



Strengthening the gotong royong character of elementary school students through cooperative learning

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ABSTRACT

Gotong royong is an Indonesian culture that reflects mutual help and harmony. In learning, gotong royong plays a crucial role in group collaboration to achieve goals. This study aims to describe efforts to strengthen the character of gotong royong through a cooperative learning model in grade V elementary students. Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, data was collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and techniques. Data analysis included three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings show that applying the cooperative learning model significantly contributes to developing students' mutual cooperative character. Gotong royong skills improve through active participation in group activities, strengthening solidarity, empathy, and teamwork. Implementing strategies such as group formation, role assignment, and joint evaluation fosters collective responsibility. This research also aligns with the goals of the Independent Learning Curriculum by shaping student characters that align with the Pancasila Student Profile. The study suggests a broader application of this model and encourages further research to gain a more comprehensive and sustainable understanding.

ARTICLE INFO

Article History:

Received: 14 Jun 2024

Revised: 13 Aug 2024

Accepted: 15 Aug 2024

Available online: 30 Aug 2024

Publish: 30 Aug 2024

Keyword:

cooperative learning; elementary school; gotong royong

Open access

Inovasi Kurikulum is a peer-reviewed open-access journal.

ABSTRAK

Gotong royong merupakan budaya Indonesia yang mencerminkan nilai saling tolong-menolong dan keharmonisan dalam hidup. Dalam konteks pembelajaran, gotong royong memiliki peran penting sebagai bentuk kerja sama kelompok untuk mencapai tujuan tertentu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan upaya penguatan karakter gotong royong melalui model pembelajaran cooperative learning pada peserta didik kelas V sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Validitas data diperoleh melalui triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Analisis data meliputi tiga tahap, yaitu reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa penerapan model pembelajaran kooperatif secara signifikan memberikan kontribusi dalam pengembangan karakter gotong royong di kalangan peserta didik. Keterampilan gotong royong meningkat melalui partisipasi aktif dalam kegiatan kelompok, yang memperkuat solidaritas, empati, dan kemampuan bekerja sama. Implementasi strategi kooperatif seperti pembentukan kelompok, penentuan peran, dan evaluasi bersama mendorong tanggung jawab kolektif peserta didik. Penelitian ini juga mendukung tujuan Kurikulum Merdeka Belajar dengan membentuk karakter peserta didik yang sejalan dengan Profil Pelajar Pancasila. Disarankan agar model ini diterapkan lebih luas dan diadakan penelitian lanjutan untuk mendapatkan pemahaman yang lebih komprehensif dan berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: gotong royong; pembelajaran kooperatif; sekolah dasar

How to cite (APA 7)

Awaliya, T. P., & Utami, R. D. (2024). Strengthening the gotong royong character of elementary school students through cooperative learning. *Inovasi Kurikulum*, 21(3), 1763-1780.

Peer review

This article has been peer-reviewed through the journal's standard double-blind peer review, where both the reviewers and authors are anonymised during review.

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INTRODUCTION

The *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum is an innovative educational policy aimed at optimizing the learning process by providing greater flexibility to educational institutions (Alfath *et al.*, 2022). Through a student-centered approach, this curriculum seeks to foster students' interest in learning, talents, and individual potential to the fullest extent. In addition to the achievement of academic competencies, the *Merdeka* Curriculum also emphasizes character development and the cultivation of life skills that are relevant to future challenges (Martini *et al.*, 2019). One of the key concepts of the *Merdeka* Curriculum is its integration with the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile). This profile encompasses six core dimensions: religiosity, global diversity, independence, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity. It serves as a reference for developing learners with Pancasila-based character (Rusnaini *et al.*, 2021). The gotong royong (cooperation) dimension in the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* is particularly significant. It reflects the values of togetherness, solidarity, and collaboration, which are intrinsic to Indonesia's cultural heritage (Riyadi *et al.*, 2024). *Gotong royong* is not merely viewed as physical cooperation, but also as mental and emotional collaboration to achieve shared goals. In the educational context, this means creating an environment where students can collaborate with their peers, appreciate differences, and support one another in overcoming challenges.

