



The role of school culture in fostering responsibility in elementary school students

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of school culture in shaping students' attitudes toward responsibility at Seroja State Elementary School, Serang City. This research was conducted using a qualitative method, employing a case study approach. The research subjects were 35 sixth-grade students and one teacher from Seroja State Elementary School, selected using purposive sampling technique. Data was analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model after being collected thru non-participant observation, documentation, and structured interviews. The research findings indicate that school culture at Seroja State Elementary School plays a significant role in enhancing student responsibility thru practices of discipline, openness and inclusion, ethics and integrity, student empowerment, and an engaging learning culture. Thru role modeling, open communication, real-world examples, and consistent rule enforcement, teachers and principals provide character reinforcement. Student behavior changed, including the ability to admit mistakes and comply with school rules. The results show that a positive, consistent, and inclusive school culture works well in shaping elementary school students' attitudes of responsibility.

Keywords: school culture, sense of responsibility, character education, elementary school

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a key element in human life because it plays an important role in shaping individuals who are cultured, have an identity, and are able to adapt to their environment (Yulia et al., 2025). Based on Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, education is a conscious and planned effort. The aim is to create a learning environment where students actively develop their potential, possess spiritual and religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills useful for themselves, society, nation, and country (Hamdani & Halimah, 2023). Therefore, education not only aims to impart knowledge but also has a moral responsibility to instill the values and norms prevalent in society (Nastiti & Suprpto, 2022).

Character education plays an important role in instilling fundamental values such as responsibility, discipline, hard work, independence, social caring, and honesty as the foundation for shaping independent and integrated generations. At the elementary school level, character values are instilled thru habituation, role modeling, and reinforcement of positive behaviors consistently applied by teachers

and the school environment (Ansori et al., 2021). Value reinforcement is also achieved when schools build a culture of discipline and responsibility thru structured activities, both inside the classroom and in social interactions, enabling students to respond to task demands and rules more consciously and purposefully. This finding is consistent with the research by Lestari and Ain (2022), which indicates that school culture has a significant influence on students' character development, especially when habituation, teacher role modeling, and parental involvement are carried out consistently and comprehensively. A positive school culture allows students to internalize character values thru direct experience in daily school life. This is supported by the research findings by Saryanto et al. (2023), which confirms that school culture plays a significant role in shaping character traits such as responsibility, discipline, politeness, and reading interest. The internalization of values occurs not only thru formal learning, but also thru social interaction, school routines, and a supportive environment, making school culture one of the strategic factors in fostering a sense of responsibility in elementary school students.

A sense of responsibility is one of the most important character values for students to possess from elementary school age. Responsibility in students can be seen in their awareness of completing

tasks, maintaining cleanliness, and following school rules. By instilling a sense of responsibility early on, students learn to understand the impact of their actions and practice being disciplined, independent, and trustworthy individuals (Anggraini & Purnomo, 2025). The role of teachers is also very important in setting an example and providing guidance so that students become accustomed to discipline and taking responsibility for the tasks assigned. In addition, cooperation between teachers and parents also greatly influences the strengthening of students' character of responsibility both at school and at home (Lestari & Ain, 2022). This is consistent with the findings by Hamdani et al. (2023), which indicates that implementing school culture thru routine activities, positive habits, and daily social interactions can gradually and sustainably shape students' character. A consistent school culture, such as a culture of cleanliness, duty roster, 5S activities (greeting, smiling, greeting, politeness, courtesy), and the habit of worship or literacy activities. Thus, school culture becomes a strategic factor that strengthens the formation of responsible character in elementary school students.

In various studies that have been conducted, many studies have discussed character education in general. However, research that specifically highlights how school culture contributes to shaping elementary school students' attitudes toward responsibility is still limited. Triyani et al. (2020) shows that routines implemented regularly can build students' awareness and responsibility thru structured and consistent activities. Lestari and Ain (2022) state that a well-managed school culture, such as positive behavior habits and supportive social relationships, plays an important role in strengthening the value of responsibility in students. Additionally, Setiati et al. (2024) found that the school culture implemented thru 5S activities, cleanliness habits, literacy activities, and daily routines at school is able to foster a sense of responsibility because students learn thru real-life practice in their daily school lives. This research gap highlights that previous studies have not yet sufficiently explained how specific school culture practices are systematically implemented and internalized by students as part of their responsibility development, particularly in elementary school contexts. Therefore, there is a need for a more in-depth study focusing not only on the existence of school culture, but also on how it is experienced and practiced in shaping students' sense of responsibility.

