

Article

# Teaching Campus and Children's Legal Awareness: Character Education Innovation in Elementary Schools in Sekolah Dasar Wilayah 3T

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**Abstract:** The Campus Teaching Program is a concrete implementation of the Freedom to Learn policy, which positions students as agents of educational transformation in elementary schools, particularly in disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost (3T) areas. One fundamental problem faced by elementary schools in these areas is students' poor understanding of legal norms and school regulations. This condition contributes to high rates of disciplinary violations and rampant bullying behavior, such as verbal harassment, exclusion, and peer coercion. This study aims to analyze the contribution of the Campus Teaching Program in fostering legal awareness in elementary school students through a character education approach. The study used a qualitative approach with a case study method and was conducted at Budisari Public Elementary School, Cililin District, West Bandung Regency. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews with teachers, students, and student participants; participant observation during the learning process; and documentation of activities. Data validity was ensured through methodological triangulation and member checking techniques. The results indicate that the involvement of student teachers in the Campus Teaching Program facilitated the internalization of legal values through learning that integrates character education into both subjects and extracurricular activities. Students successfully developed various educational strategies, such as simulations of school regulations, role-plays about the consequences of violations, and group discussions on the values of honesty, responsibility, and mutual respect. The implementation of these activities resulted in increased student legal awareness, as evidenced by greater compliance with school regulations, fewer disciplinary violations, and a significant decrease in bullying incidents.

**Keywords :** 3T Regions, Bullying, Child Law, Legal Awareness, Teaching Campus.

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## 1. Background

Legal education is generally introduced formally at the upper secondary level, such as high school (SMA) or vocational school (SMK). This is because students are assumed to have the abstract thinking skills to systematically understand legal norms, rules, and structures (Ismail & Putra, 2021). On the other hand, at the elementary school level, legal education is not yet a primary focus. In fact, many legal problems begin to develop at an early age, such as disciplinary violations, disobedience, and bullying, which are common in schools.

The lack of legal education at the elementary level results in students' weak understanding of their rights and obligations as members of the school community. In elementary school, actions such as teasing, coercion, exclusion, and violating class rules are often considered normal. In fact, these behaviors constitute violations of legal values and social ethics. Nugroho and Wahyuningsih (2023) show that values such as discipline, honesty, and responsibility, instilled from an early age, can foster legal awareness and prevent deviant behavior from an elementary level. Unfortunately, very few studies have

directly addressed the instillation of legal awareness within the context of elementary education.

The Campus Teaching Program, as part of the Freedom to Learn policy, brings university students into elementary schools, particularly in 3T (disadvantaged, frontier, and outermost) areas, to partner with teachers in strengthening literacy, numeracy, and character education. Students also play a role as agents of change, instilling legal values through a character education approach. This intervention presents a strategic opportunity to integrate legal education into students' learning activities and daily lives, particularly in areas with limited resources, such as Budisari Public Elementary School in Cililin District, West Bandung Regency.

Several previous studies have discussed the contribution of character education and law, but they tend to focus on the high school level. Ismail and Putra (2021) highlight a project-based approach to civics (PPKn) that is effective in increasing legal awareness at the high school level. Meanwhile, Dewi and Suryani (2022) state that legal education is an important part of developing a rule-abiding character, but it is mostly applied to high school students. In the context of elementary education, Nugroho and Wahyuningsih (2023) only emphasize character values without explicitly linking them to a legal education framework. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by examining how legal education can be instilled starting at the elementary school level through the Kampus Mengajar Program.

This study aims to explore the contribution of the Campus Teaching Program in instilling legal awareness among elementary school students in the 3T (Underdeveloped and Disadvantaged Regions) region. The study was conducted at Budisari Public Elementary School, Cililin District, as a case study reflecting the educational context in underdeveloped areas. Using a qualitative approach and case study method, data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and documentation. The focus of this study was on the process of internalizing legal values such as discipline, honesty, and responsibility, as well as addressing deviant behavior such as bullying in the school environment.

This research is expected to broaden the perspective that legal education does not have to start in high school, but can be instilled from an early age through a contextual, humanistic, and participatory approach in basic education.

