



The Role Of The School Environment In Shaping Students' Moral Character At State High School

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Abstract:

This study aims to examine the role of the school environment in shaping students' moral character through educational interactions. It employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore interaction patterns within a specific school context in depth. The research subjects included 10th-grade students, Islamic Religious Education teachers, guidance and counseling teachers, and homeroom teachers. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. The analysis followed an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings indicate that educational interactions play a central role in shaping students' moral character. Classroom interactions serve not only as a medium for knowledge transfer but also as a strategic space for internalizing values such as discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect. Interactions outside the classroom, including extracurricular activities and religious practices, further strengthen character development. In addition, peer interactions contribute to the formation of social awareness and positive behavior through dynamic social influence. The novelty of this study lies in its integrative analysis of multi-contextual educational interactions, encompassing classroom, extracurricular, religious, and peer environments as a unified system in character formation. This study highlights the synergistic relationship among these interaction domains within the school ecosystem. Thus, a conducive school environment, supported by teachers' exemplary behavior and positive social interactions, becomes a key determinant in shaping students' moral character.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a vital role in shaping students' character and moral values, not only in intellectual development but also in fostering moral values, attitudes, and a sense of responsibility. In this process, the school environment is one of the external factors that exerts a significant influence, as it is within this environment that various forms of social interaction take place among teachers, students, and

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the entire school community. These ongoing interactions, whether during classroom learning activities or extracurricular activities, have the potential to instill character values such as discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect.

Conditions on the ground indicate that not all school environments are able to fulfill their role optimally in shaping students' character. This is influenced by various factors, including the quality of educational interactions, teachers' role modeling, and students' social environments. Therefore, a more in-depth study is needed on how the school environment, particularly through educational interactions, contributes to the formation of students' character.

Previous studies have shown that the school environment has a significant influence on character development through socialization and social interaction. The role of teachers as role models and the influence of peers are also important factors in shaping student behavior. In addition, extracurricular activities and religious practices have been shown to contribute to the development of students' character.

However, existing research still tends to focus on the school environment in general, without specifically examining the forms of educational interaction that occur, whether between teachers and students or among students, both inside and outside the classroom. This indicates a research gap that warrants further investigation.

Based on this, this study aims to examine the role of the school environment in shaping students' character through educational interactions that take place both inside and outside the classroom. This study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the process of character development among students within the school environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach using a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of the school environment in shaping students' moral character. This approach was chosen because it allows for a contextual exploration of social phenomena, particularly those related to educational interactions within the school environment.

The study was conducted at Tapen State Senior High School (SMA) 1 based on preliminary observations that indicated the presence of notable character-building practices. In this study, the researcher served as the primary instrument, directly participating in the field data collection process.

The research subjects primarily consisted of 10th-grade students, while supporting informants included Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers, guidance and counseling (GC) teachers, and homeroom teachers. The subjects were selected through purposive sampling, based on their involvement in the learning process and social interactions at school.

Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to observe student behavior and interactions, interviews to gather in-depth information, and documentation to provide relevant supporting data.

Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity was ensured through triangulation, which involves comparing data from various sources and methods.

Thus, this study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the role of the school environment in shaping students' moral character.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Educational Interaction Between Teachers and Students

Educational interaction is a communicative process between teachers and students that takes place within the context of education; it is deliberate, planned, and has specific objectives. Educational interaction must reflect a two-way, active relationship using knowledge as its medium, thereby making the interaction meaningful and creative (Djamarah, 2010).

Teaching and learning is an interaction of normative value. Teaching and learning is a process carried out consciously and purposefully to guide the direction of the teaching and learning process (Djamarah, 2010).

In educational interactions, both teachers and students must be active—active in terms of attitude, mindset, and action. In a teaching system using a process-skills approach, students must be more active than the teacher. The teacher acts solely as a guide and facilitator (Djamarah, 2010).