School culture encompasses a set of values, norms, rules, and customs that develop within the school environment and serve as guidelines for school members' behavior. Culturalization thru school culture serves as a foundation for character development because values and habits are consistently and repeatedly applied in daily activities. Research shows that a structured school culture, such as discipline, greetings, literacy, mutual cooperation, and value-based activities, plays an important role in fostering students' sense of responsibility (Hamdani & Halimah, 2023). Character building thru school culture can also be realized thru local wisdom-based values instilled in routine activities, so that students understand the obligations and consequences of every action (Yusrianti et al., 2023). Additionally, learning that directly integrates cultural elements helps students internalize the values of responsibility, discipline, and caring thru contextual learning experiences. This indicates that school culture functions not merely as a set of norms, but as a lived experience that continuously shapes students' character through daily interaction and practice.

The relationship between school culture and attitudes toward responsibility is very close, as a consistently implemented school culture

can shape students' characters thru direct experience. For example, a culture of discipline encourages students to follow rules and complete tasks on time, while mutual cooperation fosters care for the environment and teamwork. Teacher example, routine activities such as ceremonies, morning literacy, religious practices, and maintaining classroom cleanliness, are real means that strengthen students' sense of responsibility. According to Amelia and Ramadhan cited in Hamdani et al. (2023) School culture built thru good habits and norms practiced every day can foster students' awareness of responsibility. Additionally, integrating discipline and responsibility into the curriculum and learning policies creates a recurring experience that deepens the value of responsibility in students (Chalid, 2017).

In line with the findings of Lestari and Ain (2022), stating that school culture plays a significant role in shaping students' character in schools, with the active involvement of teachers, principals, parents, and school habits. Additionally, research on this topic is also supported by Hamdani and Halimah (2023) showing that at SDN Cinanggerang 1, school culture such as a religious environment, cleanliness, and orderliness (5S) is consistently instilled thru routine habits and both intracurricular and extracurricular activities that shape character, including responsibility among students. Some previous studies conducted by these experts have examined the role of all school elements and routine habits in extracurricular activities. Meanwhile, this research not only emphasizes the role of school elements and habits, but also provides a more focused analysis of how specific cultural practices—such as school program culture, greeting and farewell culture, and structured duty systems—are implemented and experienced by students in developing responsibility. This aspect has not been deeply explored in previous studies, particularly in elementary school contexts.

School culture plays an important role in shaping the character of responsibility within students. The character of responsibility can be formed thru regular school cultural habits. This shows that school culture has a significant influence on the process of achieving success in character education. However, in reality, the implementation of character through school culture has not been fully optimized, indicating a gap between the expected role of school culture and its actual impact on students' responsibility. Although the cultivation of character values has been implemented, some students at the school are still found to be visibly not following school rules, which impacts their character or sense of responsibility. Furthermore, behaviors that are commonly practiced in the school environment will be carried over and applied in daily life.

Based on the results of the presentation above, the researcher is interested in conducting research at SDN Seroja. Because the reality at that elementary school is that the role of school culture is already widely practiced and implemented by the students. This is evident from several programs and student participation that will shape character, especially a sense of responsibility. The implementation of appropriate and good cultural habits in schools will influence the character of students at SDN Seroja. The purpose of this study is to analyze how the implementation of school culture shapes students' sense of responsibility at Seroja State Elementary School in Serang, Banten. This study also aims to provide a context-specific understanding of how school culture is practiced and internalized by students in their daily activities, thereby offering a more in-depth contribution to the study of character education in elementary schools.

METHODS

The research design used in this study is qualitative research with a case study approach. Qualitative research is a research method that focuses on a deep understanding of social phenomena thru direct interaction with subjects in the field. According to Moleong, which was cited in Abdussamad (2021), qualitative research is research used to study natural object conditions, where the researcher is the key instrument; data collection techniques are carried out thru triangulation: observation, interviews, and documentation.

A case study is a type of research used to deeply investigate an event, program, or process in a specific subject within a real-life context. This research explores the role of school culture in fostering a sense of responsibility in elementary school students. The research problem in this study is: (1). How is school culture implemented to foster a sense of responsibility in elementary school students? (2). What forms does the application of student responsibility take? (3). What is the role of teachers and principals in strengthening school culture to shape student responsibility?

