



Description of Mutual Cooperation Character through Curriculum Merdeka Teaching Module at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten

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Abstract

Mutual cooperation is a significant value in Indonesian society, and it includes the spirit of cooperation, mutual help, care, tolerance, and solidarity. In education, it is important to teach and shape the character of mutual cooperation in children from an early age. This study aims to describe the character of mutual cooperation through the use of the Merdeka Curriculum teaching module at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten. The research method used is descriptive qualitative with two groups of informant subjects: teachers as educators and students as material recipients. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation studies of three teachers and learning activities for two weeks. The results showed that the Merdeka Curriculum teaching module effectively shaped the character of mutual cooperation in early childhood at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten. This study concludes that using the Merdeka Curriculum teaching module at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten positively impacts the development of mutual cooperation character in early childhood. The practical implication is the importance of developing interesting teaching modules focusing on building mutual cooperation in early childhood education institutions.

Keywords: *Mutual Cooperation Character, Teaching Modules, Independent Curriculum, Early Childhood*



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INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the crucial aspects for a nation. It is influenced by the advancement or decline of a nation, which is affected by the quality of education prevalent in the society (Fatimatul Zuhroh, 2022). Education serves as a means to harness intellectual and societal capabilities. With sufficient intellectual and practical skills, a nation can reap benefits and progress, adapting to the evolving times. Education is a conscious and organized effort to create an environment where learners can actively develop their potential, including critical thinking skills, independently (Ferdian Utama, 2020). Through this research, it is suggested that subsequent researchers consider several aspects. Firstly, teaching modules can be enriched with

more diverse materials tailored to the needs of learners and their learning environments. Secondly, further development of the research subject is needed to align with the learning objectives of young children. Additionally, researchers can explore the use of different research methods to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of mini hydroponic teaching modules in enhancing critical thinking skills in young children.

Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, in Article 3, states that national education aims to develop individuals' abilities and shape the character and civilization of a cultured nation in efforts to enhance the nation's intelligence. Education aims to develop competencies and shape the nation's valuable personalities and culture to enrich the nation's life. The goal of education is to provide students with opportunities to grow as individuals who believe in and worship the One God, possess noble character, good health, empowering abilities, creativity, independence, and become responsible citizens (Apriliani et al., 2024). Education in Indonesia itself encompasses several levels. The early childhood education level is referred to as early childhood education or ECE. Then there are primary, secondary, and tertiary education levels.

ECE or Early Childhood Education is an effort and initiative to nurture children aged from birth to six years old. Education is provided through educational stimuli to assist physical and spiritual growth and development, aiming to prepare children for the next educational level. The implementation of ECE provides readiness to young children before entering primary education. Early childhood education requires educational efforts to achieve optimal development in all aspects, including physical and psychological sectors, encompassing intellectual, language, motoric, and socio-emotional development.

In the era of modernization and globalization, where individualistic values often dominate, attention to the development of character values becomes increasingly important in the education system. According to Rahmawari et al. (2023), this trend has led to a decline in the spirit of mutual cooperation among young children, including socio-emotional development. In the context of character education, collaboration among various parties is crucial, as emphasized by Jito Subianto in 2013. Character education must involve all parties, including households and families, the surrounding community, and educational institutions such as schools.

Mutual cooperation character is a social tradition that has become one of the hallmarks of Indonesian society, inherited through generations as part of the national culture. This solidarity is manifested through social attitudes driven by the selfless spirit of individuals, aiming to help and lighten the burdens of others. The Coordinating Ministry for Human Development and Culture (Kemenko PMK) held a National Seminar on Prevention and Handling of Violence in Educational Institutions, with the theme "Mutual Cooperation Realizing a Conducive Educational Institution Free from Violence". In this seminar, the government, schools, and communities were invited to collaborate in creating a safe and comfortable educational environment for all children, as part of efforts to prevent and address violence in the educational environment (Paudpedia, 2023). Mutual cooperation is a value that binds Indonesian society amidst differences and changing trends in the nation's civilization. Mutual cooperation practices have long existed and are an integral part of the cultural heritage that must be preserved by the entire Indonesian society (Pambudi, 2020). Therefore, the spirit of mutual cooperation needs to be applied in various aspects of Indonesian

