matter this give runway strong conceptual for practices and policies more education effective.

2. Method

This study use method studies literature with systematic literature review approach to get understanding comprehensive about redefinition education character, especially related goals and values its essence. Selected literature fulfil criteria inclusion in the form of article journal reputable, relevant in a way thematic, and reviewed colleagues. Data analyzed use analysis thematic, which includes the coding process, grouping concept and synthesis findings for identify patterns, tendencies, and development conceptual education character in decade last. Approach this allows compilation framework systematic and argumentative conceptual.

3.   Result and Discussion

Character Education Goals

Educational goals character has develop far beyond just traditional moral formation that emphasizes comply rule or social norms solely. Literature academic contemporary show that education character now understood as an educational strategy holistic that is not only implant moral values, but also develop competence social-emotional participant students (Yuan et al., 2025). Systematic review latest about education character show that role education character covers development empathy, tolerance, and understanding to diversity, which is important for formation citizens who can life productive in a pluralistic and dynamic global society (Sitanggang, Lubis, Muljono & Pramono, 2025). For example, in context development tolerance, education character play a role in foster respect, empathy, and awareness will importance diversity culture in environment more learning and social wide.

In addition, the approach education modern character in explicit combine element social-emotional learning (SEL) which aims develop interpersonal skills such as ability arrange emotions, building connection positive, and ability Work The same in group (Chowkase, 2023). The SEL program has identified in a way wide in literature education as factor key factors that contribute to the improvement empathy, sense of responsibility answer social, as well as ability collaborative participant educate dimensions that transcend traditional moral learning that only focuses on behavioral norms.

In line with that, Warlim, Rozak & Revalina (2025) showed that practice education character show that integration character with curriculum and activities learning in a way overall tend more effective in form behavior positive like honesty, sense of responsibility answer, and work same. This model put education character as an integral part of overall experience study participant educate, not as cargo addition solely, so that objective education character covers formation a person with integrity, responsible answer in a way social, as well as capable adapt in context complex social.

Essential Values of Character Education

Essential values in education character positioned as foundation normative for development personality participant educate in a way whole, beyond approach moralistic traditional compliance - focused normative just. According to Arthur et al. (2016) education character contemporary understood as part from values education (Figure 1) which integrates moral, social and emotional dimensions in frame form capable individuals functioning in a way ethical and responsible answer in modern society. Review comprehensive to study One decade final confirm that mark character no nature individualistic, but rather relationship-oriented social and responsibility answer citizenship in context life together (Putri, Astuti, Rahmat, Febriyanti, Putri & Azizah, 2025).
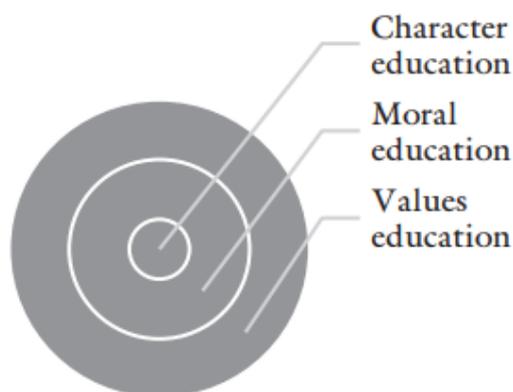

Figure 1. The relationship between general approaches to values education

A number of study empirical and systematic review identify core values that are consistent appear in various context education across countries, including honesty, respect, responsibility responsibility, justice, caring, and citizenship. Values the not only understood as objective normative education, but also as competence behavior that can developed through design planned and continuous learning. In line with the opinion of Birhan, Shiferaw, Amsalu, Tamiru & Tiruye (2021) who stated that evaluation of educational programs character show that internalization values this contribute to improvement climate school, relationship positive social, as well as behavior prosocial participant educate.

More further development literature latest show existence convergence between education character and development SEL skills. Character education viewed effective when integrated moral values with ability empathetic, management emotions, work same, and taking responsible decisions answer (Chowkase, 2023). A study by Taylor et al. (2017) showed that integration mark character and competence social-emotional give impact significant to readiness participant educate face challenge complex social, including ability adaptability, tolerance, and collaboration in environment multicultural.

In context globalization and plurality social, values essential education characters also experience expansion meaning in a way conceptual. Values such as tolerance, appreciation to diversity, justice social and responsibility global responsibility is increasing occupy position central in curriculum character contemporary research latest confirm that education relevant characters with challenge the 21st century must nature contextual, adaptive, and responsive to dynamics social, so that values character no treated as static concept, but rather as construction evolving ethics along change society (Saepurokhman & Ali, 2025).