Interaction between teachers and students is one of the key factors in creating effective classroom management. Teachers who are able to build positive and supportive relationships with students tend to be more successful in boosting their students' motivation to learn, which leads to better academic achievement. Various studies indicate that students who receive support and constructive feedback from teachers have higher levels of learning motivation and are better able to achieve their academic goals (Wahyuni, 2022).

Table : 1. Table title should be placed at the top

Statement	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)
The school environment plays a role in shaping students' moral character	88 %	12 %
Interactions with teachers influence students' attitudes	85 %	15 %
Peers influence students' behavior	90 %	10 %
Extracurricular activities contribute to character development	87 %	13 %

Interaction Between Teachers and Students In The Classroom

Interaction between teachers and students in the classroom is a crucial aspect of the learning process that focuses not only on delivering content but also on instilling character values. Based on interviews with the homeroom teacher of Class X E1, it was found that every learning activity is utilized as a means to shape students' attitudes, such as discipline, the ability to respect others' opinions, and the use of polite language in communication.

This view is reinforced by the homeroom teacher of Class X E2, who stated that dialogic learning encourages students to be more open in expressing their opinions. Through active and communicative interaction, students become

accustomed to expressing their ideas while maintaining proper etiquette. Healthy interaction between teachers and students also contributes to fostering a mutual respect within the classroom.

Theoretically, the learning process serves not only as a means of knowledge transfer but also as a medium for internalizing character values, such as discipline, mutual respect, and the ability to communicate politely (Sari & Sutarto, 2024). Thus, the interactions between teachers and students play a strategic role in shaping students' character holistically.

The quality of interaction in learning is also influenced by the teacher's personality. Teachers who exhibit a warm, empathetic, and supportive attitude tend to be able to create a positive learning atmosphere. In such an environment, students will feel valued and heard, thereby becoming more motivated to actively participate in the learning process. This aligns with Rasya's view, who states that a teacher's personality has a significant influence on the quality of interaction and the teacher-student relationship, which ultimately impacts students' academic and socio-emotional development (Rasya et al., 2024)

Thus, interactions between teachers and students in the classroom play a role not only in enhancing academic understanding but also in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors. Effective, communicative interactions, supported by a teacher's positive personality, will create a conducive learning environment and optimally support students' character development.

Interaction Between Teachers and Students Outside the Classroom

Outdoor learning is an educational approach that uses the open environment as the primary platform for learning (Nursyamsi et al., 2024). Interaction between teachers and students outside the classroom often takes place during extracurricular activities. Extracurricular activities participated in by students have a significant influence on character development. Through involvement in extracurricular activities, students tend to develop positive attitudes, such as a spirit of leadership, the ability to adapt to social environments, and increased self-confidence. On the other hand, extracurricular activities also serve as a strategic means for teachers to instill character values in students. Active participation in these various activities allows students to recognize and internalize diverse values, such as discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and other positive values that support holistic personality development (Agus et al., 2023).

Based on the results of an interview with Ms. Wiwin (a mathematics teacher), she explained that, even though teachers only teach in the classroom, their role remains significant in fostering students' discipline and moral character. Interactions outside the classroom also provide opportunities to instill good manners, cooperation, and respect for both teachers and peers. This statement aligns with Adinda et al., who note that teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' character, mindset, and behavior. Teachers can explicitly teach values such as honesty, cooperation, responsibility, and empathy to students (Daaliwa et al., 2024).

Interactions outside the classroom, as seen in various activities—such as congregational Dhuha prayer, congregational Zuhr prayer, and acts of mutual assistance—foster interaction between teachers and students. Desy emphasizes that teacher-student interaction embodies one of the principles, namely the

greeting, where interaction occurs when teachers and students greet one another before entering the school (Desy et al., 2025).