society's life. Mutual cooperation is an altruistic endeavor and has a voluntary nature. The spirit of mutual cooperation and kinship in Indonesian society needs to be passed down from generation to generation to preserve this culture. In addressing various issues faced by the Indonesian nation, mutual cooperation has proven to be an effective alternative. According to Pambudi and Utami (2020), the purpose of mutual cooperation practice is to build solidarity among citizens, unite differences, and strengthen social relationships through joint cooperation. Therefore, this mutual cooperation character must be preserved, upheld, and implemented in daily life.

However, mutual cooperation character was not found in Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten. Based on the initial observations conducted by the researcher at the end of July 2023, it was observed that the students at TK were seen playing individually, with no mutual cooperation or assistance during school activities or learning. Although they were in the same class, there was little interaction to demonstrate mutual cooperation activities. The researcher observed this for 3 months of teaching. Initially, it was observed only at the beginning of the school year because it was still the early days of school, but the individualistic behavior (lack of mutual assistance) continued throughout the 3-month teaching period (July - September 2023). After further observation, it was found that the mutual cooperation character did not emerge much among the students because the teaching provided by the teachers did not allow the children to help each other or exhibit mutual cooperation. The condition at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten was due to the suboptimal role of the teachers, who were not able to facilitate the students properly. Furthermore, the teachers had not fully implemented the Merdeka Curriculum in their teaching. Whereas the curriculum is crucial in the field of education, as a good school curriculum can enhance all aspects of child development.

The curriculum sets the direction for education. The curriculum was first formulated in 1947. Until 2022, the curriculum in Indonesia has undergone several changes. Changes and determinations of the curriculum are the authority of the Indonesian Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology. The previous curriculum, known as the Prototype Curriculum for leading schools, aimed to sharpen students' interests and talents, focusing on essential materials, developing the Pancasila character profile, and students' competencies. Currently, the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum is carried out gradually and according to the readiness of each educational institution. Merdeka Belajar (Freedom to Learn) is one of the initiatives of Mr. Nadiem Makarim aimed at creating a happy and enjoyable learning atmosphere. The goal of Merdeka Belajar is for educators, students, and parents to experience a joyful learning atmosphere (Irmalia, 2023). The Merdeka Curriculum provides flexibility for teachers to freely choose, create, use, and develop Learning Implementation Plans (RPP). The important components of RPP are the learning objectives, learning activities, and assessments. RPP is now often referred to as teaching modules. Teaching modules are a learning device or design based on the curriculum, aiming to achieve the established competency standards. In the preparation of this learning device, the role of the teacher is crucial. Teachers need to sharpen their thinking skills to innovate in creating teaching modules.

Therefore, the ability to create teaching modules is one of the pedagogical competencies that need to be developed by teachers. This will help improve teachers' teaching techniques in the classroom to be more effective, efficient, and in line with the

set achievement indicators. However, at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten, there still seem to be obstacles in fully implementing the Merdeka Curriculum in creating teaching modules. This could be a focus for improving teacher capacity and improving curriculum implementation at the school. Based on the problems mentioned above, the background of this research is to observe the low mutual cooperation character in TK Negeri Jatinegara 01. Mutual cooperation character should be instilled from an early age, as it forms the basis of children's socio-emotional skills in adulthood. This cannot develop due to teachers' lack of understanding in creating teaching modules using the Merdeka Curriculum to enhance mutual cooperation character. Therefore, the researcher will create teaching modules based on the Merdeka Curriculum that can be applied in children's learning to enhance mutual cooperation character in early childhood. There will be a significant impact in adulthood if mutual cooperation character is not developed from an early age. In the above research topic, several previous studies supporting the foundation of researchers to improve findings with the same topic were found.

