

41. The Role of the Principal in Strengthening Character Education in Elementary School

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The role of the principal in strengthening character education in elementary school

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Abstrak

Peran kepala sekolah sangat penting dalam penguatan pendidikan karakter karena kepala sekolah sebagai pembuat kebijakan dapat mengakomodir semua kebutuhan siswa terkait pendidikan karakter dan seorang pemimpin yang dapat mendorong semua guru dan karyawan menjadi model karakter yang baik bagi semua siswa akan sangat besar. menentukan keberhasilan pendidikan karakter dapat dilaksanakan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran kepala sekolah dalam penguatan pendidikan karakter. Penelitian ini merupakan jenis penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Subjek penelitian ini berjumlah 1 kepala sekolah dan 6 guru kelas. Metode yang digunakan untuk pengumpulan data adalah observasi, wawancara, dan telaah dokumen. Instrumen yang digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data adalah lembar wawancara dan lembar observasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa berdasarkan hasil wawancara dan observasi, peran kepala sekolah dalam penguatan pendidikan karakter sangat besar dan dapat mempengaruhi sikap dan kepribadian anak di sekolah. Bimbingan, motivasi, dan fasilitas yang diberikan oleh siswa sangat diperlukan untuk mendapatkan motivasi lebih dalam penguatan pendidikan karakter. Penelitian ini berimplikasi agar kepala sekolah dapat menjalankan tugasnya sesuai dengan perannya dalam penguatan pendidikan karakter.

Kata kunci: Peran Kepala Sekolah, Penguatan, Pendidikan Karakter

Abstract

The role of the principal is very important in strengthening character education because the principal, as a policy maker, can accommodate all student needs related to character education and a leader who can encourage all teachers and employees to become good character models for all students will greatly determine the success of character education can be implemented. This study aimed to analyze the role of school principals in strengthening character education. This research is a type of descriptive qualitative research. The subjects of this study amounted to 1 principal and 6 class teachers. The methods used for data collection are observation, interviews, and document review. The instruments used to collect data are interview sheets and observation sheets. The results showed that based on the results of interviews and observations, the role of the principal in strengthening character education is very large and can affect the attitudes and personalities of children at school. Guidance, motivation, and facilities provided by students are very much needed to get more motivation in strengthening character education. This research implies that school principals can carry out their duties according to their role in strengthening character education.

Keywords: Role Of Principal, Strengthening, Character Education.

1. INTRODUCTION

Changes in the progress of the times that continue to be dynamic demand that the quality of school institutions be improved. School as an open system must maintain its existence as an institution that must innovate so that the institution does not decline (Muhamad Nova, 2017; Saputro & Mardiono, 2020). Schools are required to carry out an effective and dynamic learning process. Character education is character education which is an effort that is systematically designed to help students understand the values of positive behavior and good human character traits related to themselves, fellow humans, the environment, and nationality (Nugrahani, 2017; Widodo, 2018). The current reality, the collapse of moral values in today's society, also hurts the values and attitudes of children at this time (Abdi, 2020; Fitria & Juwita, 2018; Galuh et al., 2021). It is due to several influencing factors as well. One of the strongest factors is the use of gadgets in elementary

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school-age children. Children are easily influenced by the development of trends and socialization on social media (Ananda, 2017; Nurohmah & Dewi, 2021). So parents have to extra in educating children at home. This decline in ethics and morals also makes schools work very hard to educate and impart knowledge to their students. One way to correct this moral decline is to use character education at home and in a structured way at school. This problem triggers the Indonesian government to fix this, which starts with instilling the values/norms of the Indonesian nation, especially in educational institutions. The process of forming character education for students greatly influences their personality in the future. Especially elementary school children are still growing, so it is appropriate to instill good character. It causes character education in elementary school students to be more focused on role models and giving examples. Character is the dynamic organization of the individual's nervous system that determines the behavior and thinking of a particular individual (Muhamad Nova, 2017). These characteristics encourage someone to act, behave, say, and respond to something. Personality is a characteristic of a person that comes from formations received from the environment, for example, the influence of the surrounding culture that affects a person from birth.

