

ENHANCING TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM THROUGH CHARACTER EDUCATION: A PSYCHOEDUCATIONAL APPROACH FOR EDUCATORS AT LUKMANULHAKEEM SCHOOL, YALA, THAILAND

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ABSTRACT Character development is a fundamental aspect of teacher professionalism, influencing their interactions with students, colleagues, and the broader educational community. This psychoeducational program aimed to enhance teachers' awareness of the importance of strong moral character and provide practical strategies for fostering ethical behavior in their professional roles. Conducted at Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand, on November 3, 2024, the program involved 30 teachers in a series of interactive workshops, discussions, and role-playing exercises. Findings indicated a significant improvement in teachers' ability to manage emotions when dealing with students, strengthen professional ethics in decision-making, and build positive relationships within the school environment. Post-test results demonstrated a 40% increase in participants' understanding of character-based teaching practices. Teachers reported greater confidence in handling classroom challenges, applying ethical considerations in disciplinary actions, and fostering an inclusive learning atmosphere. The results align with previous research emphasizing the critical role of character education in enhancing teaching quality and student outcomes. Future programs should focus on long-term implementation and institutional support to reinforce ethical teaching practices. This study underscores the necessity of integrating character development into teacher training programs to foster a more ethical and effective education system.

Keywords: Teacher Professionalism, Character Education, Psychoeducation

1. INTRODUCTION

Teacher professionalism is not solely determined by academic and pedagogical competence but also by strong moral character. A teacher's character plays a crucial role in shaping a positive learning environment, serving as a role model for students (Lickona, 1991). Teachers with good character are capable of fostering a conducive learning atmosphere, supporting students' moral development, and maintaining harmonious relationships with colleagues and parents (Berkowitz & Bier, 2005).

Conversely, the absence of good character among teachers can lead to various educational issues. Cases such as verbal and physical violence against students, lack of professional ethics, and insufficient empathy towards students' needs are increasingly reported in the media (Kompas, 2023; The Jakarta Post, 2023). These concerns highlight the urgent necessity of character development in the teaching profession to ensure a high-quality education system. Character is defined as a set of moral and ethical traits that shape an individual's personality and influence their daily behavior (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006). In the educational context, a teacher's character reflects the values they uphold and apply in their interactions with students, colleagues, and the school community. Several key character traits essential for teachers include: (1) Integrity: Demonstrating honesty and consistency in values and actions (Peterson & Seligman, 2004). (2) Empathy: Understanding and responding to students' feelings and needs appropriately (Davis, 1996). (3) Patience: Maintaining emotional control and composure in challenging classroom situations. (4) Fairness: Treating all students objectively and equitably in assessment and disciplinary actions (Nucci, 2017). Responsibility: Being accountable for teaching duties and the academic and moral development of students. (5) Collaboration: Working effectively with colleagues, parents, and the wider community to create a positive learning environment.

Character education for teachers is becoming increasingly important in the era of globalization, especially in educational institutions that emphasize moral and ethical values. Lukmanulhakeem School in Yala, Thailand, which is based on Islamic values, requires character reinforcement for its teachers to enhance their effectiveness in educating students holistically. Therefore, psychoeducation on the importance of good character for professional teachers is highly relevant for implementation.

This psychoeducational program aims to enhance teachers' understanding of the role of character in their professionalism and provide practical strategies for developing positive character traits within the school environment. By increasing teachers' awareness and skills in character building, this initiative seeks to improve the effectiveness of both teaching and social interactions in schools.

2. METHOD

2.1 Participants

This program involved 30 teachers from Lukmanulhakeem School, Yala, Thailand. The participants came from diverse academic backgrounds and teaching experiences, ranging in age from 25 to 50 years. This diversity enabled rich discussions based on real-life experiences in daily educational practices.

2.2 Implementation and Procedure

The psychoeducation program was conducted as an interactive workshop on November 3, 2024. The methods used included:

No	Activity Stage	Description
1	Presentation	Delivered theories on character and professionalism in teaching, including case studies from academic literature.
2	Group Discussion	Participants were divided into small groups to discuss ethical dilemmas in teaching and collectively find solutions.
3	Role Play	Simulation of classroom situations requiring the application of positive teacher character, with facilitator feedback.
4	Individual Reflection	Teachers wrote about their experiences and strategies in applying good character in teaching and developed action plans for self-improvement.



Figure 1. Participants at the psychoeducational program

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Following the psychoeducation program, there was an increase in teachers' understanding and awareness of the importance of character in their profession. Based on pre-test and post-test survey results, participants' average understanding increased by 40% after attending the program. Some observed changes included: (1) Increased awareness among teachers in managing emotions when dealing with students of various characteristics; (2) Strengthening of professional ethics in decision-making; (3) Improved skills in building positive relationships with students and colleagues.

Teachers who participated in this program reported that they are now better able to control their emotions when interacting with students from diverse backgrounds and characteristics. Prior to the psychoeducation program, some teachers admitted experiencing difficulties in managing stress and sometimes reacting emotionally to challenging student behaviors. However, after attending this training, they began applying emotion management techniques taught, such as breathing exercises, thinking before reacting, and using more effective communication strategies.

Additionally, teachers gained a deeper understanding of the importance of professional ethics in decision-making. Many acknowledged that they previously faced dilemmas in handling student discipline issues or determining appropriate teaching methods. Following this program, they felt more confident in making decisions based on professionalism and ethical values.

These impacts align with previous research findings, which suggest that character training for teachers enhances teaching quality and social interactions in schools (Nucci, 2017).

4. Conclusion and Recommendation



Figure 1. Presenter at the psychoeducational program

4. CONCLUSION

This psychoeducation program successfully improved teachers' understanding and skills in developing good character as part of their professionalism. Teachers with positive character can

create a more conducive learning environment and enhance their effectiveness in educating students.

Recommendations

Similar psychoeducation programs should be conducted regularly to reinforce the implementation of character education in the teaching profession. Schools should integrate character training into teacher professional development programs. Further program is needed to assess the long-term program and impact of strengthening teacher character on learning quality and student achievement.

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