## **2. Theoretical Study**

### **Legal Education and Legal Awareness**

Legal education is a learning process aimed at increasing an individual's understanding, awareness, and ability to understand the law so that they can understand their rights and obligations in social life (Sudjana & Rizkison, 2020). The goal is not simply the transfer of theory, but also the instilling of awareness about the importance of legal rules for social life (Sumaryati, 2016).

Early legal awareness is a key factor in developing the character of disciplined, tolerant, and responsible citizens (Triuspita & Adisurya, 2020). Legal education in elementary schools is relevant for addressing the rampant issues of bullying, violence, and intolerance (Rahmawati, 2021).

### **The Campus Teaching Program as an Innovation in Legal Education**

The Campus Teaching Program is a Freedom to Learn policy that places students to assist with the learning process in elementary schools, particularly in underserved and underserved areas (3T). In addition to improving literacy and numeracy, this program plays a strategic role in instilling character values, including legal awareness, through a contextual and collaborative learning approach (Lestari et al., 2021).

### **Previous research**

by Fatahillah (2023) emphasized the importance of early legal literacy in shaping students' character. The study found that thematic-integrative learning strategies were effective in instilling legal values. Furthermore, Azizah (2022) examined the role of the Kampus Mengajar Program in improving students' pedagogical competence, although her focus was not yet on legal education. This study fills this gap by exploring the contribution of Kampus Mengajar to instilling legal awareness in elementary school students.

### 3. Research Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach was chosen because it aligns with the research objective, which is to understand and describe in-depth the process of instilling legal awareness in elementary school students through the Campus Teaching Program in the 3T (Underdeveloped and Remote Areas) region. As stated by Sugiyono (2019), qualitative research aims to understand social phenomena from the perspective of participants holistically and in-depth in a natural context.

This research was conducted at Budisari State Elementary School, Cililin District, West Bandung Regency. This school was selected purposively because it is located in the 3T region where students are placed. Teaching Campus Batch 7, with relevant problem characteristics such as low understanding of regulations, lack of strengthening of legal character, and the emergence of deviant behavior such as bullying in the school environment. The research subjects consisted of class teachers, principals, and students in grades IV to VI. Subject selection was carried out using a *purposive sampling technique*, namely determining informants based on certain considerations who are considered to have the most knowledge and understanding of the issues being studied (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted by directly observing learning activities, classroom activities, and student interactions in the daily school routine. Interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, Kampus Mengajar students, and students to obtain more in-depth information regarding perceptions, experiences, and emerging attitudinal changes. Documentation was conducted by reviewing documents such as student regulations, violation records, Kampus Mengajar work programs, and documentation of character building activities.

Data validity was achieved through triangulation techniques, which combine various sources and data collection methods to ensure the accuracy of the findings (Sugiyono, 2019). Furthermore, member checking was conducted to reconfirm data interpretations with informants to ensure they align with the intended meaning of the research subjects.

The data analysis in this study used an interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman (in Sugiyono, 2019), which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. The entire process was carried out cyclically and continuously throughout the research until data saturation was deemed reached and no new relevant information was found.

### 4. Results and Discussion

This study revealed that the presence of Kampus Mengajar students at Budisari Public Elementary School has a positive impact on increasing students' legal awareness through a contextual and humanistic character education approach. The instilling of legal values such as discipline, responsibility, and honesty is implemented in various learning and non-learning activities. Students not only provide material but also serve as role models in adhering to school rules, such as arriving on time, maintaining cleanliness, and not using gadgets while studying.

One concrete manifestation of the success of this approach is a change in students' attitudes toward school rules. "I used to like hanging out in the cafeteria during class, but now I don't anymore. I'm afraid of getting scolded by the seniors and being embarrassed if they find out," said a sixth-grade student (Interview, April 2025). This statement demonstrates the internalization of discipline, which was previously driven by fear and is now shifting to a sense of social responsibility.

This finding is reinforced by Lickona's (1991) theory of habituation in character education, which emphasizes that values cannot be taught solely through lectures but must be instilled through role models, positive reinforcement, and consistent routines. Legal education becomes effective when legal values become part of students' daily habits, not simply subject matter.

In addition to strengthening the values of discipline and honesty, the dimension of responsibility has also seen significant improvement in students. This is evident in changes in student behavior, with students starting to voluntarily report mistakes and following rules consciously, rather than out of fear of punishment. "Now I don't litter anymore, because it makes the school dirty and upsets my friends," said a fifth-grade student

(Interview, April 2025). This recognition reflects a shift from punishment-based compliance to compliance based on an understanding of legal values.

