

STRENGTHENING THE MAJA LABO DAHU CHARACTER VALUES TO REDUCE BULLYING INCIDENTS AMONG ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN IN THE CITY OF SAMBINA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the reinforcement of the Maja Labo Dahu character values to reduce bullying among elementary school students at MIS Sambina in Bima City. The background of this study is based on the phenomenon of increasing bullying behavior in school environments, which can hinder students' social-emotional development. The local wisdom of Maja Labo Dahu, which embodies moral values such as a sense of shame and a fear of violating social norms, is considered a relevant foundation for students' character development. This study employs a qualitative, descriptive approach. Data collection was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Research informants included the school principal, teachers, and students. Data analysis was conducted interactively through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study indicate that the internalization of the Maja Labo Dahu values is implemented through teachers' exemplary behavior, the cultivation of positive behaviors, and the integration of these values into the learning process. The implementation of these values has been shown to positively impact empathy and valuing others, and to reduce the tendency toward bullying within the school environment. Thus, the local wisdom values of Maja Labo Dahu can serve as an effective strategy for strengthening character education among elementary school students.

Keywords: Maja Labo Dahu, character education, bullying, elementary school, local wisdom

INTRODUCTION

Bullying is a serious problem in the field of education that remains a major concern to this day, particularly at the elementary school level. This phenomenon affects not only students' physical well-being but also their psychological, social, and academic development. Recent research indicates that bullying in elementary schools can lead to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and a decline in students' academic performance (Nopriyanti et al., 2023). In fact, on a broader scale, victims of bullying are at risk of developing long-term mental health issues if the problem is not addressed promptly and appropriately (Zhao et al., 2024).

In the context of education in Indonesia, incidents of bullying in elementary schools remain high and often take the form of verbal, social, or physical bullying. Several studies have shown that bullying behavior is influenced by low empathy, poor self-control, and a lack of internalized character values among students (Smith, 2024). In addition, the school environment and a lack of teacher supervision have also contributed to the problem (Nopriyanti et al., 2023). This indicates that a preventive approach focused on character building is crucial to addressing bullying in schools.

One approach considered effective for addressing bullying is character education grounded in local wisdom. Character education does not focus solely on cognitive aspects, but also instills moral, ethical, and cultural values as guidelines for student behavior (Zulkarnaen, 2022). Education based on local wisdom has proven effective in strengthening students' character development and social attitudes in their daily lives. Local wisdom plays a strategic role because the values it embodies are deeply rooted in community life and are more readily accepted by students (Iryani et al., 2025). Therefore, integrating local cultural values into the learning process can help foster better character in students.

One of the values of local wisdom relevant to shaping students' character is Maja Labo Dahu, which originates from the Bima community. This value embodies a sense of shame (maja) and fear (dahu) regarding actions that violate religious, social, and customary norms. Philosophically, this value serves as a form of self-control that encourages individuals to ensure their behavior remains in line with prevailing norms. In an educational context, the internalization of the Maja Labo Dahu value is believed to foster discipline, responsibility, and empathy toward others, thereby reducing the tendency toward bullying behavior among students.

However, changing times and the tide of globalization have begun to shift local values, particularly among the younger generation. This is consistent with research indicating that globalization can erode local culture and influence students' character (Saputra et al., 2019). The erosion of local cultural values also contributes to a decline in character, as values such as cooperation, responsibility, and respect, which are inherent in local culture, play a crucial role in shaping students' behavior (Rizqi et al., 2025). This situation is exacerbated by the lack of integration of cultural values into the school learning process, leaving students without a strong moral foundation for social interaction.

On the other hand, various efforts to prevent bullying have been implemented, including anti-bullying education, psychoeducational programs, and strengthening teachers' roles in creating a safe and comfortable school environment (Safaruddin et al., 2024). In addition, a learning-based approach has also proven effective in instilling anti-bullying values in students (Husnunnadia & Slam, 2024). However, this approach will be most effective when combined with local cultural values that are contextual and relevant to students' lives.

Although various studies have addressed character education and bullying prevention efforts in elementary schools, most research still focuses on general approaches such as anti-

bullying education and strengthening school discipline. Research examining the integration of local wisdom values as a preventive strategy to reduce bullying behavior remains relatively limited, particularly studies that highlight the Maja Labo Dahu values in the context of elementary school education. In fact, local cultural values are closely tied to students' social lives, making them easier to internalize as part of character development. Therefore, this study is important for addressing this research gap and strengthening the implementation of character education grounded in local culture in the elementary school environment.