Previous research plays a role in enriching analysis and discussion to distinguish previous research from current research. In this research process, several research journals related to the Merdeka Curriculum with loose part media were included. First, a study by Maya, Faridi, & Zulfikar (2023) conducted qualitative research on mutual cooperation character based on the P5 basis carried out at SMP Muhammadiyah 8 Batu. This study resulted in a spirit of mutual cooperation, which was the result of increased student character from togetherness, empathy, cooperation, mutual assistance, to solidarity among them. This research aimed to understand the implementation process and strategies provided by teachers to instill mutual cooperation character. This research differs from research at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten. Although both emphasize mutual cooperation character, research at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten prioritizes teaching modules of the Merdeka Curriculum (Maya, et al., 2023).

Second, a study by Hayati & Utomo (2022) titled "Instilling Mutual Cooperation and Responsibility Character through Habituation Methods in Elementary Schools" used a descriptive qualitative method. The results of this study present that habituation methods can implement the cultivation of mutual cooperation and responsibility character at SDN 02 Sringin, presented in several forms of activities. The difference from the research by Hayati & Utomo (2022) is that their research focuses on habituation methods for students. Meanwhile, the research at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten prioritizes teaching modules of the Merdeka Curriculum (Hayati & Utomo, 2022).

Third, a study by Mulyani, Gufron, Akhwani & Kasiyun (2020) titled "Enhancing Mutual Cooperation Character in Elementary Schools" aimed to describe the forms of mutual cooperation behavior that persists and describe teacher strategies in enhancing mutual cooperation character for students at SDN Jemur Wonosari 1/417 Surabaya. The results of this descriptive qualitative method research are teacher strategies in instilling mutual cooperation character in students through direct examples and rewards such as praise for students. The difference from the research at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten is that the study by Mulyani, et al. uses a reward system and direct examples from teachers.

Meanwhile, research on the development of mutual cooperation character focusing on the indicator of teaching modules of the Merdeka Curriculum is as follows: First, the research conducted by Erlina, Hartoyo, & Herlina (2023) titled "Designing a Project-Based Learning Model to Develop Mutual Cooperation Attitudes and Creativity of Participants in Science Learning at Elementary Schools" aimed to consider the Merdeka Curriculum in learning to align with character development. This research emphasizes that the student's condition is directed more towards emphasized psychomotor abilities, so it is important to condition mutual cooperation attitudes and creativity to integrate well. One learning model that can support the development of mutual cooperation attitudes and creativity directly or indirectly is a project-based learning model. This research uses a qualitative approach in collecting data. The main difference between Erlina, Hartoyo, & Herlina's research and the situation at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten is the use of a project-based learning model in an effort to develop mutual cooperation attitudes and creativity of students. This indicates variations in learning approaches that can be applied to achieve character development goals in the context of the Merdeka Curriculum (Erlina, Hartoyo, Erlina, 2023). A study by Ratna (2023) titled "Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum Dimension of Mutual Cooperation and Its Relevance to Islamic Religious Values at SMA Negeri 2 Sidoarjo" aims to explore the relevance of the Merdeka Curriculum and the dimension of mutual cooperation to Islamic religious values. This study uses a qualitative method. The difference in this research at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten is that Ratna's research uses teaching modules conducted at SMA Negeri 2 Sidoarjo and emphasizes Islamic religious values (Ratna 2023).

From all the above research, the main studies conducted by the authors seem to have never been done by other authors; namely, research on the development of mutual cooperation character through teaching modules of the Merdeka Curriculum. Some articles above discuss mutual cooperation character developed through habituation methods, rewards, and others develop mutual cooperation character using project-based learning. Some discuss mutual cooperation and the Merdeka Curriculum but not for early childhood. Research on mutual cooperation character in early childhood through teaching modules of the Merdeka Curriculum is an important and urgent study, but it is rarely done by other researchers. From this research, the author can convey that mutual cooperation character is a behavior created from awareness and a spirit of togetherness to achieve common goals in every activity in the environment. Meanwhile, teaching modules in the Merdeka Curriculum are a detailed learning program consisting of learning objectives, learning activities, and learning experiences that are specific and clear.