The subjects of this research are 35 sixth-grade students and one teacher from Seroja State Elementary School. The selection of these participants was based on their active involvement in the implementation of school culture practices and their direct experience in activities related to responsibility development. The selection of research subjects for this study was conducted using the purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling is the selection of samples based on sample requirements and is done intentionally by choosing specific samples that have certain characteristics, traits, criteria, or properties (Fauzy, 2019). This technique was chosen because it allows the researcher to select participants who are considered information-rich and relevant to the research objectives, particularly those who are directly involved in the implementation of school culture and character development processes. The participants in this study consisted of elementary school classroom teachers who implemented school culture, school principals as policymakers and directors of school culture, and classroom students as subjects for developing a sense of responsibility. Participants were selected because they were considered to have direct experience in implementing school culture, understood policies supporting character development, and were actively involved in the process of fostering students' sense of responsibility. This selection ensures that the data obtained reflects in-depth insights into the real implementation of school culture in fostering students' sense of responsibility.

The data collection techniques in this study used three main instruments: structured interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted with classroom teachers and school principals using a question guide focused on school culture aspects such as discipline, openness and inclusion, ethics and integrity, student empowerment, and learning culture. Non-participant observation was conducted by directly observing the learning process and school cultural activities using an observation sheet containing indicators of student participation, response to rules, and teacher role modeling. Documentation data was obtained from photos of routine activities such as duty, prayer, and ceremonies, documentation of teacher role models, classroom rules, duty schedules, and evidence of student activities that reflect responsibility, empathy, and courage. The use of multiple data collection techniques was intended to obtain

comprehensive data and to strengthen the validity of the findings through data triangulation.

The data analysis technique used in this study is the Miles and Huberman analysis model. There are three stages of data analysis that must be carried out: the data reduction stage, which is done by grouping, simplifying, and organizing the research data. Next, the data presentation stage is carried out by presenting the data in table format. These stages were carried out systematically and iteratively, allowing the researcher to continuously compare, refine, and interpret the data to ensure that meaningful patterns and themes related to students' responsibility development were accurately identified.

Furthermore, data validity is determined using the data trustworthiness validity technique. The data validity indicates how accurate and precise the collected data is. In this study, research data collection used various data collection methods. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, this study applied several validation strategies, including data triangulation from interviews, observations, and documentation, as well as prolonged engagement in the field to gain a deeper understanding of the research context. In addition, the researcher conducted data verification through repeated observations and cross-checking information from different sources to enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of observations and interviews, the school culture at Seroja State Elementary School plays a role in fostering students' sense of responsibility. School culture is not only reflected in the rules that are made, but also in daily habits, the examples set by teachers, and the opportunities given to students to take on specific roles and responsibilities. Thru habituation and direct experience, students learn to understand and fulfill their responsibilities, not just out of obligation, but because it has become part of their shared understanding of customs and values. This finding indicates that responsibility is not formed instantly, but develops through continuous interaction between students and their social environment. This supports the perspective of social learning theory, which emphasizes that behavior is shaped through observation, repetition, and reinforcement in everyday contexts.

Implementing School Culture in Fostering a Sense of Responsibility

Based on interviews with the principal, teachers, and field observations, it was found that Seroja State Elementary School implements a school culture thru self-reflection habits, acknowledging mistakes, creating class agreements, and cultivating habits of maintaining cleanliness and physical, mental, and spiritual health. This habituation is relevant to the concept of character education, where the value of responsibility is built thru direct experience and daily practice in the school environment. The implementation of school culture is supported by the flagship program "Serang City Reads the Quran" and the socialization of school regulations. Since the beginning of the school year, students have been introduced to school rules, duties and responsibilities, and the consequences of violations. This aligns with the theory of habituation, which states that the character of responsibility is formed thru the repetition of positive behaviors in a consistent social context. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Firman &



Figure 1. Real-life image of students cleaning the classroom (Source: Field study)

Hidayat, 2020; Tabroni et al., 2021), which highlight that consistent habituation and role modeling play a significant role in shaping students' character. However, this study provides a more context-specific perspective by showing how these practices are implemented in daily school activities and directly experienced by students.

The homeroom teacher (participant 1) stated:

"Indeed, there are some children who need to be reminded every day. There are also times when they have made a mistake, and they won't repeat it again."

This finding indicates that the internalization of school culture does not happen instantly, but requires a process of guidance and reinforcement from teachers. Teachers play a role as models and facilitators in character development, as explained in social learning theory.

