

# Cultivating Independent Character in Students at the Cendekia Berseri School in Makassar City

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## **Abstract:**

*The world of education has three domains that students must master: cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The cognitive domain is oriented toward mastery of science and technology, and the affective domain is related to attitude, morality, spirit, and character. In contrast, the psychomotor domain is linked to procedural skills and tends to be mechanical. However, in the reality of learning in schools, efforts are always made to balance these three domains, but in fact, the dominant domain is the cognitive and then psychomotor domains; the result is that students are rich in hard skills but lacking in soft skills because the affective domain is ignored. The speed of technology and the rapid development of the times require people with character who can adapt to their environment and keep up with technological growth. For this reason, character strengthening and education are essential. Researchers use this type of qualitative research because qualitative research requires data and information in the form of descriptions and narratives to reveal the meaning behind the informants' descriptions/descriptions. A child's character will be formed from the habits they get at school and home. Therefore, good cooperation between teachers and parents is needed so that interpretation can occur between the habits made by teachers and parents.*

**Keywords:** Full-day school; independent character; protege

## **INTRODUCTION**

The objectives of national education in article 3 reflect the qualities that every Indonesian citizen must have, developed by various educational units with different human values that an Indonesian citizen must have. Therefore, the aim of character education is the most operational source in developing character education. In the world of education, there are three domains that students must master, namely the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The cognitive domain is oriented to the mastery of science and technology; the affective domain is related to attitude, morality, spirit, and character, while the psychomotor domain is linked to procedural skills and tends to be mechanical. Teachers and the government are still pursuing students' character formation in the learning process. Remembering how important it is to form a golden generation that is intelligent and has character as echoed in the character education strengthening program since 2017 for all students in Indonesia with five characteristics that need to be possessed, namely religious,

nationalist, independent, cooperation, and integrity (Ernawati et al., 2022) (Yenti & Maswal, 2021).

In general, problems in education involve various factors such as curriculum, infrastructure, teacher quality, management, educational policies, and the character of students. (Khaironi, 2017). These problems require special attention and handling from the authorities to achieve quality education and form a quality society so that in the future, children can compete in the global era (Susanto, n.d.). Apart from being an educator, the role and responsibilities of teachers must also be to develop children's independent behavior from an early age (Maranatha, 2019). In this way, teachers can instill several norms into students' souls so that they become people who have the knowledge, have commendable attitudes and character, are capable and skilled, and have noble character. However, efforts are always made to balance these three domains in school learning. Still, the dominant domain is the cognitive domain, followed by the psychomotor domain. The result is that students are rich in hard skills but lacking in soft skills because the affective domain is ignored (Juliani, 2013).

Character education refers to developing and improving students' personality qualities, which is an urgent matter nowadays (Zubaidah, 2019)—various phenomena occurring among children and teenagers who no longer reflect or meet the nation's expectations. Many incidents occur in schools, such as bullying, violence, and sexual harassment. This is due to the lack of character education instilled in the environment around children, both inside and outside the school. For this reason, the role of parents and schools is essential for children's development, especially in strengthening or character development programs for children. The speed of technology and the rapid development of the times require people with character who can adapt to their environment and keep up with technological growth.

For this reason, character strengthening and education are essential. One of the characteristics that children must have is being independent. Deep Erikson (Candra & Leona, 2019) Expressing independence is a person's attempt to escape from parents in search of an identity to find himself through the process of searching for ego identity, namely standing alone. Children's independence is also the child's ability to carry out daily activities and tasks independently or with little guidance, according to the child's development and skills. Independence means that children can know right and wrong and differentiate between good and evil.

Steinberg (Kurniawati, 2023) explains that independence refers to two mutually sustainable terms: independence and autonomy. Independence refers to an individual's ability to carry out their activities regardless of the influence of other people. In contrast, autonomy is developing individual independence emotionally, behaviorally, and values. Children with an independent character are expected to be able to carry out their activities without the help of their parents or the adults around them. So that it helps children to achieve their life goals, achievements that can undoubtedly win awards. Forming children's character, especially independent character, requires habituation because of the importance of internalizing behavior and independent traits for young children. Therefore, kindergarten education is a very strategic period for forming the essential development of attitudes, knowledge, skills, and creativity students need in their environment and creating an independent character for children for the next period of growth and development.

Every individual is born. It is natural for every human being born into the world to be able to live and develop. He cannot stand alone because humans are apart from being individual creatures. They are also social creatures (Rusmiati et al., 2019). For this reason, every individual must establish social relationships between one individual and another and is naturally equipped to help themselves by adapting to the conditions of the natural

environment to survive. Psychologically, self-adjustment is also called adjustment (Endriani, 2016).

