



## ***Gangster Si Cantik* Program: Implementation of Character Building for Elementary School Students**

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**Abstract:** This study aims to identify and produce valid information about character education development programs in elementary schools, along with character identification developed from the *Gangster Si Cantik* program. This is a follow-up on overcoming character education problems that occurred in schools after the pandemic. This is important for conducting this research comprehensively to develop the character of elementary school students. This research used qualitative research with the type of case study to school programs at Dr. Sutomo 5 Surabaya Elementary School, East Java, Indonesia. The study was conducted by collecting data and information through purposive sampling, from 7 respondents consisting of the principal, teachers, and 5 students. The results of the research include the background of the formation of *Gangster Si Cantik* and character development strategies by *Gangster Si Cantik*. Based on student and teacher interviews there are good changes in the attitude of friends for the better despite it requiring some time and process. The characters developed through *Gangster Si Cantik* include caring, cooperation, fairness, honesty, discipline, and peace-loving. The constraints of this program are the limited time when traveling around and the limited number of aspiration boxes. This program is a form of collaboration between principals, teachers, and students in solving character education problems in elementary schools to create a safe and peaceful school environment. Collaboration is essential for future research in every aspect. It is intended that the findings of this study will enhance the practice of character development in elementary schools through scientific references.

**Keywords:** character education, *Gangster Si Cantik*, students, elementary school

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### **Introduction**

Education is one of the important efforts to encourage change, one of which is changing character for the better. In the current educational context, the main goal is not only to transfer knowledge but also to create results that can adapt to the social environment (Saptono, 2022). The growth of good character is obtained by the existence of a learning pedagogy that helps students not only to be intelligent but also to have a good attitude toward themselves and their environment. This is certainly related to the understanding that education is also an effort of the community and nation to prepare its younger generation for the better survival of society and nation in the future (Hasnah et al., 2018). Education is a means of preparing human resources for development (Hermino & Arifin, 2020). So being an educated



person is very important because humans are educated to be useful people, both for the state and the nation (Alpian et al., 2019).

Character education is one of the life developments that help humans become sensitive to themselves and their environment. In essence, character enables someone to stay strong in their surroundings, possess resilience in facing struggles, and overcome challenges with profound meaning (Saputro et al., 2015). Character education can be done starting at home, school, and in the community. The first education tri-center was introduced by Ki Hajar Dewantara, empowering all elements of society to build education (Bariyah, 2019; Sugiyanto Sugiyanto et al., 2023). The family is the most important educational institution because, in that family, humans are born, raised, and educated to be able to absorb the norms upheld by the family and are protected with affection. The school becomes a structured educational institution with a curriculum and tiers consisting of primary, secondary, and higher education. Society is one of the educational institutions intended for the development of community members into good citizens based on the values, norms, ethics, and good habits of society.

Schools are systematic educational institutions and their curricula allow programs to develop student character. This is motivated by the real-life cases that occur. Low respect for parents and teachers, impolite speech in communicating, and often even issuing rude and dirty words (Cahyo, 2017). Not only that, but even students have committed criminal acts, namely theft, obscenity, bullying, and acts of violence that resulted in the deaths of other students. Since 2013, there have been more than 3,200 cases of violence against children in Indonesia, while 50% of them are sexual violence against children, most of which occur in the home and school environment (Fitriyani et al., 2021). Social care values that are currently fading are, for example, indifference, wanting to win alone, disloyalty to friends, and so on (Muhamadi & Hasanah, 2019). The cause of bullying in elementary schools is triggered by an imbalance of power, the bully's overpowering strength, and the victim's incapacity of covering themselves accountable for it (Saptono, 2022)

Moreover, this character education problem also occurs in post-COVID-19 education. During the COVID-19 pandemic, education has become less than ideal for teachers, students, and parents (Hermanto & Pamungkas, 2023). This has resulted in a reduced level of control for both teachers and parents over students, leading to various learning problems. These learning problems include reducing students' religious characteristics, including praying not on time, incomplete prayer five times, sunnah prayer, as well as social attitudes (Khirur et al., 2021). Bullying and cyberbullying have been established as global phenomena, occurring at different stages of education (Kowalski et al., 2014). In Indonesia, character education is currently being discussed a lot. character decline is the reason for the importance of character education in the world of education in Indonesia (Purnomo & Pratiwi, 2021).