Figure 3. : Religious club activities



Figure 2. : Group prayer activities

Educational Interaction Among Students

Educational interaction refers to the exchange of information, ideas, and experiences between teachers and students, as well as among students themselves, within both formal and non-formal educational contexts. Interaction among students significantly influences the learning process; interactions within the classroom environment enable students to exchange thoughts, knowledge, and experiences (Walewangko et al., 2024).

In addition to interactions between teachers and students, peer relationships are also a crucial component of the learning process. Peer interactions constitute a form of social communication that occurs among students during various learning activities, such as group discussions, collaborative task completion, and the exchange of ideas regarding instructional content (Anifah et al., 2024).

As a normative interaction, educational interaction has the following characteristics: it has a specific purpose; it involves planned procedures to achieve that purpose; it is characterized by the presentation of specific content; it involves student activities; the teacher acts as a guide; it requires discipline; it has a time limit; and concludes with an evaluation (Djamarah, 2010).

In addition to teachers, peers also have a significant influence on character development. A positive peer group tends to exhibit good behavior, whereas a less positive social circle has the potential for negative impacts. Religious activities conducted at Tapen State High School 1 also contribute significantly to fostering students' discipline and character. This is reinforced by the view of Lutfiyah et al. that, conceptually, social interactions are closely linked to the awareness that humans are social beings who cannot be separated from the influence of their environment. Friends play a strategic role in shaping a person's mindset, habits, and behavioral tendencies (Lutfiyah et al., 2026).

Based on the results of an interview with a student from class XE4, it can be concluded that the environment plays a significant role in shaping student behavior. Some students are able to exercise good self-control, making them less susceptible to negative influences. Thus, self-awareness, the ability to manage one's behavior, and the ability to selectively choose positive environments are crucial. This indicates that social interaction and the school environment play a crucial role in developing students' discipline, responsibility, and character in a

holistic manner. This is reinforced by the views of Zahra and Ibnu, who state that responsibility develops through the process of habituation in direct experiences. From a constructivist perspective, children build their understanding of social concepts and values through active engagement in various experiences (Zahra & Ibnu, 2025).

The development of social skills is one of the primary outcomes of educational interactions among students. Students learn to communicate with others, understand various perspectives, and respect differing opinions that arise within the learning environment (Hestya & Widiarni, 2022).



Figure 4. : Student council activities



Figure 5. : Scouting activities

DISCUSSION

Interaction Among Students in the Classroom

In the context of classroom learning, educational interaction among students is a mutual process of exchanging ideas, knowledge, and experiences that plays a role in creating an active and conducive learning environment. Through interactions in the classroom, students are not merely recipients of information but also act as active participants in the learning process. This demonstrates that effective learning does not depend solely on the teacher's role but also on the quality of interactions occurring among students (Walewangko, 2024).

The success of the learning process is greatly influenced by the dynamics of interactions taking place in the classroom, both between students and between students and teachers. Effective communication facilitates students' understanding and absorption of the material presented. Effective interaction is a key factor in improving the quality of learning (Rasyad et al., 2024).

This is further reinforced by Siska, who notes that interactions within the classroom are a crucial component in creating a conducive learning environment. Harmonious relationships among students, as well as between teachers and students, foster a comfortable learning atmosphere, thereby motivating students to actively participate in learning activities (Siska & Dela, 2024).

Interactions among students also make a significant contribution to improving understanding of the subject matter. Activities such as group discussions provide opportunities for students to exchange information and explain the material to their peers. Open communication and active student engagement in discussions can create a more lively learning atmosphere, increase participation, and support

the achievement of optimal learning outcomes (Anifah et al., 2024).

Thus, educational interactions among students in the classroom play a crucial role in supporting the learning process. Through active and positive interactions, students can develop a deeper understanding of the material while also improving the social skills needed in daily life.