Thus, there are academic questions as problem formulations and researcher focuses to uncover and analyze data in the field. This research highlights the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten in building mutual cooperation character in early childhood. The research focus will be on a deeper understanding of mutual cooperation character, teaching modules of the Merdeka Curriculum applied, and efforts to develop this character through this approach. Through this research, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding will be obtained of how the Merdeka Curriculum approach can be an effective means of strengthening mutual cooperation values in early childhood at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten. In this context, the research will discuss important

questions regarding mutual cooperation character, the implementation of teaching modules of the Merdeka Curriculum, and the potential development of mutual cooperation character.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, a qualitative research methodology with a descriptive analysis approach is employed to describe the character of mutual cooperation through the free curriculum teaching module at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten. The research was conducted directly at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten during the odd semester of the 2023-2024 academic year, with a duration of approximately 2 months, starting from December 2023 to January 2024. The research subjects consist of teachers as educators and students as recipients of the material. Data collection was carried out through interviews, observations, and documentary studies. Interview guidelines were created based on the sub-focus of the research with predetermined indicators. Observations were conducted directly at the school location through mutual cooperation character development activities using the Free Curriculum Teaching Module. Documentary studies included photographs and reports of research activities. The research stages included research preparation, implementation with data collection, and the preparation of research reports. The data obtained will be verified through triangulation of data collection techniques and data sources. Data analysis was carried out through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion formulation based on research findings. Thus, this research methodology is designed to generate a comprehensive understanding of mutual cooperation character through the Free Curriculum approach at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TK Negeri Jatinegara 01 was established on the site of former teacher housing that was rebuilt in 2018. The land area is 2400 square meters with a building area of 680 square meters. In July 2019, the school was officially inaugurated as TK Negeri Jatinegara 01 based on the decree of the Governor of the Special Capital Region of Jakarta Number 1068 dated July 19, 2018. The school is located in a densely populated area and is close to the Cibesut Flats and Pasar Pagi. Therefore, TK Negeri Jatinegara 01 is a popular school, especially among the majority of residents who work as traders or entrepreneurs. TK Negeri Jatinegara 01 has 80 students in the 2023/2024 academic year. There are 20 children in TK A (ages 4-5) and 60 children in TK B (ages 5-6). The majority of students are Muslim, but there are also some who are Protestant. Most of the students come from the Cipinang Besar Utara area. The process of admitting new students begins with mandatory parent class activities attended by both parents of new students. After that, cooperation between the school and parents is conducted to support the child's development at school and at home. TK Negeri Jatinegara 01 has eight educators and educational staff with diverse educational backgrounds. They have the main tasks of teaching and also maintaining the cleanliness of the educational unit, leading morning prayers, and carrying out other duties according to the teacher duty roster.

TK Negeri Jatinegara 01 is located in an urban area with densely populated residential areas. Nevertheless, the environment is still lush due to the many green trees surrounding the educational unit. Around the school, there are apartment buildings, morning markets, as well as several other educational units and institutions.

The majority of the community around the school is Muslim and has livelihoods as traders, private employees, civil servants, or factory workers. They come from various regions, bringing diverse cultures, which result in diverse interactions between teachers, parents, and students. Intracurricular learning is conducted from Monday to Friday from 07:30 to 10:30. The teaching methods used include discussions, storytelling, group learning, experiments, and project methods. The Pancasila Student Profile (P5) Strengthening Project is carried out with the themes "I Love the Earth" and "I Love Indonesia" to strengthen the dimensions of faith, devotion to God Almighty, noble character, creativity, critical thinking, global diversity, and mutual cooperation.

Module Teaching and the Spirit of Cooperation

Instilling the spirit of cooperation from an early age is an effort to prevent individualism and egocentrism in adulthood, both in one's own life and in the community, where adults will prioritize collective interests. Early childhood is the most strategic target for introducing and teaching positive values, one of which is cooperation. Emphasizing the spirit of mutual assistance in all aspects will ultimately make community life safer, more peaceful, and harmonious.