Based on the observation results, the implementation of school culture is reflected in students' real behavior, such as: Cultivating respectful and polite attitudes toward teachers, maintaining classroom cleanliness thru duty (see [Figure 1](#)), disposing of waste in designated areas, and washing hands. Bringing a reusable water bottle as a form of environmental concern and plastic waste reduction. Helping each other among friends and demonstrating compliance with school rules. This behavior reflects indicators of responsibility, namely awareness of performing tasks, adhering to rules, and caring for the environment. Theoretically, these results align with the concept of school culture according to Deal and Peterson (cited in Huda, 2021) that a positive school culture is capable of shaping behaviors, habits, and values that are internalized within students.

Based on field findings, the researcher observed that the process of internalizing school culture indeed requires time and patience from all parties, especially teachers who must be consistent in reminding students. As an educator, teachers often feel that these elementary school children are like sponges, absorbing values thru daily repetition, not just words. This makes me believe that the theory of habituation



Figure 2. Students carrying water bottles (Source: Field study)

truly applies here, where positive behaviors like admitting mistakes become a natural habit after a few months. However, the challenge is when there are students who are less responsive, so teachers need to be more creative in their approach, for example, with inspirational stories or interactive games. Based on the data obtained, one of the flagship programs like "Serang City Reads the Quran" not only fosters spiritual responsibility but also strengthens social bonds between students and teachers. Overall, this implementation demonstrates that a strong school culture can be a key foundation for character education at the elementary level, provided it is supported by a shared commitment from the school and parents (Hanafi, 2021; Indriani et al., 2025).

Forms of Applying a Sense of Responsibility

Discipline indicators

Based on the results of interviews and observations, the implementation of discipline at Seroja State Elementary School is not carried out thru a direct punishment approach, but thru a reflective and collaborative approach. The teacher guides students to first acknowledge the mistakes they have made, assess their impact, and participate in determining what are considered fair consequences. This shows that discipline is not only understood as obedience to rules, but also as a form of self-awareness and responsibility for the actions taken. Thru observation, it is evident that the teacher encourages students to take responsibility for their behavior without immediate sanctions. The teacher uses a dialogical approach, which involves inviting students to discuss mistakes and formulate a mutual agreement regarding. This approach aligns with social constructivism theory, which states that understanding and character are formed thru social interaction and reflection on experience (Bodner, 1986).

Additionally, the school implements environmental discipline by encouraging students to bring their own eating and drinking utensils to reduce plastic waste during break time (see [Figure 2](#)). This habit not only cultivates disciplined behavior in the context of rule compliance but also develops responsibility toward the environment. The implementation of this discipline involves synergy between teachers, students, parents, and school vendors, thus forming an educational

ecosystem that supports the internalization of discipline values. This finding reinforces the view that school culture plays a strategic role in shaping disciplined character and fostering a sense of responsibility in elementary school students.

According to Husni and Norman (2015), discipline should strengthen students' character, not merely control their behavior. Similarly, according to Ariputra et al. (2025), discipline is an action that demonstrates obedience and compliance due to self-awareness and internal motivation toward rules, without violating them. According to him, discipline is an act of obedience driven by one's own desire, without external coercion, and the activities performed do not violate the rules. According to Melati et al. (2021), discipline is a person's behavior of obedience to an applicable rule. Discipline plays an important role in determining students' learning success and offers many other benefits when students adopt a disciplined attitude. It can be concluded that discipline is an attitude or behavior possessed by an individual that demonstrates obedience, compliance, and orderliness toward the prevailing rules and norms of life.

Openness and inclusion

Based on interviews with classroom teachers and the principal, the culture of openness and inclusion at Seroja State Elementary School is built thru the habituation of positive, dialogical, and mutually respectful communication. The teacher explained that every student was given equal opportunity to speak, ask questions, and express their opinions. This was stated by one of the teachers, who said,

"We always try to make the children feel safe first, so they're not afraid to make mistakes when speaking in class."

The principal also emphasized that openness is a value they want to instill as part of the school culture. He stated,

"We want this school to be a place that is friendly to all children. So, it's not just the teachers who need to be open, but the entire school community must set an example that every voice is important."

The teacher also added that a dialogical approach is used to help students understand their mistakes without feeling pressured (see **Figure 3**). He stated,

"If someone does something wrong, we talk to them nicely. Not to scold, but to understand why it happened."

This statement shows that the guidance process is carried out with an emphasis on empathy and responsibility. Overall, the interviews indicate that a culture of openness is not just a classroom practice, but a school-wide commitment built thru the principal's leadership and teachers' consistency in interacting with students.