Based on initial observations at MIS Sambinae in Bima City, various forms of bullying among students were still found, such as verbal taunts, social exclusion, and minor physical acts. These conditions indicate that the reinforcement of character values in the learning process has not yet been implemented optimally. Therefore, an approach is needed that is not only theoretical but also contextual and closely aligned with students' social lives, for example, by reinforcing the Maja Labo Dahu values as part of the Bima community's local wisdom.

Thus, this study aims to examine how promoting the Maja Labo Dahu character values can help reduce bullying among elementary school students at MIS Sambinae in Bima City. It is hoped that this study will contribute to the development of an effective character education model based on local wisdom and serve as a reference for schools in creating a safe, comfortable, and bullying-free educational environment.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive research design to gain an in-depth understanding of how the Maja Labo Dahu character values help reduce bullying among elementary school children. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for the contextual, natural, and holistic description of social phenomena in accordance with field conditions (Creswell & Poth, 2016). In addition, this approach is also effective in examining social phenomena such as bullying and character education in elementary school settings (Abidin & Ardiansyah Farel, 2024). The study was conducted at MIS Sambinae in Bima City, West Nusa Tenggara, which was purposively selected because the school continues to integrate local wisdom values into its character education program. The study lasted approximately three months, from the initial observation phase through to data analysis.

The research subjects were selected using purposive sampling, which involves the deliberate selection of informants based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives (Abdillah et al., 2024). The informants in this study included the school principal, classroom teachers, 10 students in grades 4 and 5, and parents of students who were considered to have

knowledge and experience regarding the implementation of the Maja Labo Dahu values and the phenomenon of bullying in the school environment. Data collection techniques included observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to directly observe students' social interactions and bullying behaviors in the school environment. In-depth interviews were conducted to gather comprehensive information on efforts to strengthen character values, the role of teachers, and students' experiences with bullying. Meanwhile, documentation was used to supplement the data, including school records, school rules, and activities related to student character development. This data collection method is also consistent with character education research that emphasizes the importance of triangulating techniques to obtain valid data (Johnson et al., 2017).

The data analysis technique used in this study employs the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles et al., 2014). The analysis was conducted continuously from the start of data collection through the study's completion to ensure that the data obtained were valid and in-depth. To ensure the validity of the data, this study employed source triangulation and methodological triangulation and conducted member checks with informants to verify that the data accurately reflected the actual conditions in the field (Thomas, 2017). Thus, the results of this study are expected to have a high degree of credibility and validity and to be scientifically sound.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Implementation of the Maja Labo Dahu Character Values

The implementation of the Maja Labo Dahu character values in the learning process at MIS Sambinae in Bima City is carried out by instilling them through daily activities within the school environment. These values are not merely conveyed theoretically but are integrated into routine activities that shape student behavior. Teachers play an active role in instilling the values of maja (shame) and dahu (fear) by reinforcing polite behavior and mutual respect and by prohibiting negative actions such as teasing, hitting, or excluding peers.

Based on the interview results, these values are instilled through daily learning activities, such as offering advice, sharing moral stories, and reinforcing positive behavior before the

main learning activities begin. One informant stated that: *“Before class begins, we always remind the students to behave well, not to tease their classmates, and to respect one another.”*

These findings are supported by observations showing that before learning activities begin, teachers routinely provide guidance, advice, and examples of behavior that reflect the Maja Labo Dahu values. These activities serve as an effective means of instilling character values in a contextual and sustainable way.

This implementation through habit formation demonstrates that the internalization of character values is more effectively achieved through direct practice in students’ daily lives. This is consistent with the concept of character education put forward by (Lickona, 2001), which emphasizes that character development is achieved through habit formation, setting a good example, and integrating values into daily activities within the educational environment.

Furthermore, these findings indicate that the values of Maja Labo Dahu serve not only as cultural norms but also as a self-regulatory mechanism that can prevent bullying among students. Thus, the incorporation of local wisdom into the learning process plays a strategic role in fostering a more positive character among students and creating a conducive school environment.

Forms of Bullying Behavior Observed

Research findings indicate that bullying behavior still occurs at MIS Sambinae, albeit in the mild-to-moderate range. The forms of bullying identified include verbal taunts, the use of derogatory nicknames, and social exclusion. This behavior generally occurs in everyday interactions among students, both in the classroom and throughout the school environment.