Based on the results of initial observations made by researchers, several activities have the value of independence, which become a habit for all students at the Berseri Scholars School, including junior kindergarten students who are the focus of the research. This can be observed by making strict regulations for teachers, students, and parents, what methods teachers use to accustom students to be independent and disciplined, and how the interaction between teachers and students is used to train them to be independent and disciplined. The value of independence that can be seen, especially in junior kindergarten students at the Cendekia Berseri School, is that students are trained to be independent in going to the bathroom themselves, independent when playing, independent when cleaning plates after eating, separate when doing assignments, independent without being waited on. When going to school, picking up toys, eating, putting on shoes, returning things taken to their place, cleaning up your belongings, and so on. The results of observations in the field were obtained when researchers conducted observations at the Berseri Scholar School, one of the kindergartens in Makassar that implements an entire day school. During a school interview, one of the teachers stated that the school had implemented independent character values. Separate character values are one of the main things applied in classroom and school learning. So, students at this school are expected to avoid depending on other people from an early age.

As for other research related to children's independence, research (Jojo Renta Maranatha, 2019) states that there is an influence between the application of discipline in kindergarten and increasing independence in early childhood. The autonomy of group A kindergarten children who were given congruent communication discipline treatment was higher than that of group A kindergarten children who were not given treatment. As has been stated, the discipline given to kindergarten group A children is carried out in learning at school, so in applying discipline, planning the application of discipline in learning activities becomes fundamental and vital. Discipline implementation needs to be prepared and implemented well in the planning process. because the application of congruent communication discipline is carried out by teachers in learning at school. So, the success of implementing congruent communication discipline is determined by the ability and commitment of educators or kindergarten teachers. Based on the problems explained and considered necessary, research was conducted on cultivating independent character in children at the Cendekia Berseri School in Makassar.

## METHOD

Researchers use this type of qualitative research because qualitative research requires data and information in the form of descriptions and narratives to reveal the meaning behind the informants' descriptions/descriptions. Qualitative research methods are often also called naturalistic research methods because research is carried out in natural conditions (natural settings), which are more qualitative. This research uses direct research using a qualitative approach. This research approach is based on revealing the influence of full-day school on children's independence. This research was conducted at the Cendekia Berseri School. This research was conducted within one month. Researchers carry out their duties to analyze and observe children's activities at school, especially children's independence. The research informant in this study was the Junior Kindergarten class teacher. Sample determination includes Purposive Sampling, namely, purposive withdrawal of informants is a method of attracting informants which is carried out in selecting subjects Based on specific criteria set by the researcher (Campbell et al., 2020). Determining informants in this research was carri-

ed out using a purposive technique where informants were selected deliberately based on established criteria specified based on the research objectives (Dolores & Tongco, 2007). Researchers also use saturated data samples. The data collection process will be completed when all the informants' answers are the same. Research focus can develop or change according to developments in research problems in the field. This instrument uses observation sheets and interview guides as support in this research. The type of data collected in this research comes from two sources, namely primary data and secondary data. Data collection techniques used were observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Data analysis techniques used are reduction, display, and verification.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Education in the current era of globalization requires schools to create students who can think critically and where children can carry out their activities independently. Along with the increasingly rapid development of technology, it has changed the way we communicate, how we interact, how we eat, and so on (Septiani & Kasih, 2021). In line with this, the task of teachers in educating children at school is to adapt to the character demands of the 21st century.

The relationship between character strengths and 21st-century competencies, including its theoretical definition, implies that character strengths are the psychological foundation that supports the acquisition and development of 21st-century competencies (Zubaidah, 2019). Forming children is a challenging matter. It requires cooperation between parents and teachers. For the formation of independent character at school to be successful, we need to involve all components of the school. One component that needs to be conceptualized and designed is the techniques and methods for forming independent character, where teachers can create a learning climate and atmosphere that can increase independence in students. A separate character can influence social and emotional development in early childhood (Sari & Rasyidah, 2020). The interrelationship of character 1 with other characters can be used as an initial foundation for bringing out different characters in children. According to Yamin (Bump Sri Agus Setyaningsih & Wahyuni, 2018), Aspects of children's independence include social-emotional, physical, bodily, and intellectual independence. To increase aspects of children's freedom, this is done slowly or repeatedly and by giving children opportunities to carry out their responsibilities but with the supervision of adults or educators. Early childhood education is an educational institution that systematically implements guidance, teaching, and training programs to help children to be able to develop their potential optimally, both regarding the moral-spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, and motoric aspects of children, and is an effort coaching aimed at children from birth to six years of age, by providing educational stimulation to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children are ready to enter further education, which is carried out through formal channels.

The educational process of a teacher is not only limited to transferring knowledge but must be able to shape the character and disposition of children so that they become better, more polite, at an ethical and aesthetic level, and behave in everyday life. The best period for forming a person's character is during childhood, starting from an early age, then at the age of 0 - 6 years, which is usually called the childhood period golden age, which experiences very rapid growth and development. Currently, the teacher is a supporter or provider of assistance whose job is to discipline the child to comply with school rules and living norms in the family and community.