Classroom observations indicate that a culture of openness is consistently implemented by the teacher. The teacher provides an equal opportunity for all students to answer questions, express their opinions, and share any difficulties they are experiencing. During the discussion, the teacher provided supportive responses, both thru gestures and words that showed appreciation for the students' opinions. The classroom atmosphere also seemed inclusive, with no apparent dominance by specific students (see **Figure 4**). All students receive a fair opportunity to participate. The teacher uses phrases that encourage



Figure 3. Teacher scolding a student who made a mistake (Source: Field study)



Figure 4. The neat shoes of the students in front of the classroom indicate adherence to rules (Source: Field study)

students' courage and self-confidence, such as "try saying it first" or "your opinion is important," which shows that the interaction is built on a safe and supportive climate.

Based on the results of interviews and observations, the culture of openness and inclusion at Seroja State Elementary School is evident thru the habit of positive, participatory communication that is oriented toward respecting the rights of every student. The teacher strives to create a safe classroom atmosphere so that students feel comfortable expressing their opinions, receiving feedback, and admitting mistakes without fear. Additionally, the principal's commitment to fostering a friendly and inclusive learning environment further strengthens the openness practices taking place in the classroom. This dialogic and supportive environment aligns with the concept of social inclusion in education, which is about creating learning spaces that are accepting, respectful, and provide equal opportunities for all students to participate actively.

The teacher uses phrases that encourage students' courage and self-confidence, such as "try saying it first" or "your opinion is important," which shows that the interaction is built on a safe and supportive climate. This kind of condition is consistent with the findings (Lindorff, 2020), which indicates that a positive school climate that meets students' psychosocial needs is correlated with increased well-being, resilience, and a decrease in negative behaviors such as bullying. In other words,



Figure 5. Anti-bullying poster showing obedience and respect (Source: Field study)

the teacher's practice of openness contributes to the creation of a safe and conducive learning environment for students' social-emotional development (Dung & Zsolnai, 2021; Jordan, 2013).

Based on the results of interviews and observations, the culture of openness and inclusion at Seroja State Elementary School is evident thru the habit of positive, participatory communication that is oriented toward respecting the rights of every student. The teacher strives to create a safe classroom atmosphere so that students feel comfortable expressing their opinions, receiving feedback, and admitting mistakes without fear (see Figure 5). The principal's commitment to fostering a friendly and inclusive learning environment also strengthens the openness practiced in the classroom. This dialogic and supportive environment aligns with the concept of social inclusion in education and is reinforced by theories of school climate and social learning, both of which emphasize that positive interactions, emotional safety, and role modeling are essential foundations for shaping students' character and responsible behavior (Indriani et al., 2025; Syamsi & Tahar, 2021).

Ethics and integrity

Based on the results of interviews and observations, the implementation of ethics and integrity at Seroja State Elementary School is carried out thru the habituation of moral values in daily life. The teacher emphasized that obedience to school rules is not solely due to sanctions, but rather a form of moral responsibility toward oneself, others, and the environment. This reflects students' understanding that integrity is the alignment between believed moral values and demonstrated real behavior. In practice, teachers emphasize the importance of honesty, respect, and self-control (see Figure 6). The teacher demonstrated that maintaining classroom cleanliness, speaking politely, and being punctual are not merely obligations, but rather part of social ethics and a form of respect for others. This approach aligns with Kohlberg's theory of moral development, which states that morality is not just about following rules, but also involves internal awareness and personal responsibility.

The application of ethical and integrity values is strengthened thru habit-forming activities, such as encouraging students to be honest when admitting mistakes, not cheating, maintaining school facilities, and understanding that every action has consequences (see Figure 7). The teacher also emphasized that integrity grows from self-awareness, not from imposed rules, so students behave well because they



Figure 6. Students shaking hands (Source: Field study)

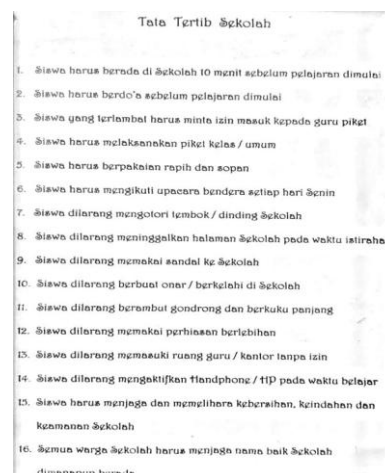


Figure 7. School rules (Source: Field study)

understand the value of goodness, not out of fear of punishment (see Figure 8). This finding suggests that internalizing ethics and integrity thru school culture can shape students' sense of responsibility more deeply and sustainably. The moral values formed are not only normative, but also reflective and meaningful for the development of students' character.

