



## An Investigation of Social Care in Elementary School Students

*Original scientific paper*

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Received: 2023/09/09

Accepted: 2024/17/01

### Abstract

*The implementation of learning activities based on cooperative activities and mutual interaction is quite limited during the COVID-19 pandemic so that students' concern is not well honed. The purpose of this study is to survey the condition of the social care character of elementary school students in Indonesia. The method used in this research is a survey by distributing questionnaires to elementary school students. The scale used in this study is the Guttman scale. The results showed that the social care character of elementary school students is still low and needs to be reinforced after the pandemic through cooperative learning-based activities and other social activities. Most students still often experience bullying by their friends. Therefore, there needs to be efforts from various parties to reinvigorate the social caring character of elementary school students.*

**Keywords:** *Elementary School, Investigation, Social Care*

Humans are essentially social creatures that need care for others, especially in this age of globalization (Aulia & Wuryandani, 2019; Naparan & Gadong, 2021). Entering the 21st century, the world of education began to transform into value-based education and character-based education while remaining sensitive to the social conditions that exist in society. The attitude of social care is very necessary in social life, because through this attitude one can ease each other's burdens, both in terms of economic, social, and so on. The character of social care is also very important to foster a sense of brotherhood, kinship, and keep

away from arrogant, selfish, and individual traits. But often the character of social care is not developed early enough (Anggito et al., 2023). In fact, care that is internalized from an early age will become a solid foundation in giving birth to collaboration, synergy and cooperative abilities.

Schools must be a place to strengthen character education so that it can instill a sense of caring and kinship between students (Lickona, 1996). School is a means of organizing education that has the potential to instill and strengthen social care value education through the help of teachers and all elements in the school. However,

the formation of social care attitudes towards others in the school environment is arguably difficult to implement and must be instilled early. Therefore, it is important for parents and educators to foster social care attitudes in children from an early age as a provision for life in the future (Mahmutovic & Hadziefendic, 2020). Modelling and reinforcing positive social behaviour is an important step in a student's education (Pula et al., 2023). So that children have a socially caring attitude towards the surrounding environment.

The reasons for the erosion of these values are complex and varied, including social inequality or social position caused by people's selfish attitudes, lack of understanding or cultivation of the principles of social care, and lack of tolerance, sympathy and empathy. The fading of children's social care character towards the surrounding environment will affect the social development process of elementary school students (Fazrin & Radjak, 2023; Indarjo et al., 2019). The main thing that underlies the importance of social awareness for elementary school students is as an effort to prevent the emergence of criminality among students, as well as support the success of the student learning process in the school environment and society. However, during the 19 pandemic since 2020, teaching and learning activities have been carried out online and caused the optimization of social skills development to run less well. Indicators of someone said to have a caring character according to the Josephson Institute are as follows (Kreie & Cronan, 2000). According to the Josephson Institute, caring people are kind, compassionate and loving. They have empathy, the ability to understand and feel the sadness or pleasure of others. The highest form of caring is altruism, or sacrificing one's own interests for the benefit of others. Caring people are not cruel, selfish, or self-centered. Therefore, in simple terms, the indicators of caring according to the Josephson Institute are being kind, compassionate and showing care, saying thank you, forgiving others, and helping people in need (Gregg & Hill, 2015).

Empathy is one of the important elements of caring studied by the Josephson Institute. The ability to empathize shows

several essential things related to social care, namely 1) helping to solve other people's problems, 2) paying attention to others, 3) understanding other people's difficulties, 4) showing a sense of tolerance, 5) having a point of view, and 6) not being quick to judge others (Gilbert et al., 2017). Character value is still an abstract concept, so to see that the value has been well internalized is to see concrete actions based on these character values. These values can be observed through student activities at school, at home, and in the community.

Social care is very important to be reinvigorated immediately after the Covid-19 pandemic. This is because by having good social care, students will tend to achieve maximum student learning achievement and be able to enjoy their lives more happily. Therefore, the education sector is very important in an effort to strengthen the character of social care in students. This study aims to investigate the social care attitudes of elementary school students after the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

## Methodology

This research uses the Unweighted Cross-Section Survey method. This survey approach aims to group the population in the same data collection period. This survey was conducted for one month, starting from May 01-31, 2023. Respondents in this study were 246 elementary school students spread across 13 elementary schools in Indonesia. Respondents were selected based on the school curriculum using the phase B independent curriculum. The next criterion is that the students have experienced online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2021). This criterion was set because students' post-pandemic social care attitudes are likely to affect the resulting survey results.

The instrument used in this research is a survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire contains the social care character of elementary school students developed from the adaptation of indicators at the Josephson Institute that have been adjusted. The following aspects of social care according to Kreie & Cronan (2000) developed in this study.