This condition aligns with Kohlberg's (1981) idea of *the stages of moral development*, where students begin to move from the *pre-conventional level* (obedience due to fear of punishment) to *the conventional stage*, namely obedience due to understanding the importance of social norms. The process of internalizing law becomes effective when students feel that rules are part of their lives, not external pressure.

Students at the Teaching Campus also incorporate a reflective approach into their legal education. Students are encouraged to write in daily journals or draw pictures of their experiences with regulations, conflicts, and solutions. This activity not only builds legal awareness but also fosters empathy. One student's drawing depicts two children reconciling after a dispute, with the caption, "We shouldn't retaliate, we should forgive each other." This activity emphasizes that legal literacy can be developed from an early age through age- and culturally appropriate media.

This research also strengthens the argument that legal education at the elementary school level must address affective aspects, not just cognitive ones. As explained by Tella (2021), an affective approach to children's legal education has a greater impact on fostering social awareness and responsibility. Teachers and students must become facilitators of values, not simply transmitters of material.

Furthermore, bullying issues previously considered normal or ignored are beginning to receive attention from students themselves. For example, when a student reprimands a friend for physical teasing, he says, "The seniors at the university said we should respect each other." This demonstrates that legal education goes beyond formal rules and fosters awareness of the rights and dignity of others.

Another interesting finding was the more active involvement of teachers after the students arrived. Teachers began incorporating legal messages into thematic learning. For example, during a science lesson on environmental cleanliness, teachers linked it to students' rights to a healthy environment and their obligation to maintain cleanliness. This demonstrates a *pedagogical transfer* from students to teachers, creating continuity in instilling legal values in the classroom.

Institutionally, the school also demonstrated a new commitment to strengthening the culture of law. The principal supported the students' initiative by establishing "Just Fridays"—a day of reflection on violations and appreciation for rule-abiding behavior. This innovation has resulted in increased social control among students. "The children have begun to reprimand their peers in a positive manner, and some have even made posters prohibiting bullying without being asked," said a sixth-grade teacher (Interview, April 2025).

This approach aligns with the principles of *restorative justice* in education, which emphasize restoring social relationships, not simply imposing sanctions. According to Zehr (2015), restorative justice for children is essential for fostering a sense of collective responsibility and healing social wounds through dialogue. Kampus Mengajar students apply this principle through weekly class discussion forums, where students freely voice their experiences and feelings, including those related to minor bullying.

This research demonstrates that legal education can be developed organically in elementary schools without the need for major policy interventions. Micro-interventions such as habituation, role modeling, reflection, and active student involvement are quite effective in establishing a foundation for legal awareness. Consistent with Farid & Andriani's (2022) opinion, a bottom-up approach to legal education is more sustainable than a purely structural approach.

## 5. Conclusion and Suggestions

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that, first, the instillation of legal education through the Teaching Campus Program at Budisari Public Elementary School demonstrated significant effectiveness. Students successfully instilled legal values through character-based approaches, habituation, and role models tailored to the students' developmental levels. Values such as discipline, responsibility, and honesty were consistently instilled in both learning and daily school activities, thus fostering legal awareness from an early age. Second, the change in students' attitudes toward school rules is very significant. Children are beginning to understand the importance of rules, not solely out of fear of punishment, but because of a growing awareness of maintaining order and

communal well-being. This is reflected in students' new habits of adhering to school rules, avoiding negative behavior such as truancy and swearing, and taking the initiative to remind friends who break the rules. Third, bullying practices, previously considered commonplace, began to decline as awareness of the values of respect and empathy increased. Through the guidance of Campus Mengajar students and the support of teachers, students began to understand that bullying is a violation of others' rights. Children began to demonstrate mutual respect and build a safer school environment. This program demonstrated that legal education can be effectively instilled in elementary schools through an appropriate character-based approach. The recommendation from this study is that the Kampus Mengajar program be continued and improved, particularly in providing more in-depth training related to legal and character education to student participants. Schools are also expected to maintain the good practices established during the program so that legal values remain alive and developing within the school culture. For further research, it is recommended that it be conducted at more than one elementary school location to obtain a broader picture and stronger generalizations regarding the effectiveness of character-based legal education at the elementary level.

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