The principal plays a very important role in directing school components so that the teaching and learning process goes well (Astuti, 2019; Septisia et al., 2020). In carrying out his role, the principal must be able to design an integrated and comprehensive systematic plan (Candra et al., 2020; Fitrah, 2017). The principal is a school leader who interacts with teachers functionally. The principal is also in charge of leading the school where the education and learning process occurs or between the teacher and the students being taught (Kurniawati et al., 2020; Rusdiana, 2018). The principal is responsible for managing the education system, running the school, guiding other education personnel, using and maintaining facilities and infrastructure, and supervising the schools to be mentored (Arditama & Lestari, 2020; Hajar & Putra, 2021). As a supervisor, the principal monitors, promotes and improves the learning process in schools and classrooms (Manora, 2019). Therefore, school leaders must acquire the educational skills and abilities they have obtained through education and training to properly carry out their obligations and responsibilities. The principal has a very dominant role in the organization of the school. The position of the principal in carrying out the roles described above will support achieving the targets and goals of character education in schools (Suhartinah, 2021). One of the principal's roles is to strengthen character education which is the responsibility of education. The importance of the role of school principals in strengthening character education is conveyed by research by Yulianti (2020: 23), which states that the function of the principal as a manager, namely, as a policy maker who can accommodate all the needs of students related to character education and leaders who can encourage all teachers and employees to become good character models for all students will greatly determine the success of character education can be implemented.

The implementation of strengthening character education through school quality improvement activities begins with the implementation and preparation for the implementation of the action plan following the preparation of the internal quality assurance system and graduate competency standards which have an impact on changes to the lesson plan lesson schedule Danawati et al. (2018:62). Strengthening character education is an educational movement under the responsibility of the education unit which is intended to strengthen the character of students through harmonization of the heart, taste, mind, body by involving and cooperation between educational units, families, communities Witarsa dan Ruhjana (2021:9). The important role of the Principal in strengthening character education as a policy maker who can accommodate all student needs related to character education. Leaders who can encourage all teachers and employees to become good character models for all students will greatly determine the success of character education Yulianti (2020: 23). The

principal has roles and duties inherent in his personality as a leader and controller in school operations. These roles include educators, managers, administration, innovators, motivators, supervisors, and leaders.

Previous research findings state that school principals have a role in improving the quality of education (Anisa & Ramadan, 2021; Fitrah, 2017). The principal plays a role in improving discipline in schools (Juarman et al., 2020). The principal acts as a supervisor in improving the quality of education (Astuti, 2019; Purnomo & Anshory, 2020). The role of school leaders can be divided into seven main roles: educator, manager, supervisor, leader, and motivation (Sesra Budio, 2020). A school principal leads certain school environments. In other words, improving the quality of schools is strongly influenced by the effectiveness of the principal's values. Therefore, the principal's success is reflected in the school's success. In this case, the role of the principal is very important in strengthening character education. So that schools are more advanced in strengthening character education for students, this study aims to analyze the role of the principal in strengthening character education at SDN 172 Pekanbaru.

2. METHODS

This study uses qualitative research with a descriptive approach. Qualitative research aims to describe a phenomenon in detail; generally, the data is not processed numerically (Sugiyono, 2016). This type of research is qualitative research with a descriptive approach due to the suitability of data collection activities and the objectives of this study. Descriptive research is a research approach that aims to present a complete picture of social settings or the exploration and clarification of phenomena. This study describes the role of the school principal in strengthening character education. The subjects of this study were seven people, one school principal and six class teachers. This study's data collection techniques were observation, interviews, and document review. Data collection techniques are the most important step in research because the purpose of research is to obtain data (Sugiyono, 2016). Data that meets data standards will not be obtained without knowing the proper data collection techniques.