Based on interviews with classroom teachers and the school principal, the implementation of ethics and integrity at Seroja State Elementary School is built thru the consistent habituation of moral behavior within the school environment. The teacher explained that every violation or form of indiscipline is always handled thru a dialogical approach. The teacher said,

"If a child commits an infraction, I don't get angry right away. I talk to them nicely first so they understand why it's wrong."

This quote shows that teachers not only emphasize obedience, but also guide students to understand the moral reasoning behind a rule. This process reflects the development of moral reasoning as explained by Kohlberg, namely that understanding moral reasoning helps



Figure 8. Teacher explaining and students listening to the teacher (Source: Field study)

children move from simply avoiding punishment to acting based on more mature principles.

The principal also emphasized that integrity is a core value instilled thru various school activities. He stated,

“We want children to get used to being honest and responsible, not out of fear of punishment, but because they know what is right.”

This statement shows that the school is trying to encourage the internalization of values, not just mechanical obedience. The emphasis on role modeling and habituation is highly relevant to Bandura’s social learning theory, which explains that children learn moral behavior thru observation of significant figures such as teachers and principals. When teachers demonstrate patience, honesty, and polite behavior in their interactions, students gain a real-world model of how integrity is embodied in everyday situations.

The observation results reinforce the findings of the interview. The teacher seemed to give all students a fair opportunity to speak, express their opinions, and share the difficulties they were experiencing. As the discussion progressed, the teacher provided feedback with a calm intonation and word choices that were respectful of the students. This kind of interaction creates a sense of emotional safety, so students are not afraid to admit mistakes or apologize. This condition is consistent with research findings. Lindorff (2020) which indicates that a positive school climate that meets students’ psychosocial needs is associated with increased well-being, self-regulation skills, and decreased negative behaviors. Thus, a friendly and supportive classroom environment becomes an important foundation in the formation of ethics and integrity (Karyono et al., 2019).

Observations also show that teachers use dialog to encourage students to understand the impact of their behavior on others. For example, when a student is late completing a group assignment, the teacher asks,

“How do you think your friends feel when their work is delayed?”

This kind of reflective approach strengthens the development of perspective-taking and empathy skills, which are important parts of moral development within Kohlberg’s framework. The student is not



Figure 9. Students mopping the floor as a form of responsibility (Source: Field study)

only told that a behavior is wrong, but is also encouraged to consider its social consequences.

Overall, the findings from interviews and observations indicate that ethics and integrity at Seroja State Elementary School are shaped thru a combination of teacher role modeling, dialogic communication, appreciative interactions, and a safe and supportive school environment. This habituation process aligns with Bandura’s social learning theory, which emphasizes the role of modeling, is consistent with Kohlberg’s moral development theory, which highlights the importance of understanding moral reasoning, and is reinforced by the concept of a positive school climate proposed in the researches of Izzati et al. (2019), and Zaliyanti and Azani (2024). All three studies show that the formation of integrity cannot be forced thru punishment, but develops thru consistent, supportive, and everyday social experiences that allow students to learn about themselves and understand the impact of their actions.

Student empowerment

Student empowerment is the process of providing space or opportunities for students to actively participate in every activity, such as making simple decisions and taking on roles with real responsibilities within the school environment. Thru this empowerment, students can be involved in its implementation and not just receive rules, so they can feel that they have a role in maintaining mutual comfort. This empowerment can also encourage students to learn how to manage tasks, work together, and understand the consequences of every decision they make. Based on the observation results, teachers empower students thru direct involvement in classroom tasks and school activities, such as being on duty, ceremony officers, and class structure. Teachers can help guide the implementation of tasks while also providing direction so that students carry out their roles with discipline, responsibility, and respect for both teachers and peers (see Figure 9). This experience can help students start to get used to following rules without always needing to be reminded, demonstrating confidence and a sense of care for the school environment.

Based on interviews with homeroom teachers and the principal, student empowerment at Seroja State Elementary School is carried out thru habituating discipline, targeted dialog, and providing opportunities for students to be involved in decision-making. The teacher explained that every infraction is not immediately punished, but is first discussed with the students. He said, “If a student makes a

mistake, I don't immediately punish them. I'm asking them to understand first why their actions are wrong and what the consequences are. This quote shows that the teacher wants students to understand the reasons behind the rules, not just obey them out of fear.