From the interviews with informants regarding the description of the spirit of cooperation through the independent curriculum teaching module at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten, data was obtained indicating that at the beginning of the new school semester, children's knowledge about the spirit of cooperation was still very minimal, possibly because the children are still young, and also because families have not introduced them to the spirit of cooperation. Introducing the spirit of cooperation to young children is a very important and urgent need because with the advancement of technology and information, it is very easy for children to access information through the internet and social media without knowing what is good and what is bad. The continuous influence of social media can lead to increased individualism in children.

Therefore, it is very important for children to be equipped with knowledge about the spirit of cooperation from an early age so that they can be protected from ideologies, cultures, and lifestyles that are far from the Indonesian national character, thus making them fully interdependent human generations who need each other, depend on each other, and cooperate in everything to enhance unity and unity in Indonesia. This is in line with what Effendy conveyed, that cooperation is built and created from awareness and enthusiasm in working together while prioritizing collective values over personal interests. The culture of cooperation is a moral value that has philosophical roots in academic studies. In the spirit of cooperation, there are social capital values needed to foster progress and welfare in community life (Effendy, 2003).

Next, the discussion relates to the product of the independent curriculum, namely the teaching module. Teaching modules are used as guides for educators to conduct learning activities in the classroom. Based on the interviews with informants regarding the independent curriculum teaching module at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten, it was found that the teaching module consists of lesson plans and assessment. The components contained in the teaching module at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten include the day, date, theme, sub-theme, learning objectives, learning indicators, and the tools and materials used. This is in line with what is stated on the

kemdikbud.go.id website that a teaching module is one type of teaching tool that contains a plan for implementing learning to help guide the learning process to achieve Learning Outcomes (LO). If the educational institution uses a teaching module provided by the government, then that teaching module can be matched with the RPP Plus, because it has more complete components than the RPP. If the educational institution develops its teaching module independently, then that teaching module can be matched with the RPP (Kemdikbud.go.id, 2022).

Another finding by the researcher is that the delivery of the teaching module provided by TK Negeri Jatinegara 01 is systematic, enjoyable, and stimulates a great curiosity in children. This is in line with the objective of teaching modules according to Kemdikbud.go.id, where teachers can deliver teaching modules by adjusting to the characteristics of the students. The criteria for teaching modules are: 1) Essential, 2) Interesting, meaningful, and challenging, 3) Relevant and contextual, 4) Continuous.

Development of the Spirit of Cooperation through the Independent Curriculum Teaching Module

From the field findings regarding the description of the spirit of cooperation through the independent curriculum teaching module at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten, the researcher found the application of teaching modules given to children at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten starting from positive habits conducted throughout the learning process from the beginning of arrival until departure, then through planned learning activities prepared to develop the spirit of cooperation. This is in line with educators' efforts to instill cooperation as expressed by Rich, namely instilling the spirit of cooperation in young children through 1) providing an understanding of the principles of cooperation, task division, and cooperation through various media; 2) developing group project activities; and 3) habituating discussions to prepare and complete tasks together (Rich, 2008).

Based on field findings, the independent curriculum teaching module used by TK Negeri Jatinegara 01 contains lesson plans and assessment, where the existing assessment will be summarized and then reported through development reports every semester. However, in the process of creating teaching modules, teachers faced some obstacles due to a lack of knowledge about creating teaching modules, so teachers attended several training sessions to be able to create teaching modules that are in line with the characteristics of TK Negeri Jatinegara 01. This is in accordance with the existing theory about the core components of teaching modules that teachers, namely consisting of 1 must study) Learning objectives, 2) Learning activities, 3) Assessment plans (Kemdikbud.go.id, 2022).