Interactions Among Students Outside the Classroom

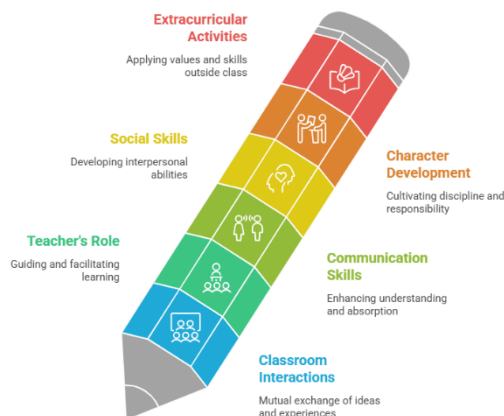
Based on a discussion with one of the 10th-grade students, it is evident that the school environment plays a significant role in shaping students' behavior and moral character. Cultivating attitudes of discipline and responsibility are key factors in building good character. Daily activities at Tapen State High School No. 1 also help students adhere to rules and carry out their duties with a sense of responsibility. This finding aligns with the views of Abdullah and Lasri (2024), who state that the school environment significantly contributes to shaping students' behavior and moral character through the cultivation of discipline and responsibility. Additionally, teachers play a crucial role as role models, as the attitudes and behaviors they demonstrate serve as a reference for students in developing honesty, discipline, and responsibility (Abdullah & Lasri, 2024).

Educational interactions among students outside the classroom can be observed through various activities, particularly extracurricular activities. One activity that plays a role in character development is the Rohis extracurricular program. This activity is a religious program conducted outside formal class hours and aims to develop students' skills while fostering a noble and pious character (Amjad, 2021). Through these activities, students not only engage in social interaction but also learn to apply religious values in their daily lives.

In addition, interactions among students outside the classroom need to be harmonious in order to support the character-building process. Positive relationships among students can provide encouragement and motivation in both learning and behavior. Changes in students' attitudes are often influenced by their peer group, where positive behaviors from peers can be internalized and applied in daily life. Positive interactions are characterized by support, motivation, and mutual acceptance among students (Bela et al., 2022).

Thus, educational interactions among students outside the classroom play a crucial role in shaping students' moral character. Through various activities and social relationships, students can develop attitudes of discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and other positive values that support comprehensive character development.

Figure 6. : The Impact of Student Interactions



Interaction among students in the classroom constitutes a fundamental component of effective learning, as it transforms students from passive recipients into active participants in the construction of knowledge. Through collaborative activities such as discussions, peer explanations, and idea exchange, students engage in meaningful learning processes that enhance their cognitive development and critical thinking skills. The quality of these interactions significantly influences students' understanding of the subject matter, as effective communication enables clarification of concepts and deeper comprehension. Moreover, a supportive and harmonious classroom environment fosters students' confidence and willingness to participate, thereby creating a more dynamic and conducive learning atmosphere. Consequently, student-to-student interaction not only strengthens academic achievement but also contributes to the development of essential social competencies, including cooperation, empathy, and communication skills.

Beyond the classroom, interactions among students play an equally crucial role in shaping their moral character and social behavior. The broader school environment provides opportunities for students to internalize values such as discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect through daily social engagement and participation in extracurricular activities. Programs such as religious or character-based extracurricular activities serve as effective platforms for reinforcing moral and spiritual values while promoting positive peer relationships. Furthermore, peer influence becomes a significant factor in shaping students' attitudes and behaviors, where constructive interactions characterized by support and motivation can lead to positive behavioral development. Therefore, interactions outside the classroom complement formal learning by fostering holistic student development, integrating cognitive, social, and moral dimensions essential for their personal and academic growth.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the school environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' character through educational interactions that take place both inside and outside the classroom.

Interactions between teachers and students serve not only to convey learning materials but also as a means of instilling character values such as discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect. On the other hand, interactions among students also contribute to the development of social skills and the formation of positive behavior through various learning activities and extracurricular activities. Therefore, a conducive school environment, supported by teachers' exemplary behavior and positive interactions, is a key factor in the holistic development of students' character.

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