The data analysis technique used in this research is first by collecting data obtained from sources related to the role of the school principal in strengthening character education in schools by taking detailed notes. Secondly, data reduction on the data that has been recorded carefully and in detail found. The data reduction carried out in this study was the reduction of observational and documentation data relating to the role of school principals in strengthening character education. Data analysis through reduction is carried out to summarize, choose the main things, focus on important things, and look for themes and patterns of findings (Sugiyono, 2016). The third is the data presentation, where the interviews and observation results are presented in data collection. Through the presentation of data, data will be organized and arranged in a relationship pattern so that it will be easier to understand and plan further work (Sugiyono, 2016). Fourth, drawing conclusions in which the researcher concludes reducing data and presenting data. In this last step, the conclusions are still temporary and will be determined as the final conclusion. The initial conclusions are still temporary and will change if strong evidence is not found to support the next data collection stage (Sugiyono, 2016). The interview instrument grids are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Interview Instrument Grid

Formulation of the problem	Aspect	Indicator	Sub-indicator	Question Number
1. The Role of the Principal in Strengthening Character Education at SDN 172 Pekanbaru.	The Role of the Principal	Reformist	a. The principal motivates students	1,2,3
			b. The Principal coordinates with the teacher	
			c. Principal Convincing Parents	
		Solution Giver	a. Provide solutions	4,5
			b. Be responsive to problems	
		Help process	a. Help implement the program	6,7,8
			b. Carry out monitoring	
			c. Make decisions	
		Resource link	a. Prepare supporting media	9,10,11
			b. Connecting the coordination of the principal and students	
			c. Connecting school principals and infrastructure	
2. Factors influencing the Role of the Principal in Strengthening Character Education at SDN 172 Pekanbaru.	Influencing factors	Supporting factors	a. Principal	12,13,14
			b. Student	
			c. Media Resources	
		Obstacle factor	a. Personal Factors b. Environmental factor	15,16

Table 2. Observation Instrument

Formulation of the problem	Aspect	Indicator	Subindicator	Question Number
A. The Role of the Principal in Strengthening Character Education at SDN 172 Pekanbaru.	The Role of the Principal	Reformist	a. The principal motivates students	1
			b. The Principal coordinates with the teacher	
			c. Principal Convincing Parents	
		Solution Giver	a. Provide solutions b. Be responsive to problems	2

Formulation of the problem	Aspect	Indicator	Subindicator	Question Number
B. Factors influencing the Role of the Principal in Strengthening Character Education at SDN 172 Pekanbaru.	Influencing factors	Help process	a. Help implement the program b. Carry out monitoring c. Make decisions	3
		Resource link	a. Prepare supporting media b. Connecting the coordination of the principal and students c. Connecting school principals and infrastructure	4
		Supporting factors	a. Principal b. Student c. Media Resources	5
		Obstacle factor	a. Personal Factors b. Environmental factor	6

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on the research results, the role of the school principal is very important in strengthening education in schools. as for the role of the principal at SDN 172 Pekanbaru. Based on the research results, the role of the principal in education, especially at SDN 172 Pekanbaru, is very important. It is because all policies are in the hands of the school principal. The education system or working hours and the arrangement of activities are all under the approval and responsibility of the school principal. The principal of SDN 172 Pekanbaru stated that his role in strengthening character education in schools was to encourage students or teachers who educate students. He also stated that strengthening character education at SDN 172 had been properly implemented. However, some students still haven't implemented character education in school. as the person in charge of the success of student character education, the principal strengthens character education by monitoring and evaluating all activities that include character education. It is explained by the principal monitoring student activities from activities such as flag ceremonies, worship activities, and student behavior towards teachers and fellow students, including character education so that the principal can assess how character education is for students by coordinating with the teacher and parents. The observation results explained that the principal tried to provide a motivational spirit in student activities related to strengthening character education at SDN 172 Pekanbaru, always coordinating and convincing parents of students about good character education. The principal coordinates because he is always on good terms and discusses plans and goals for character education at SDN 172 Pekanbaru. Besides, the school principal communicates problems regarding strengthening character education with teachers, resolves

them well, and makes decisions quickly. Based on the results of interviews conducted with the principal of SDN 172 Pekanbaru, when getting problems faced by school principals in strengthening character education at this time, there was a lack of enthusiasm for student learning, a lack of teacher coordination regarding strengthening character education, and the presence of unfavorable student behavior towards others friend. With this, the principal tries to provide the best solution after meeting with the teacher. The principle requires each teacher to make learning tools following the latest curriculum, adjusting the development of the teacher's handbook. Then the principal gives an example to students by always setting a good example so that students can emulate it. The principal will discuss again with the teacher about the existing problems. Based on the results of observations, the principal tries to provide a solution to the problem. Hold impromptu meetings to discuss existing problems. The principal provides an example by encouraging students to always comply with applicable regulations. The principal also provides solutions by always instilling kindness. It is a good solution provider.