These findings are consistent with previous research indicating that bullying at the elementary school level often takes the form of verbal and relational bullying, which is viewed as part of social dynamics (Olweus et al., 2019). This suggests that bullies are often unaware of their behavior because it is viewed as normal social interaction among children.

The Roles of Teachers and Parents in Reinforcing the Maja Labo Dahu Values

Teachers and parents play complementary roles in reinforcing the Maja Labo Dahu character values to prevent bullying. Teachers act as facilitators and role models in the learning process by instilling the values of maja (shame) and dahu (fear) through consistent practice, guidance, and a persuasive approach in guiding student behavior. Through this role, teachers help students understand behavioral boundaries and the negative consequences of bullying.

On the other hand, parents also play a crucial role in instilling these values within the family. The Maja Labo Dahu values, as a motto of local wisdom, have actually long been taught by parents; however, in practice, they are more often conveyed through advice and

habit formation without directly mentioning the term “Maja Labo Dahu.” This results in children understanding these values implicitly but not yet fully grasping their philosophical meaning as a guide for behavior.

This situation indicates that the instillation of the Maja Labo Dahu values within the family environment remains unstructured, so its impact on fostering children’s self-control over negative behaviors, including bullying, has not been optimal. Therefore, more targeted reinforcement is needed through collaboration between schools and parents so that these values are not merely understood in general terms but are also recognized and consistently applied in daily life—Sinergi antara guru dan orang tua ini menjadi faktor penting dalam menciptakan konsistensi pendidikan karakter.

This is in line with the view that (Berkowitz et al., 2017) which emphasizes that the success of character education depends heavily on collaboration between schools and families. Thus, effective cooperation between teachers and parents plays a key role in reinforcing the internalization of the Maja Labo Dahu values and minimizing bullying among students.

The Effectiveness of the Maja Labo Dahu Values in Reducing Bullying

Promoting the Maja Labo Dahu values has had a positive impact on reducing bullying behavior at MIS Sambinae. Students who have internalized these values tend to be better able to control themselves and demonstrate mutual respect. The Maja value encourages students to feel ashamed of engaging in negative actions, while the Dahu value fosters an awareness of the consequences of such behavior. Based on observation results, students who previously frequently engaged in verbal teasing began to show behavioral changes after teachers consistently integrated the Maja Labo Dahu values into daily learning activities and routines. Students appeared more cautious in their speech and began to demonstrate mutual respect among peers within the school environment.

However, the effectiveness of these values is still influenced by several factors, such as the family environment, peer influence, and the consistency with which teachers and school officials apply these values. Therefore, synergy between schools and parents is needed to strengthen students’ character education. This finding is consistent with research indicating that the success of character education depends heavily on the involvement of various stakeholders in the educational environment (Brown et al., 2023), which emphasizes that effective character education requires the full involvement of schools, families, and the community.

Challenges in Implementing the Maja Labo Dahu Values

The implementation of the Maja Labo Dahu character values at MIS Sambinae in Bima City still faces several challenges, including the influence of social media and peer groups, as well as a lack of reinforcement of these values within the family environment. Some students still view teasing and excessive joking as normal in their daily interactions. Additionally, the influence of external cultures has led to a decline in students' interest in local cultural values. On the other hand, limited class time prevents teachers from fully integrating character education into their lessons. Nevertheless, the school continues to strive to strengthen the application of the Maja Labo Dahu values through positive reinforcement, teacher role modeling, and collaboration with parents to prevent bullying within the school environment.

DISCUSSION

The research findings indicate that reinforcing the character values of Maja Labo Dahu plays a significant role in reducing bullying behavior among students at MIS Sambinae in Bima City. The values of maja (shame) and dahu (fear) are not merely understood as symbolic cultural concepts but have been internalized into students' actual behavior through various learning activities and school culture. This internalization occurs through a consistent process of habituation, so that these values become part of students' self-awareness in social interactions.

Conceptually, the value of maja teaches students to feel shame when engaging in actions that violate social or religious norms, such as mocking, hurting, or belittling peers. Meanwhile, the value of dahu instills a fear of the moral and social consequences of such negative behavior. The combination of these two values fosters strong self-control in students, enabling them to regulate their behavior better and avoid bullying. In this context, local wisdom values serve not only as a cultural identity but also as an effective and contextually relevant instrument for character education.