Post-pandemic learning problems are also reviewed by other countries. In the Netherlands, many schools are closed, and of course, it is found that there are learning losses due to school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating that there is no learning ability when students study at home (Engzell et al., 2021). Other studies revealed that student discipline problems also occur during online learning (Cicekci & Sadik, 2019). Research in Africa found that early-grade reading problems were abandoned during the pandemic. (Ardington et al., 2021). Academic problems experienced by students can trigger other problems such as lazy learning, lack of discipline, lack of care for the environment, and others.

Even though the development of character education is very important, it should prioritize character/morals, noble values, or ethics. Effective implementation of character education in primary schools will have a long-term impact as students transition to higher education, such as during the secondary school year (Khoury, 2017; Birhan et al., 2021). In addition, the age of elementary school students (6–12 years) is a crucial age to build a solid foundation for student character building (Jhon, 2021).

Education in elementary schools is designed to support the development of attitudes and knowledge through school programs. Arum Susilowati et al. (2023) studied the implementation of religious character education in terms of moral-knowing students. This religious character education can be developed and integrated into the learning process, in extracurricular programs and self-development programs in schools. Lestari, S., & Azizah, N. N. (2023) found that school programs that provide a social-emotional platform for students such as sharing classes encourage students to express problems

that they face at school and home. So that the teacher could assist and support the students. the aspiration of children.

Based on the description above, it is important to conduct this research comprehensively to develop the character of elementary school students. One of the elementary schools in the city of Surabaya strives to develop character education, especially after the pandemic and various impacts experienced by its students. Dr. Sutomo 5 Surabaya Elementary School is one of the outstanding schools located in the center of Surabaya. Based on the initial information obtained, this school has a special program for character development that empowers students through a program called *Gangster Si Cantik*. This interesting program has never been studied in depth through research, so this study aims to identify the *Gangster Si Cantik* program in depth. It is hoped that the findings of this research will add scientific references to the practice of character cultivation in elementary schools. The research question is how the implementation of the *Gangster Si Cantik* program develops the character of elementary school students and character identification developed from the *Gangster Si Cantik* program at Dr. Sutomo 5 Surabaya Elementary School. This interesting program has never been thoroughly researched before, so this study aims to provide valid information about the implementation of the *Gangster Si Cantik* program in developing the character of elementary school students, along with character identification developed from the *Gangster Si Cantik* program at Dr. Sutomo 5 Surabaya Elementary School. It is intended that the findings of this study will enhance the practice of character development in elementary schools through scientific references.

### Methods

This research used qualitative research with the type of case study. This qualitative research study aims to get an in-depth comprehension of people, groups, or situations through investigating processes, discovering meaning, and understanding. (Asmita & Erianjoni, 2019). The selection of informants in this study was carried out through purposive sampling. Researchers choose informants based on criteria, namely knowing the researcher's research problems.

The study was conducted from January 2023 to May 2023. Purposive sampling was used in this study's informant selection process. Informants are selected by researchers based on specific criteria, including those related to research issues. The research subjects consisted of the principal, teachers, and also five students. The following is a list of informants in this research.

**Table 1.** Informant Profile

No.	Initials	Role	Class	Gender
1.	ST	Principal		M
2.	ABN	Teacher		M
3.	AG	Student A	5	M
4.	FT	Student B	5	F
5.	FD	Student C	5	M
6.	NF	Student D	4	F
7.	GL	Student E	4	M

Data collection techniques used semi-structured interviews, observations, and documentation studies. The instruments used include interview guidelines, observation guidelines, and documentation. The data collection procedure begins with asking permission first to become an informant, then conducting interviews following the agreement between the researcher and the informant. The interviews were conducted online and offline. So that the data is more comprehensive. In addition, the results of direct observation of the activities of *Gangster Si Cantik* and documentation studies belonging to the school, such as journals, photos, and school work programs.