Redefining Character Education in Contemporary Context

In one decade lastly, education character undergoing a process of redefinition significant conceptual along with change landscape social, cultural and global which are increasingly complex. Character education no again understood as effort normative that focuses on planting individual moral values statically, but rather as approach education holistic development-oriented capacity ethical, social, emotional, and civic participant educate. Arthur et al. (2016) emphasized that education character is a pedagogical process that is designed in a way aware for grow moral, intellectual, and civic virtues through experience integrated learning in life school. This definition reflect shift from approach moralistic traditional going to understanding character as related multidimensional constructs close with life social and participation citizen.

Redefinition education character is also reflected in literature that places character no just as a set personal values, but as competence behavior that can developed and observed in context social. Hadi et. (2025) defines education character as approach education based purposeful values form pattern thoughts, dispositions, and actions ethical participant educate through environment consistent and continuous learning. Within the framework this, character understood as results interaction between individual and context social, so that success education character is very dependent on design curriculum, culture school, and practice supportive pedagogical internalization mark in a way real.

In line with development in this regard, Addzaky, Bustomi, Khusnadin & Alfani (2025) emphasized that redefinition education modern characters must integrate moral dimension with aspect emotional and relational. Character no can released from ability individual in understand and manage emotions, building relation healthy social, as well as take decision ethical in complex situation. Therefore that, education character understood as a development process virtues that are manifested in practice social, not just as a transfer of value normative or teaching moral rules. This views strengthen argument that character nature dynamic and growing through experience reflective social.

In context globalization and increasing plurality social, redefinition education character is also characterized by expansion values essential to be focus curriculum character contemporary. Jerome and Kisby (2022) show that education characters in various countries are increasingly directed for prepare participant educate life in public multicultural and democratic. Values like tolerance, appreciation to diversity, justice social and responsibility global responsibility becomes an integral part of education

character 21st century. This is mark shift important from individual-oriented character towards character oriented social and civic, where participants educate positioned as moral subject at the same time actor social in life together.

Redefinition education character is also strengthened by integration between education characters and framework SEL. Taylor et al. (2017) defines education character contemporary as an approach that is not can separated from development skills social-emotional like empathy, work same, management emotions, and decision making responsible decisions answer. Meta-analysis they show that the education program designed characters and SEL in a way systematic contribute to improvement behavior prosocial, quality relation social, as well as climate positive school. This findings confirm that education character no only functioning as objective normative, but also as a pedagogical strategy that has an impact real in practice social participant educate.

Literature systematic review and evaluation policy education the more confirm consistency core values in education character cross context culture and country. The What Works Clearinghouse report from the US Department of Education (2018) identified values like honesty, respect, responsibility responsibility, justice, care, and citizenship as foundation main educational program effective character. However thus, the values the no positioned as draft abstract, but rather as competence behavior that can developed through planned learning, habituation institutional, as well as involvement active community school. This approach strengthen redefinition education character as an educational process sustainable which involves dimensions cognitive, affective, and behavioral in a way simultaneous.

More far, education character in perspective 21st century understood as construction contextual and adaptive ethics to change social. UNESCO (2015) through framework global citizenship education emphasize that education character must equip participant educate with global awareness, commitment to justice social, as well as ability act ethical in face global issues such as inequality, conflict, and sustainability environment. Within the framework this, character no again understood as a set values that are static and universal in nature ahistorical, but rather as results of ongoing dialogue between universal values and context socio-cultural that continues changed.

4. Conclusion

Character building contemporary has experience redefinition from approach narrow normative going to framework education holistic that integrates moral, emotional, social and civic dimensions in a way simultaneous. Character education no again understood as planting static personal values, but rather as a development process competence manifested behavior in action ethical, relationship healthy social and participation responsible answer in life socializing. Literacy latest show existence consistency cross-core values context culture, such as honesty, respect, responsibility responsibility, justice, care, and citizenship, which must be developed through experience meaningful learning, practice pedagogical reflective, as well as culture supportive schools internalization mark in a way sustainable. With thus, education character understood as a dynamic and contextual process whose success depends heavily on the design curriculum, environment institutional, and involvement active all over community education in form individuals who have integrity, empathy, and are capable contribute in a way ethical in a pluralistic and ever-changing society develop.

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