This research discusses the relationship between cultivating independent character in students at serial intellectual schools in Makassar, which implements a full-day school

system. The aim of character education is the most operational source in developing character education. Eighteen character values are emphasized in students to build national character and increase the educational development index. At this time, children's potential can be developed. For this reason, teachers are critical as educators. Teaching independence to children from an early age requires unique methods. To teach independence, you don't need to tell people what independence means or anything like that. It is enough to make sure efforts, such as those made at school, namely habituation, which also needs to be modeled by educators so that children can carry out their activities, namely allowing children to do the things they like, which is one way to instill independence. Teachers only need to give children choices. This treatment will enable children to decide according to their desires and needs. Children at an early age already desire to be active and provide the best business results for themselves and others. When a child gives or does a good deed, the teacher must appreciate his efforts, even though his work is not perfect. Children can also be left to solve their problems in whatever way they know so that they can solve their issues.

According to (Wiyaini N, 2020), two factors influence the development of independence in early childhood: internal and external. Internal factors that influence the child's independent nature are influenced by the child's emotions and intellectual factors, which can help build the child's independence. The characteristic that marks a child as separate lies in controlling the child's feelings, which are not dependent on the emotional needs of the parents. Early childhood independence differs from general independence—developmental tasks such as learning to feed themselves or interact with others. If young children can carry out their developmental tasks, they can be said to be independent. At the time of research carried out by children aged 4 - 5 years in intellectual school kindergartens, the results of observations carried out were by the opinion expressed by (Yamin M, 2010) that children could carry out their activities independently by their developmental tasks.

The developmental tasks at this age are measured by indicators of self-confidence, responsibility for the environment and oneself, discipline and sharing, and control of one's emotions. Self-confidence is seen from internal factors, namely when the child can move forward when allowed to express his own opinion, and self-confidence can also be assessed from the child's intellectual perspective, which is evaluated during the learning process and the child's behavior in his daily life. This is by what is expressed. According to Acmad, the characteristics of a person or individual with self-confidence include (1) Acting independently, namely being able to act on oneself independently or without other people's involvement, and believing in the activities carried out. (2) Having a positive feeling towards oneself or husnudzan, namely having a good assessment from within oneself, both in terms of views and actions taken, thus giving rise to a positive feeling towards oneself and one's future. (3) Dare to express your opinion. The existence of an attitude of being able to express something within oneself that one wants to express to others without any coercion or feeling that could hinder the disclosure (Latifah et al., 2018).

The following are the results of observations on children in junior classes, namely as follows:

1. Internal factors

- a. Children's Emotions

The factor that marks a child as independent lies in controlling the child's emotions, which are not dependent on the emotional needs of the parents. Based on the results of observations that began in the junior kindergarten class on November 27, children carried out worship activities, namely the Dhuha prayer. In selecting the prayer leader, boys were seen raising their hands without any coercion by the teacher. When the teacher wanted to choose a prayer leader, the children in the class were seen enthusiast-

ically raising their hands. Emotional factors also play an essential role in determining one's choices, namely having the courage to make one's choice. From the observations made in the Junior Kindergarten class, all children were assessed as developing according to expectations. Before the activity, there is an opening activity with activities carried out by the teacher, namely the poki-poki dance with the children. The children were seen enthusiastically following their teacher. After the activity, the children were asked several questions and enthusiastically raised their hands. This indicates that the child is enthusiastic about carrying out the learning process.

Children in the junior kindergarten class can also take responsibility; this can be seen when they lay out mats and put up their sheets. In this case, it has developed very well because it has been able to do it without help and direction from the teacher. A child's ability to adapt to the environment of their own accord is one of the characteristics of a child's independent character. The results of observations made in the junior kindergarten class assessed that all children could develop very well.

b. Children's Intellectuals

The child's self-confidence can be seen during observation. After each coloring learning activity, the teacher asks the child to come forward to show or demonstrate the results of his work in front of his friends. There was one child who dashed forward and exhibited his work. If you look at his work, it is immaculate, and the colors given to the pictures are elegant. From the results of the teacher's interview, the child was very. Children's intellect influences children's attitudes. It was seen that during the observation period, several children were active in the class during the question and answer process, and some were listening. Children who always answer their teacher's questions have confidence in every answer they give. Assessing children's intellectual abilities or understanding can be measured from their answers.

Another activity carried out in the junior kindergarten class is being able to make choices, which can be seen when eating in the dining room, namely choosing the food menu that he likes himself and taking several side dishes that he likes. This activity shows that children are independent in choosing their favorite foods or are disconnected in fulfilling their desires.