The principal emphasized that such practices are part of the school's efforts to build character. He explained, "Discipline is not meant to suppress children, but so they learn to be responsible. Therefore, we are instilling this habit thru daily activities and collaborating with parents. The statement indicates that empowerment is seen as a process involving cooperation between teachers, schools, and families. The teacher also provides space for students to express their opinions and explain the mistakes they have made. He said,

"We gave our child space to speak first. We listened to their opinion, then we discussed the consequences."

This discussion provides students with firsthand experience on how to make decisions and understand their impact.

The practices carried out by educators align with Darling-Hammond's idea of student empowerment, that involvement in decision-making can increase a sense of responsibility (Özkan Hıdıroğlu & Tanrıöğen, 2021; Samsu et al., 2021). The example of patient and consistent teachers is also in line with Bandura's social learning theory, where moral behavior develops thru the examples provided by adults around the child. Additionally, the process of dialog and deliberation conducted by the teacher reflects Vygotsky's perspective that moral development and self-regulation are shaped thru meaningful social interaction.

Throughout the activity, the teacher used supportive and calming language. Phrases like "try to say it first" or "your opinion is important" make students feel safe to speak up or admit mistakes. The classroom atmosphere seemed warm, and the students appeared enthusiastic about working together without any particular dominance. The interactions that occurred during learning showed an improvement in students' ability to cooperate, adhere to group agreements, and complete tasks according to their respective roles. This reflects the growth of self-regulation and a sense of responsibility, which are at the heart of student empowerment. These findings align with Bandura's theory of the role of modeling, and also support Darling-Hammond's view that a safe and supportive learning environment can strengthen student participation. Additionally, the discussion process that takes place in the classroom also illustrates Vygotsky's principle that social interaction is an important means of developing cognitive and moral abilities (Jin, 2016).

Learning Culture

Based on the observation results, it can be seen that the teacher builds a learning culture by creating a conducive, open, and educational classroom atmosphere (see Figure 10). The teacher gives students the opportunity to be brave enough to admit their mistakes, improve their understanding, and understand the meaning and consequences of each action they take. There are class rules that are created together, so students not only follow the regulations but also feel a sense of responsibility to adhere to them. Teachers consistently enforce rules and set an example thru honest and disciplined behavior, treating all students fairly. From this habituation, it can be seen that students are beginning to show the courage to admit mistakes, perform tasks diligently, and obey the rules without being reminded, as a form of



Figure 10. Students discussing (Source: Field study)



Figure 11. Students expressing their opinion (Source: Field study)

awareness and responsibility in the learning process at school. The teacher emphasized that this practice demonstrates that the learning culture in the school emphasizes collaboration, responsibility, and decision-making. This approach aligns with the views of John Dewey, who emphasized the importance of active and participatory learning experiences (Dewey, 1938). Additionally, the social interaction carried out by the teacher supports Lev Vygotsky's theory that cognitive development occurs thru meaningful interaction with others (Ahmad et al., 2016; Pakpahan & Saragih, 2022).

Learning culture is a set of habits, values, and interaction patterns formed within the teaching and learning process that encourages students to actively participate, be responsible, and value the learning process. This culture not only reflects how learning takes place, but also how teachers and students build relationships based on mutual respect, openness, and other values. The teacher seems to be encouraging students to discuss and express their opinions without fear of being wrong (see Figure 11). The classroom atmosphere looked warm, and the students were enthusiastic about working together without any dominance. This interaction shows that the learning culture at Seroja State Elementary School is able to improve students' communication, collaboration, and critical thinking skills. This finding supports the experts' view that a supportive, collaborative, and participatory learning culture is crucial in building students' learning skills and motivation.

The Role of Teachers and School Principals in Strengthening School Culture to Shape Student Responsibility

Based on the observation results, teachers play a significant role in strengthening the school culture related to shaping students' sense of responsibility. Teachers not only conduct learning but also guide students thru example and habituation. In classroom interactions, teachers provide students with opportunities to acknowledge mistakes, explain their reasons, and collectively determine the consequences of their actions. This kind of approach helps students better understand that responsibility comes from awareness, not fear. Additionally, teachers instill discipline thru routine activities such as arriving on time, doing hall duty, keeping the classroom clean, and following school rules. Teachers set a direct example, provide reinforcement, and collaborate with parents to ensure that discipline is also practiced at home. As time went on, students began to show changes in attitude, such as being orderly, following rules, and starting to control their behavior in learning activities.