The implementation of the Maja Labo Dahu values in the school environment is carried out through various strategies, such as fostering polite behavior, reinforcing school rules, and integrating these values into the learning process. Teachers play a central role in this process, particularly in modeling good behavior, offering guidance, and helping students understand moral values. The learning process focuses not only on cognitive aspects but also on shaping students' attitudes and behaviors in their daily lives. These findings align with the concept of character education proposed by (Lickona, 2001), which emphasizes that character education is more effective when it is carried out through habit formation, leading by example, and integrating values into students' daily activities.

Furthermore, the research findings indicate that bullying behavior still occurs at MIS Sambinae, albeit in relatively mild forms, such as verbal taunts, negative nicknames, and social exclusion. This behavior often arises in everyday interactions and is frequently viewed as normal by students. This situation suggests that students' understanding of the line between joking and bullying has not yet fully developed. This is consistent with the view (Solberg & Olweus, 2003) which states that bullying among elementary school-aged children often takes the form of verbal and relational bullying, which is not always recognized as harmful behavior. Therefore, more systematic efforts are needed to help students understand the negative effects of bullying, both for the victims and the perpetrators.

In this context, teachers are crucial as the primary agents in reinforcing character values and preventing bullying. Teachers do not merely serve as conveyors of instructional content but also as role models who set concrete examples of appropriate behavior. The approaches teachers employ tend to be persuasive and educational, such as offering guidance, fostering dialogue, and helping students understand their mistakes. This approach has proven more effective than those that rely solely on punishment, as it fosters internal awareness among students. This aligns with the theory of moral education proposed by (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008), which emphasizes the importance of dialogue, reflection, and understanding in the process of moral development.

In addition to teachers' roles, environmental factors also influence the effectiveness of reinforcing the Maja Labo Dahu values. The family environment and peers play a major role in shaping student behavior. If the values taught at school are not reinforced at home, the internalization process becomes less effective. Therefore, parental involvement is crucial in supporting children's character education. Collaboration between schools and parents, such as through regular communication and parenting programs, can strengthen the consistent application of character values in students' lives. This aligns with the view of Berkowitz et al., who state that the success of character education depends heavily on synergy among schools, families, and the community.

Furthermore, the findings of this study indicate that the values of Maja Labo Dahu are highly relevant to modern education, particularly in addressing the challenges of moral degradation stemming from globalization. Amid rapid social change, local wisdom values can serve as a strong foundation for shaping the younger generation's character. Integrating local cultural values into education provides a more contextual approach that is closely aligned with students' lives, making it easier to understand and apply in daily behavior.

Thus, it can be concluded that reinforcing the Maja Labo Dahu values not only shapes students' character but also serves as an effective preventive strategy to reduce bullying behavior. These values foster self-awareness, enhance empathy, and strengthen social bonds among students. Therefore, the application of local wisdom values in character education must continue to be developed to create a safe, harmonious, and bullying-free school environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that reinforcing the character values of Maja Labo Dahu plays a significant role in reducing bullying behavior among elementary school students at MIS Sambinae in Bima City. The values of maja (shame) and dahu (fear) have been proven to foster self-control in students, causing them to be more cautious in their attitudes and behavior toward their peers. The implementation of these values is carried out through daily practice, teacher role modeling, and enforcement of school rules that foster a conducive learning environment.

Nevertheless, bullying behavior is still observed in verbal and social forms, such as teasing and exclusion, indicating that the reinforcement of character values has not yet been fully optimized. Several factors, including inconsistent application of values, peer group influence, and incomplete internalization of the Maja Labo Dahu values within the family environment, influence this. Parents tend to instill these values implicitly through advice without directly mentioning the concept of Maja Labo Dahu, so students' understanding of its philosophical meaning remains limited.

Therefore, stronger synergy between schools and parents is needed to instill the values of Maja Labo Dahu in a structured and sustainable manner. Teachers serve as facilitators and role models within the school environment, while parents reinforce these values within the family environment. Through effective collaboration, these local wisdom values are not merely understood as slogans but also tangibly implemented in students' daily lives.

Thus, reinforcing character values rooted in local wisdom, such as Maja Labo Dahu, can be an effective strategy for shaping students' character and creating a school environment that is safer, more comfortable, and free from bullying.

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