Data analysis used by Miles and Hubberman includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Results**

*Gangster Si Cantik* is an anti-violence movement to realize intelligent, active, polite, skillful, imaginative, and character students. This movement was formed in 2023 with the beginning of a visit by the local police force to each school to anticipate juvenile delinquency, child violence, and bullying. *Gangster Si Cantik* performed at Dr. Sutomo 5 Surabaya Elementary School. The name *Gangster Si Cantik* is the policy of the principal. Here's an excerpt from an interview about the background and purpose of forming this group.

"There are often complaints of bullying from some children, and for the means of the aspiration of children, children make complaints if they experience one of the acts of violence. This *Gangster Si Cantik* is a forum for aspiration and control and education to their friends." (Teacher)

"This movement aims to shape the character of students who are disciplined and responsible and care about the surrounding environment. Anticipating rampant juvenile violence and delinquency." (Principal)

The results of interviews with students who are members of this group also obtained data that this activity aims to remind each other to be always praiseworthy. These are the data from the student's interview:

"This non-violence movement can make us stop bullying in this school environment" (Student A)

"We can give or share to friends around so as not to do actions that harm others" (Student C)

"Create a comfortable atmosphere in making friends in the classroom environment and at school" (Student D)

Based on interview information, it was also found that members of this innovative group consisted of representatives of children from each fourth and fifth grade with 3 main participants and 15 children supporting the movement. Initially, each class sent two name proposals, and then a selection was made by the teacher on duty. Several criteria are considered when choosing members of *Gangster Si Cantik*.

"There is a jury, the selection of members by taking into account leadership skills, public speaking skills, and having high enthusiasm and concern for the environment." (Teacher)

Students who are members of *Gangster Si Cantik* take control every day by traveling to the school area as an act to prevent violence and bullying. Students go around during school recess. As part of this program, the school also created an aspiration box placed in a certain corner to accommodate student complaints. There are 3 locations, namely near the library, near the teacher's room, and the school's room. There is paper and pen provided, and sometimes children write with spoons. Every complaint will be processed by both the participants of *Gangster Si Cantik* and the collaborator teacher. If further treatment is required, action will be taken.

"One example of the movement we do as anti-violence *Gangster Si Cantik* ambassadors is to provide a means to channel complaints, opinions, and others in a suggestion box/complaint box. (Student E)

"From the contents of the complaint box, we can help friends who have complaints such as being bullied by each other" (Student B)

The strategy carried out so that this movement runs effectively is to involve students actively in prevention and supervision efforts. The supervisor is actively involved in controlling participants who are members of *Gangster Si Cantik* in evaluating every effort made and taking appropriate actions to overcome problems that occur in the field.

"We do evaluations at least 2 times a week by opening the contents of the suggestion and complaint box to find out the problems that have been resolved or not, but I open communication with the children every day" (Teacher)

Another strategy is also the distribution of tasks between *Gangster Si Cantik members* so that activities can run smoothly. There is a division of roles including the person in charge of taking the contents of the complaint box at each location, the division of classes handled, the part of preparing the schedule, and the socialization section.

The steps taken by the members of *Gangster Si Cantik* began by opening the aspiration box, then the members of *Gangster Si Cantik* conveyed it to the Class Teacher and then discussed how to solve the problem. Students are allowed to help solve problems independently, if the problem is solved, *Gangster Si Cantik* students will also do controlling. Sometimes problems are also found when returning home from school, monitoring in areas outside the school and students can report to the teacher. Based on the principal's interview, it was found that problem-solving can be different from the category of problems, namely mild, moderate, and severe.