**Table 1.**  
*Social Caring Indicator*

No	Aspects	Operational Indicators
1	Kind	Students have seen their friends laughing at people who make mistakes Students enjoy working with others because it is very exciting
2	Loving	Students have been ignored when asking for help from classmates Students have seen their friends being rude to others
3	Compassionate	Students have seen classmates who are disrespectful to others Students have been teased by classmates

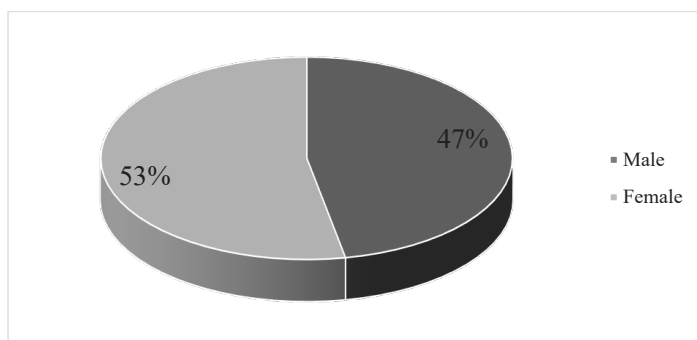
The data in this study were obtained by distributing questionnaire sheets to students in 13 elementary schools. The scale used in this study is a Guttman scale in the form of Yes and No options that have been validated beforehand. This survey questionnaire was distributed by visiting each school and asking permission from the principal and each homeroom teacher.

Students are still accompanied and strived to be able to fill in the questionnaire sheet with the actual conditions and circumstances.

**Results and Discussion**

This study was conducted involving 246 elementary school students with the following percentages of males and females.

**Figure 1.**  
*Results of Kind Indicator in Social Care Character of Elementary Students*

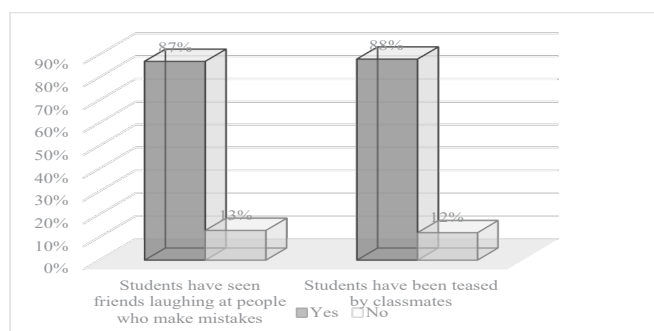


The survey results on the investigation of social care attitudes in elementary school students used three aspects proposed by the Josephson Institute, namely: kind, loving and compassionate.

The following are the survey results regarding the condition of the social care character of elementary school students after the Covid-19 pandemic

**Kind Aspect**

**Figure 2.**  
*Percentage ratio of male and female students*



Based on the survey results above, it can be seen that the percentage of students who have been laughed at by their friends when they make mistakes is quite high, namely 87%. This shows that most students have been laughed at by their friends. Of course, this incident is quite worrying because of the low sense of respect and care between students when their colleagues experience difficulties or mistakes. In addition, students also often get ridiculed by their friends. At least 88% of students have been teased by their friends. This is certainly quite worrying because these teasing activities can often lead to other negative actions, such as fights and hostility between students.

In line with the results of the kind aspect research above, the Children's Worlds Survey in Indonesia revealed that 52.5% of primary school students had been physically bullied by other children at school at least once in the past month. 60.6% had been

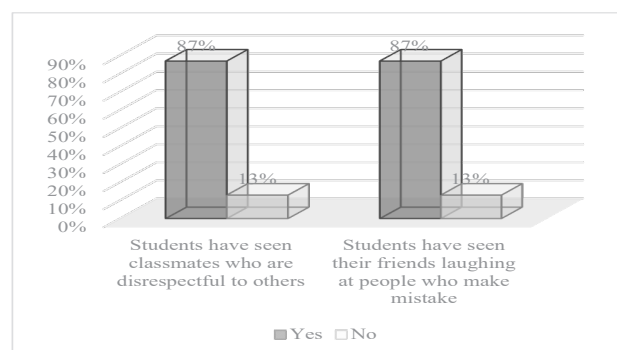
bullied verbally, and 49.6% had been bullied psychologically. In addition, some studies reveal that bullying can lead to mental health disorders (Copeland et al., 2013; Fanti & Kimonis, 2012), being bullied increases depression (Xie et al., 2022), increased suicidal ideation (Kim & Leventhal, 2008), lower academic performance and adverse impact on children's physical health (Irwin et al., 2021).

What needs to be considered is that the impact of teasing and bullying each other can have an impact on children in various phases of their lives. In fact, some studies have even revealed the effects of bullying on children's later life (Copeland et al., 2013). Although it is often underestimated because the issue of bullying often arises and gets a lot of attention from the public, the reality is that this action still often occurs (Nguyen et al., 2020). Even though victims of bullying are reported to experience psychosomatics and depression in the future.

## Loving Aspect

**Figure 2.**

*Results of Loving Indicator in Social Care Character of Elementary Students*



Based on the results of a survey on aspect loving, it was noted that 78% of students had been ignored when asking for help from their friends. This result is certainly a quite alarming finding considering that a sense of concern for his friend who asks for help is often ignored by his own friend. Social caring character can be interpreted as a character that is shown by efforts or actions that always want to provide assistance to others who are in trouble or need help (Riski & Ain, 2022; Ülger et al., 2014; Wuryani et al., 2018).