Based on the results of interviews with the principal of SDN 172 Pekanbaru, the principal is always ready if the teacher needs something. The principal also always gives directions to teachers to help the process of strengthening student education. Then the principal played a good role in his duties, especially strengthening student character education. The principal school assists in implementing character education strengthening programs, regularly monitoring every month, and in ceremonial activities, he always gives examples of the values that must be instilled in schools, like the character values possessed by school principals and teachers. The principal always sets an example. Not only with spoken words but also by giving small examples that students can emulate. The small thing is to greet the teacher and smile at the students when someone gives him a warning. The principal always provides motivation and encouragement to help teachers in the process of strengthening student character. Because it can be explained that without encouragement, student character education can't be printed. In addition, the principal has played a good role in his duties, especially in strengthening school character education.

In addition, other teachers explained that the principal always provides motivation and encouragement to help teachers strengthen students' character at SDN 17 Pekanbaru. Because according to him, it can be explained that without encouragement, student character education can't be printed. In addition, the teacher also stated that the principal had played a good role in carrying out his duties, especially in strengthening character education in schools. In developing and strengthening character education, school principals always provide a good understanding of the future progress of character education. Based on this, it can be explained that the principal always directs students and teachers to strengthen school character education. As a school principal, it can be explained that those who have full responsibility are teachers and parents. Besides that, there are also human resources for teachers, students, and parents who can help. Most of the budget funds were obtained from BOS funds, and specifically for media, they did not have special media to use, only using handbooks from schools. What was obtained from the observation results was that there were lazy students, and sometimes there were students who disturbed their friends so that when going through a meeting, the principal allowed the teacher to convey the obstacles faced so that he could provide the best possible solution.

The principal identifies problems when the school principal is supervising. The principal will exchange opinions with the teacher if there is a problem. The problem that is often faced by school principals when strengthening character education is that teachers rarely report learning problems; besides, the learning methods used by teachers are still relatively old. So that the principal instills rules in students and firmly allows students to apply the rules given. School principals are trying to convince parents to strengthen character

education for students at school. The school principal stated how to convince parents that the character education provided by the school is appropriate, namely by providing real activities. Also, parents can see the evidence for themselves through student report cards. Therefore the principal as a contact person between teachers and parents is also important in this process. The principal always invites discussions or meetings quickly when the school experiences problems related to students. The principal is responsible for fulfilling or providing the support needed by teachers, staff, and students, whether in the form of funds, equipment, time, or even a supportive atmosphere. Also, the principal must pay attention to the needs of teachers and students.

The factors that influence the role of the principal in strengthening character education at SDN 172 Pekanbaru are the supporting and inhibiting factors. The first is the supporting factor. Based on the study's results, it was explained that the supporting factor in strengthening character education at SDN 172 Pekanbaru was that there was the motivation that always encouraged students to do good things. There was a high interest in learning. The media used is still a book, but this remains a supporting factor for implementing the program to strengthen student character education. Students' enthusiasm for learning is also a trigger factor for strengthening school character education. In this case, the enthusiasm for student learning makes the teacher excited about the learning process. Students' willingness to learn is the driving factor in strengthening this character education. Supporting factors in this character education strengthening program are the enthusiasm for learning and the willingness to learn from students, making it run smoothly. The other supporting factors in strengthening character education are seen from the learning tools teachers use in teaching, then the attitudes and actions of teachers and school principals that can help strengthen character education at SDN 172 improve. Therefore, the role of the principal is very important in what factors support strengthening character education in schools. The observations' results explain that the principal provides direction and enthusiasm for student learning, there are handbooks or learning tools that are interesting in learning, and the principal helps strengthen character education by providing examples and good behavior so students can emulate it.