"There are cases that can be solved right away, some need to be resolved with the help of students at school, and can also involve parents" (Principal)

"The cases handled are varied, ranging from fighting over toys, mocking parents' names, fighting, and other cases" (Teacher)

In addition to controlling aspiration boxes, *Gangster Si Cantik students* also conduct socialization or presentations to their friends. Presentations are carried out with storytelling activities. The story is made by students of *Gangster Si Cantik* who can consult with the teacher. Presentation activities are carried out together with other school events.

"Students prepare their original stories, then tell them to their friends in the hope that they can change from the examples they tell" (Teacher).

"When there are Damkar (firefighter) officers visiting the school, we provide an opportunity for *Gangster Si Cantik* for storytelling" (Principal)

The school also implements strategies through cooperation with parents, if cases occur that require resolution from various parties.

"Not only that, but we also involve the role of teachers and parents in raising awareness and how to take the right action against bullying" (Principal)

In addition to school strategies, students as members of this *Gangster Si Cantik* group also have strategies for conveying socialization and anti-bullying to their friends. The following is an excerpt of the statement delivered by the student.

"We diligently provide socialization to friends about the consequences of these dishonorable actions by socializing to each class easily and easily" (student A)

This program has a good impact, by providing the results of changing attitudes from friends who previously mocked friends, gradually reduced. This change is a process and requires habituation from members of *Gangster Si Cantik* to always warn.

"Praise God, there is a change that has occurred, the child who previously liked to mock friends, and bully friends, decreased, although not instantly" (Teacher)

This good program also encounters problems, one of which is because the time for the implementation of supervision coincides with rest hours, so they also rush to eat and then go around to supervise. In addition, the large number of students in the school and the large location also make supervision difficult. The number of aspiration boxes is also still limited and not until 3 days are full.

### **Discussion**

Based on the results of the research presented, findings were obtained about the background of the group called *Gangster Si Cantik* as part of the follow-up to the visit of figures to the school. The existence of character presented to school can increase student learning motivation and also create a new pleasant atmosphere. Learning motivation is the overall driving force within students that causes learning activities (Oktiani, 2017). The learning motivation possessed by students in each learning activity plays a role in increasing their learning achievement (Zurriyati & Mudjiran, 2021). Creation of an effective learning environment with good organization, effective time management, creating a happy and productive learning environment, and minimizing disruptions (Idhayani et al., 2020).

As for this group consisting of students who are class representatives, this indicates the importance of involving students to help with the problems faced by their friends. This group is like giving students opportunities to get involved in assisting to reduce acts of violence. Student involvement in learning can be seen as a form of learning where students carry out meaningful activities with the content offered (de Jong, 2019; Manubey et al., 2021). According to Wangid & Purwanti (2020), The implementation of group activity was effective in reducing negative emotional exhaustion in the learning process.

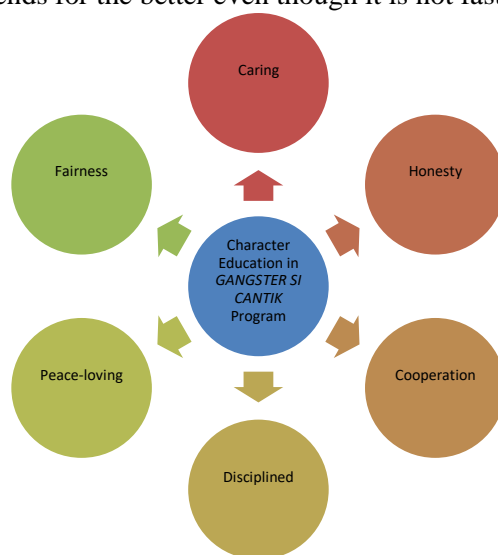
The purpose of this group formation is to develop the character of the students. Students are invited to have a character of caring for friends and caring for their environment. The cultivation of social care is one of the 18-character education regulated by the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia (Arif et al., 2021). Efforts to ensure the character of the school (Amaniyah & Nasith, 2022; Susilo et al., 2022).