Emotions that influence children also influence children's desires. If a child is happy, he will be enthusiastic about carrying out his activities at school and home. Suppose you look at the activities in the junior kindergarten class. In that case, they start with an opening by singing several fun movements and songs so that the children are enthusiastic about carrying out activities at school. As for children's daily activities after carrying out activities in class, children are also accustomed to being responsible for laying out their mattresses. Choosing the desired food menu according to the menu on the table, being confident in showing your work to friends, raising your hand without pressure from the teacher, and taking off your shoes are habits that can build children's independence; apart from that, they also build children's self-confidence. The teacher's motivation and trust in the child will significantly influence the child.

2. External Factors

a. Environment

A school environment that supports children's self-confidence is carried out daily. Activities often carried out get children used to doing things to be confident, for example, coming forward to show their work and showing their hands when they know the answer to the teacher's question. In activities in the junior kindergarten class, children are also able to make choices such as at meal times, children are trained to choose side dishes

and the amount of food for themselves at meal times, and children are also taught to determine which clothes to wear when going to bed because children bring three clothes to school.

Environmental factors are one of the factors that can support children's independence. Children who go to a scholarly school with an environment that allows children to be independent in their activities, such as when starting the learning process, taking off their shoes and storing them in the shoe rack, storing drinking water in the place provided, preparing the classroom with the teacher before starting the learning process activities in class. This process is used as a habit at school every day.

b. Stimulus

The results of observations made in the junior kindergarten class were on the stimulation given to children by teachers by giving them responsibility for their equipment, such as requiring children to wipe up spilled food and fill their water bottles when they run out. The stimulation given to children every day causes the child's attitude to be able to adapt. Namely, it can be seen that the children are accustomed to being given joint activities in class lessons and sharing snacks. Next, learn to share with friends; apart from that, outside the classroom, children can be seen freely playing with friends from different courses on the school playground and getting used to the life skills explained previously. Stimulus factors and parenting styles also play an essential role in increasing children's independence. According to Tassoni, (Enjelita, 2022) several things can be done throughout the day to encourage children to act independently, namely 1) encourage children to clean up their toys, 2) encourage children to choose their toys, 3) allow children to practice wearing their clothes, and 4) encourage children to try to be independent. This has been done in intellectual schools, namely in the child's daily habituation process, so the child can do all four things while still being supervised by the teacher. Therefore, stimulation is also crucial in increasing children's independence.

c. Parenting

The intensity and quality of parental care affect children's growth and development. Children need attention, affection, appreciation, education, and morality (psychological needs)(Rahmatica & Damayanti, 2023). Not only at home but at school, you also need to apply parenting patterns. In the habits implemented at school, teachers always seem to agree on the classroom rules. For example, before studying, the teacher mentions things that cannot be done in class, such as not running, always asking permission when you want to go in and out of class, always apologizing when you make a mistake and being grateful when friends give you something. Also, listen to the teacher when talking and agree on punishment if someone violates it. If we look at how teachers educate children, it can be concluded that teachers apply a democratic parenting style. Democratic parenting is a parenting style that provides very close supervision but is also responsive to the child's behavior (Rumekti et al., 2023).

Teachers giving children the opportunity to try new things, always providing motivation, and rewards and punishments when they achieve something good can support children's independent character. Motivation is an essential psychological factor in the learning process. Motivating to learn plays a vital role in learning success because it will be easier to realize all actions in a better direction with the inherent motivation in mind. Rewards and punishments are applied to strengthen children's emotional maturity with normal classroom learning activities(Ramania & Wardhani, 2023). If a child violates, they will be given sanctions that have been mutually agreed upon, and if the child acts according to the class rules, they will be given a reward.

Remember the interaction between parents and teachers, namely that they must have the same vision and mission by treating children according to what is done at school and home. Parents give love and affection to their children by supporting all the child's growth and development processes by providing facilities that support the child's development process both in the school environment and the environment at home. Children who develop according to their developmental stages must be fully supported by their parents by allowing the child to try something but still under their supervision.

## CONCLUSION

From the results of research and observations carried out at the Cendekia Berseri School, it can be concluded that a child's character will be formed from the habits he gets at school and home. Therefore, good cooperation is needed between teachers and parents so that interpretation can occur between the habits made by teachers and people. Old. Teachers have an essential role in determining children's character education results. Children's characters will be perfect if they are developed from an early age, independent characters, and others so that a superior generation will be created ready to face changing times. The attitude of independence in children is closely related to their social intelligence; independence does not reflect an individualistic or selfish attitude in children, so it is easier for them to get along with friends and their environment. The more children do independently, the greater their happiness and self-confidence. Children's development will be shaped according to the stimulation they receive in the school environment and home environment; for this reason, the teacher's role cannot be separated from the child's growth and development. Research on children's character

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