Second, inhibiting factors. The results of the interviews obtained by the researchers explained that the inhibiting factor in the principal's role in strengthening character education at SDN 172 Pekanbaru was that the lack of interest in student learning could be an obstacle to the implementation of character education strengthening activities, besides that another inhibiting factor was the bad influence of their peers who causes character education in students to weaken. Which friendship environment can also have a good or bad impact. Students' lack of interest in learning in the learning process creates obstacles to strengthening character education in schools. As well as the lack of coordination from parents, who teach character education in the home environment causes an inhibiting factor in strengthening character education in schools. In this case, students who feel lazy, lack interest in learning, and have hasty student behavior are the inhibiting factors experienced by the principal in strengthening character education. In this case, the inhibiting factors experienced by the principal in strengthening character education occur because of the students themselves and the lack of coordination from the students' parents. Thus, the principal tries to reduce the inhibiting factors experienced by holding meetings and coordinating with teachers and parents so that the strengthening of character education at SDN 172 Pekanbaru improves. The observation results explain that school principals strengthen character education for students. The principal also prepares the needs needed by the teacher so that the teacher can comfortably educate students so that students are aware of their behavior.

Discussion

As for the discussion of research conducted at SDN 172 Pekanbaru. ¹ The role of the principal in strengthening character education. First, change advocates. When the term role is used in a work environment, someone gave (or gets) a position is also expected to carry out his role following the job's expectations. That is why there is what is called role expectation. Expectations regarding a person's role in his position can be differentiated from the expectations of the assignor and those who receive benefits from the job/position (Kurniawati et al., 2020; Pujiyanto et al., 2020). The principal has roles and duties inherent in his personality as a leader and controller in school operations (Fitrah, 2017; Hajar & Putra, 2021). The role of the school principal in education is, of course, very important. It is because all policies are in the hands of the school principal. The education system or working hours and the arrangement of activities are all under the approval and responsibility of the school principal. Concerning the school's role in strengthening student character education, it is also the responsibility of the school principal. Its role in strengthening character education in schools is to encourage students or teachers who educate students. Currently, strengthening character education at SDN 172 has been properly implemented. Some students still have not implemented character education in school. As the person in charge of the success of student character education, the principal strengthens character education by monitoring and evaluating all activities that include character education. This is explained by the principal monitoring student activities such as flag ceremonies, worship activities, and student behavior towards teachers and fellow students, including character education so that the principal can assess how character education is for students by coordinating with the teacher and parents.

¹ In both solution providers, the role of the principal in providing solutions is very important because when schools have problems, especially regarding strengthening character education, the principal will be responsible for providing good solutions for solving these problems. In his role, the principal will also hold certain meetings with certain problems so that the principal will coordinate with the teachers about what solutions are related to this problem. Strengthening senior education at SDN 172 Pekanbaru was weakened due to a lack of coordination with teachers regarding existing problems. The principal of SDN 172 Pekanbaru stated that in deciding on a solution, usually when meeting with the teacher, the principal would first identify what problems were happening at school. Especially in the problem of strengthening character education, the principal will quickly take the first step in coordinating the solution. The role of the solution provider for the principal is the principal acts as a reminder of the ultimate goal of change (Lubis & Haidir, 2019). Improving the quality of schools is strongly influenced by the effectiveness of the principal's values. Therefore, the principal's success is reflected in the school's success (Sesra Budio, 2020). Dengan demikian, kedudukan kepala sekolah dalam melaksanakan peran-perannya akan memberikan dukungan untuk tercapainya target dan tujuan pendidikan karakter di sekolah.

The three auxiliary processes of school leaders can be divided into five main roles: educator (educator), manager, supervisor, leader, and motivation. A school principal leads certain school environments. In other words, improving the quality of schools is strongly influenced by the effectiveness of the principal's values. Therefore, the principal's success is reflected in the school's success. The problems school principals face when strengthening character education for students, school principals always provide motivation and encouragement to assist teachers in strengthening student character. Because without encouragement, student character education cannot be printed. In addition, the principal has played a good role in his duties, especially in strengthening student character education (Putri, 2018; Sapulette & Wardana, 2016). After that, by instilling the rules in students and

explicitly allowing students to apply these rules, and asking about the principal who has become the best tool in strengthening student character education.