Teachers also involve students in real roles at school, such as being ceremony officers, class structure, and more. This responsibility makes students consciously learn to follow rules, understand the meaning of cooperation, and show mutual respect. Thru this activity, students not only follow the rules but also participate in maintaining an orderly and respectful learning environment. On the other hand, the principal plays a role in creating a school environment that supports the formation of students' character. The principal establishes policies and programs that foster order, togetherness, and care. For example, students are encouraged to bring their own eating and drinking utensils to reduce plastic waste, to follow ceremonies in an orderly manner, and to participate in character-building activities. The principal also directed the teachers to ensure that discipline and responsibility training is carried out consistently and is not merely a set of rules. In addition, the principal maintains an inclusive school atmosphere that values equality. This can be seen in the equal treatment of all students, the use of uniforms without regard to background, and the fair enforcement of rules for everyone.

The principal fosters good collaboration and communication with teachers and parents so that character development takes place comprehensively, both at school and at home. The results of the observation show that collaboration between teachers and the principal is able to demonstrate a school culture that is not only about rules but also about daily habits and behavior. From what was done, it can be seen that students are starting to get used to admitting mistakes, maintaining honesty, obeying rules, and fulfilling their responsibilities without always being asked or reminded. From this, it can be seen that the strengthening of school culture is happening in a real way thru role modeling, habituation, and giving students responsibility.

The research findings indicate that teachers play a central role in shaping a school culture that encourages students to be responsible. Teachers not only deliver material but also serve as role models thru their daily attitudes and habits. A positive school culture helps students understand that responsibility is self-awareness, not simply following rules out of fear of punishment. According to Putra and Suryani (2020), a strong school culture can shape students' positive character and behavior thru consistent habituation. From interviews with teachers and principals, it's clear that teachers emphasize the importance of students acknowledging their mistakes before determining consequences. A homeroom teacher stated, "We always encourage

students to understand their mistakes first, and then we work together to find solutions so they don't repeat them." The principal added,

"A culture of discipline is implemented thru cleanliness programs, character development, and small responsibilities like class duty or ceremony officials."

This gets students used to taking on roles and realizing the consequences of their actions.

Classroom observations show that the teacher actively guides students toward discipline and responsibility. For example, when a student spills water, the teacher encourages them to admit their mistake and work together to determine steps for improvement. Students are also given real responsibilities, such as being on duty, class president, or ceremony officer. This aligns with Lickona's view which states that instilling responsibility thru real-life roles can shape a strong and independent character (Lickona, 1997, 2013). Observations also show that an open school culture encourages students to be brave enough to admit mistakes, appreciate differences, and take responsibility with self-awareness. This attitude is reflected in daily interactions, ranging from study discipline and maintaining cleanliness to respecting teachers and friends (Yusrianti et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion above, it can be concluded that school culture plays an important role in shaping the character of responsibility in elementary school students. The school culture implemented at the school is not only in the form of written rules, but is also applied thru daily habits, teacher example, and consistent communication methods. The teacher uses a teaching method that encourages students to understand the reasons and consequences of certain actions. The teacher does not immediately punish students when they commit violations. Instead, they asked the students to talk to each other to reconsider what they were doing. In this way, students become more aware of their own responsibilities rather than simply obeying out of fear. The principal also emphasized discipline and honesty in daily activities and collaborated with parents to ensure these values are consistently applied at home.

Thru observation, it was evident that a conducive and communicative classroom atmosphere helped students feel safe to express their opinions, acknowledge mistakes, and accept feedback. When teachers provide space for students to participate in decision-making or determine the consequences of certain actions, students learn to understand their role in maintaining classroom harmony. Additionally, this situation enhances students' ability to complete group and individual assignments.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that a positive and consistently implemented school culture within the specific context of Seroja State Elementary School contributes to the development of students' responsibility through habituation, role modeling, and participatory learning practices. The findings of this study suggest that, within this particular school context, the development of responsibility does not solely depend on formal rules, but is strongly influenced by how the school environment provides meaningful, consistent, and supportive learning experiences for students. These findings provide context-specific insights that may contribute to the understanding of

character education practices in elementary schools, particularly in relation to how school culture is implemented and experienced in shaping students' responsibility.

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