Figure 1. Peta Konsep



Figure 2. Peta Konsep

Increasing teachers' knowledge has positively impacted TK Negeri Jatinegara 01, as the researcher found that the teaching modules created became more interesting and suitable for the characteristics of TK Negeri Jatinegara 01. This was observed during the creation of the independent curriculum teaching module that emphasized the spirit of cooperation. In the initial activities, teachers introduced concept maps first, followed by activities according to the designed plan to enhance children's spirit of cooperation. This has impacted children who have started to work together to create duty schedules, help tidy up drinking areas, maintain class cleanliness together, and maintain class order together. In addition, in the concept of sacrifice, children are able to queue, allow other friends to go first if they are seen to be in greater need.



Figure 3. Anak menjaga kebersihan sekolah Figure 4. Menjaga kebersihan kelas

Another finding in the spirit of cooperation concept is mutual assistance, where children engage in mutual assistance activities in cleaning up the classroom and school environment, helping with duty tasks assigned to their friends to expedite completion, playing and making friends with anyone without taking sides or choosing friends. It can also be seen in the socialization concept where children can play together during play activities in the classroom or school environment, remind each other about togetherness, not be selfish, and be patient while waiting.

This is in accordance with the indicators of cooperation, namely: 1) Togetherness, 2) Unity, 3) Willingness to sacrifice, 4) Mutual assistance, 5) Socialization. It is also in line with the cooperation indicators according to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2014:70), namely: 1) Actively involved in voluntary work to clean classrooms and schools, 2) Willingness to perform duties as required, 3) Willingness to help others without expecting rewards, 4) Active in group work, 5) Focusing on the goals of the group, 6) Not prioritizing personal interests, 7) Seeking ways to overcome differences in thoughts or opinions between oneself and others, 8) Encouraging others to cooperate in order to achieve common goals. With the increase in knowledge and understanding of children about the spirit of cooperation, it is hoped that children at a young age can have a patriotic spirit or enjoy helping others and not prioritize personal interests.

After conducting the research, the researcher identified shortcomings, especially in the research method. The limitation of the method refers to the data sources of the research, namely in the evaluation documentation of student assessments that are not yet complete. Therefore, the writer did not get a detailed picture of the development of children in teaching and learning activities, especially regarding the spirit of

cooperation through the teaching module in its entirety. The writer only used activity documentation, and assessment documentation was sourced from checklist assessments. Assessment documentation is an important part of learning activities. The development of children over time can be measured from these assessment reports. The obstacle in this part made it difficult for the writer to confirm in depth about the complete picture of the spirit of cooperation through the independent curriculum teaching module.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research titled "Description of the Spirit of Cooperation Through the Independent Curriculum Teaching Module at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten," it can be concluded that the spirit of cooperation at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten is still minimal due to the lack of support from family environments and the young age of the children. Early childhood is a strategic target for introducing positive values such as cooperation. Emphasizing the spirit of mutual assistance is expected to improve security, peace, and tranquility in society. The independent curriculum teaching module at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten is delivered systematically, enjoyable, and stimulates curiosity in children. The module includes information about the day, date, theme, sub-theme, learning objectives, learning indicators, as well as the tools and materials used. The development of the spirit of cooperation through the independent curriculum teaching module at Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten begins with positive habits from the beginning of the learning process until planned learning activities. Children have shown understanding of unity, classroom cleanliness, tidiness, and the concept of sacrifice. It is hoped that with increased knowledge and understanding, children can have a patriotic spirit and enjoy helping others. From the analysis and conclusions, the researcher provides several recommendations, including for the Jatinegara 01 State Kindergarten institution to implement cooperation through teaching modules comprehensively using concept maps, module creation, diverse activities, and assessments according to children's development. Recommendations are also given to TK institutions in general to adopt character education in cooperation through the independent curriculum teaching module as done by TK Negeri Jatinegara 01. Additionally, the East Jakarta City Government, especially the Department of Education, is expected to pay attention to and provide assistance to educational institutions in developing the spirit of cooperation. By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped to improve the spirit of cooperation in young children and make a positive contribution to community development.

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