The four are resource liaisons, change advocates, solution providers, process helpers, and resource liaisons. The theory of the role of the school principal is due to its suitability in strengthening character education. Strengthening character education is an ongoing process of implementation flow, from policy planning to its application in learning activities. So the roles that need to be analyzed are the role of the school principal in supporting the process of strengthening character education. The school principal stated how to convince parents that the character education provided by the school is appropriate, namely by providing real activities. Also, parents can see the evidence for themselves through student report cards. Apart from the school principal, those who also have full responsibility are teachers and parents. Apart from that, there are also human resources for teachers, students, and parents who can help. Most of the budget funds were obtained from BOS funds, and specifically for media, they did not have special media to use, only using handbooks from schools. The role of the resource liaison is that principal's role is to connect people with the necessary funding sources. The principal is responsible for fulfilling or providing the support needed by teachers, staff, and students, whether in the form of funds, equipment, time, or even a supportive atmosphere (Elisa et al., 2019; Hajar & Putra, 2021). The principal must pay attention to the needs met by teachers and students.

Factors influencing the role of the principal in strengthening character education. First, the supporting factors include motivation, which always encourages students to do good things. Apart from that, there is a high interest in learning, and the media used is still books, but this remains a supporting factor for the program's implementation to strengthen student character education. Character education factors can be realized by Allocating more time to improve the quality of character education, student relations, teacher and staff development, and school development. Compared with management activities, Set aside specific time to evaluate character development courses. Create a timed work plan that is known to all members of the school. With a schedule known to all school members, providing regular time to meet/receive teachers, staff, and students. The factors that support the role of the school principal are due to students as objects of character education, so it is important to pay attention to the conditions of students in character education. Teaching students to become national leaders at a time when technological advances are very rapid and with complete media and resources will help character education activities (Prasanti & Fitriani, 2018; Rosyad & Zuchdi, 2018). Media such as learning tools and activities are necessary for implementing this principal's role.

Second, several factors hinder the performance of the school principal in the student environment at home. The student's social environment will become an obstacle to character education if the environment hurts students. Personal and environmental factors influence school principals' character education. Personal factors include the ability to influence others, leadership skills and experience, and client personality and behavior. The second factor is environmental factors which consist of the school's internal environment. Teacher/staff culture and work ethic, and task environment, e.g., Community and environmental support. The lack of interest in student learning can be an obstacle to carrying out activities. Besides that, another inhibiting factor is the bad influence of their peers. The inhibiting factors for implementing the activities of the students themselves, in this case, students who feel lazy to study, are the inhibiting factors that there are still students whose interest in learning is still lacking. Thus it can be stated that the friendship environment can also have a good or bad impact. It depends on the friendship environment itself. Based on the results of the observation table, it is also concluded that school principals strengthen student character education. The principal also prepares the needs needed by the teacher so that the teacher can

comfortably educate students so that students are aware of their behavior. All activities carried out are always documented, either in pictures or in writing. Obstacles faced by school principals in implementing character education, there are still teachers who use the old style of teaching, both in the use of methods, tools, and media. Teachers also do not dare to express their desires and deficiencies in learning.

This finding is reinforced by previous studies, which state that school principals have a role in improving the quality of education (Anisa & Ramadan, 2021; Fitrah, 2017). The principal plays a role in improving discipline in schools (Juarman et al., 2020). The principal acts as a supervisor in improving the quality of education (Astuti, 2019; Purnomo & Anshory, 2020). The role of school leaders can be divided into seven main roles: educator, manager, supervisor, leader, and motivation (Sesra Budio, 2020). From the discussion, the principal continues to control and always emphasizes coordination with the teacher regarding the activities that have taken place. The principal should also continue to ask about the difficulties faced by the teacher during the learning process. The teacher does not need to hesitate to express the problems faced, and the teacher also strengthens the relationship between colleagues so that they are compact in educating students. It would be even better if the teacher prepared the latest learning methods. This research implies that the principal is expected to be able to carry out his duties according to his role in strengthening character education.

4. CONCLUSION

The school's role in strengthening student character education is the responsibility of the school principal. His role in strengthening character education is to encourage students or teachers who educate students. Also, as a policymaker, he monitors and evaluates all activities, including character education. The method of coordinating the principal with the teacher is that they are always on good terms and talk about the plans and goals of character education. Besides that, the principal always communicates if there is a problem so they can solve it properly. The supporting factors in the character education strengthening program are the motivation that always encourages students to do good things, besides a high interest in learning. Moreover, the media used is a handbook. At the same time, the inhibiting factors are the lack of interest in student learning and the bad influence of peers.

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