The role and responsibility of teachers as companions in this program is to be a guide so that the members of *Gangster Si Cantik* can do their duties well. To achieve these goals, character educators must act as "knowledge intermediaries", effectively modifying information (Walker et al., 2015). In addition, the most important responsibility of teachers is to be a model for their students and to be a good model teachers must have the desired characteristics (Demirel et al., 2016).

The suggestion box is installed to accommodate ideas/suggestions/complaints to be a good tool to give students space to speak. Students write down their experiences through writing. This means that improving communication skills is equally important. Communication skills are the most basic skills to be mastered by individuals during physical development and human mental growth (Oktavia & Ridlo, 2020). Writing is an interesting activity, it can provide benefits for students even though there are basic difficulties in writing it is still a useful part (Yulianti et al., 2019).

Solving existing problems by involving all roles of school residents is an important point. Students are invited to be actively involved in this program to help each other with friends' problems and also create a safe environment. Building students' capacity to talk about conflict provides a natural atmosphere for students to have caring resources that value mutual respect (Noddings, 2012; Parker & Bickmore, 2020). Involving parents to overcome problems with weight categories is a good form of collaboration. This can happen because the problems faced by students come from the family. One of the obstacles to implementing the character development program is the gap between education at school and education at home, thus hindering the development of student character (Darmayanti, S. E., & Wibowo, U. B., 2014). Education should be viewed as a collaborative community effort between the government, teachers, parents, and schools to improve the efficacy of teaching and learning methods that have been negatively affected and ensure that students are not left behind (Rasmitadila et al., 2020; Noviana 2018).

This strategy of getting used to reminding each other regularly in the *Gangster Si Cantik* program provides an important method in character education, namely habituation. Transmission of knowledge and moral values to students can be through teaching, habituation, guidance, nurturing, controlling, and developing the potential to achieve harmony (Andhini et al., 2019). Other studies have also found that habituation can improve discipline character in elementary school students (Asih & Sunarso, 2020). This regular habituation has an impact on the learning process of students, so that there is a change in attitudes and knowledge for the better, as found in the results of student and teacher interviews about changes in the attitude of friends for the better even though it is not fast and requires a process.



**Figure 1.** Analysis of Character Development through the *Gangster Si Cantik* Program

Character Education can be done with various activities, at Dr. Sutomo 5 Surabaya Elementary School. The *Gangster Si Cantik* program consists of group members who are ready to help their friends and enforce rules at school. The strategy carried out in this program is the distribution of duties and responsibilities between members, placing aspiration boxes in 3 corners of the school, refraction strategies are effective enough to increase the scheduling of fellow students. The characters in the program are caring, honest, cooperative, disciplined, peace-loving, and fair. Caring is manifested in an attitude of being willing to help friends who experience violence, or discomfort over their friend's behavior in class. Honesty is manifested in the real-world presentation of problems to teachers and students who are primarily in trouble. The character of cooperation is also seen in the cohesiveness of the team that works together between members of *Gangster Si Cantik* to help friends' problems. The character of discipline includes going around every day reminding friends to do good, obeying rules, and carrying out activities according to the schedule that has been made. The character of Peace Love follows the purpose of the establishment of this program, which is that every member is obliged to maintain peace in the school.

### Conclusion

Efforts to develop character education at SDN Dr. Soetomo Surabaya has many strategies that are being pursued, one of which is the Si Cantik Gangster Program. This program has an important role in helping students to care about their environment, learn to be more disciplined, and work together well. It is hoped that this program can be consistently developed and can provide inspiration for other schools for character education since elementary education. The suggestion for advanced researchers is that it is necessary to explore in depth the existing impact of this program from the perspective of other students who are not members of *Gangster Si Cantik*. In addition, it can also be measured how much influence this program has on the success of school management, or other factors.

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