Social care begins with the willingness to "give" rather than "receive". Being social and helpful are universal

teachings and are strongly encouraged by all religions. However, the sensitivity to carry these out cannot just grow in a person because it requires a process of training and education. Having a caring spirit for others is very important, every individual cannot live alone. Character development in students is realized in the form of self-development so that students are able to be themselves, have healthy competitiveness and care for the surrounding environment.

In addition, another indicator is that 87% of students have seen their friends being rude to their classmates. This is in line with research showing that aggression among children and adolescents is increasingly

worrying (Salimi et al., 2019). This is in line with the statement issued by UNESCO in the year which estimates that about 30% of all students annually experience some kind of violence at school (UNESCO, 2018). This percentage is quite high considering that violent actions should be minimized, especially at the elementary school level. In social psychology, violence refers to behaviors that arise to harm others (Fite et al., 2014; Johnson, 2009).

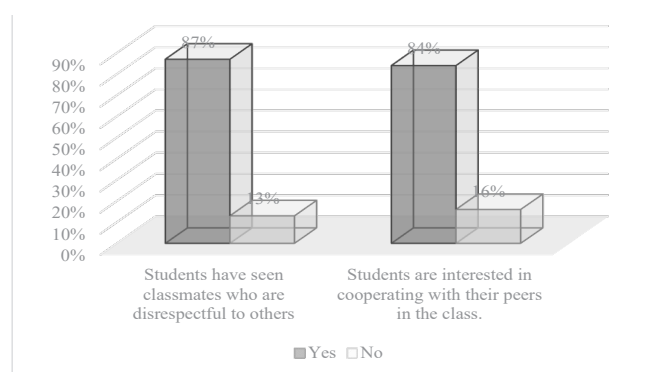
Physical abuse refers to intentionally harming someone to cause pain such as hitting, pushing, throwing objects, etc. (Shachar et al., 2016). Approximately, one in every 10 children suffers from repeated violent behavior or is bullied by peers

(Abu Al Rub, 2018). Violence that occurs between students can have a direct impact on students. Violence causes adverse effects on social competence, efficiency, and interpersonal relationships (Chen et al., 2010; Jenkins et al., 2017) and may develop a negative image among peers and teachers, peer rejection, academic performance, delinquency, self-harm, aggression, and anxiety (Leff & Waasdorp, 2013; Zinatmotlagh et al., 2013). These negative impacts are not expected to increase massively, especially at the elementary school level considering that students are in the golden age period. Therefore, prevention and reduction of violence in students before this age is recommended (Cross et al., 2012).

## Compassion Aspect

**Figure 4.**

*Results of Compassionate Indicator in Social Care Character of Elementary Students*



Based on the survey results, 87% of students have seen their classmates behaving impolitely to others. This finding is a consideration that politeness is still a big concern for the world of education in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the percentage results on the survey regarding cooperation between students show quite good results. The survey accumulated that 84% of students were happy to cooperate with their colleagues in class. This shows that even though they often act disrespectfully to others, they are always eager when given tasks to do in groups. However, this spirit of cooperation is sometimes less reinforced by mutual care and respect between students. Students are still limited to enjoying joint activities because they can rely on each other, especially on their friends who are considered to understand the material.

The importance of language politeness since elementary school is due to a number of problems that are currently happening. These problems are the many quarrels and fights that occur among students and in the community (Di Fabio & Duradoni, 2019). Many children or students do not respect their elders (Muammar et al., 2018). It is important to consider in communication to avoid conflict and create good harmony. This means that the application of politeness in the learning process of language skills is very important, so that students become more active in speaking in class and become more accustomed to using polite language (Effendie, 2014).

Based on this fact, the strength of good social care can be one of the solutions to overcome social problems that occur in students in today's digital era. Basically,

a student should have an attitude of social care because human nature is a social being who always needs other people and cannot live alone (Hulawa, 2019; Jati et al., 2019). The waning of life based on social care among the younger generation as a result of globalization is very unfortunate because Indonesian society has a good and noble manners value system.

Often at school and in the home environment it is clearly seen that children lack the character value of social care, such as children who are indifferent to friends around them, children do not want to help their friends in times of difficulty, even children are also lazy to help with work at home (Riski & Ain, 2022). Character education and academic learning should not be considered as two separate things, but rather there should be a strong and mutually supportive relationship. Caring schools and classrooms make students feel liked and respected by teachers and fellow students, so students will be more likely to work hard and achieve. Therefore, learning in elementary schools should also support the implementation of social caring characters.

### Conclusions

Students at the elementary school level are a very important phase to start cultivating the character of social care which is important in supporting their role as social beings. However, the facts in the field show that both the kind, loving, and compassionate aspects of the character of social care according to the Josephson Institute show that students' social care character is still low.

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