Although the gotong royong (cooperation) concept is a crucial pillar in the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile), its implementation faces several challenges. One of the main challenges is the increasing prevalence of individualism in the digital era (Putri *et al.*, 2023). The culture of individualism, characterized by increasingly virtual social interactions, tends to shift students' focus from collective interests to personal goals. Moreover, the competitive nature of the education system often prioritizes individual achievements, thereby hindering the development of collaborative skills (Mustaghfiroh & Listyaningsih, 2023). Lastly, the lack of real-life collaborative experiences within school environments also poses a barrier to cultivating the spirit of *gotong royong* among students. Introducing children to the value of *gotong royong* from an early age is key to educational success. This character trait fosters a caring and responsible personality and prepares them to face future challenges collectively (Sunaryati *et al.*, 2022). The roles of families, communities, and schools are vital in instilling this value. There is a strong synergy between individual character development and the practice of *gotong royong* (Tyaputri & Utami, 2024). Teaching character values in schools contributes to shaping students' character, which is oriented toward social values, such as *gotong royong*. (Mulyani *et al.*, 2020).

Several previous studies have demonstrated the benefits of implementing the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* dimension of *gotong royong* (cooperation) through cooperative learning models. Applying the STAD (Student Teams Achievement Divisions) model in IPS (social studies learning) emphasizes the transfer of information and focuses on developing students' character. Through intensive social interaction within heterogeneous groups, students naturally develop cooperation, empathy, and tolerance (Martini *et al.*, 2019). Through the *Guru Penggerak* (Teacher Leader) program, students are encouraged to internalize the values of Pancasila as the foundation for thinking and acting. Consequently, Pancasila becomes not merely a concept illustrated in school but a guiding principle for daily life that is accepted and practiced (Damayanti & Asbari, 2024). However, research examining how cooperative learning models influence students' *gotong royong* skills at SD Muhammadiyah 16 Karangasem remains limited. Therefore, this study seeks to fill that gap by empirically investigating how cooperative learning models can contribute to developing *gotong royong* character among fifth-grade elementary school students. The novelty of this research lies in its focus on implementing cooperative learning models within the context of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum and the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, particularly about the *gotong royong* dimension.

Based on preliminary observations at SD Muhammadiyah 16 Karangasem, it was found that some students were still less active in practicing *gotong royong* (cooperation) when completing assigned tasks.

This indicates a need to enhance the character value of *gotong royong* within the learning process. This research problem focuses on how the aspect of *gotong royong* can be improved by implementing cooperative learning models among fifth-grade students at SD Muhammadiyah 16 Karangasem. In order to nurture a younger generation with strong character and a collective orientation, fostering the value of *gotong royong* in education becomes a strategic effort. Values such as cooperation, tolerance, and empathy must be instilled early through various relevant learning activities. In doing so, it is believed that students will be able to engage in shared participation in their daily routines and become agents of positive change. (Karomah *et al.*, 2024).

This study aims to explore how the aspect of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation) is learned by fifth-grade students at SD Muhammadiyah 16 Karangasem through the implementation of a cooperative learning model and to measure the extent to which this model can enhance elementary students' *gotong royong* skills. The findings of this research are expected to significantly contribute to the development of effective learning strategies for strengthening the character of *gotong royong* in alignment with the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* within the context of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of *Gotong Royong*

Gotong royong is a manifestation of collaborative ability within a group, where individuals work together effectively and efficiently to achieve a common goal. The values embodied in *gotong royong* reflect the characteristics of a democratic, open society that upholds unity and educational principles that emphasize the importance of cooperation, tolerance, and mutual assistance (Kahfi, 2022). *Gotong royong* is a cultural value grounded in the belief in the unity of humankind as creations of God (Yasinda *et al.*, 2017). This value is reflected in everyday practices, highlighting the importance of cooperation and solidarity. *Gotong royong* represents fundamental human values based on mutual support and respect. These principles are the foundation for building a just and sustainable social order. (Setyawan & Nuro'in, 2021).

Developing students' character through the education of *gotong royong* (cooperation) values is an effort to prepare future generations to become citizens who are socially responsible and capable of contributing to societal advancement. Based on the aforementioned definitions, *gotong royong* involves individuals collaborating effectively and efficiently to achieve shared goals. A spirit of togetherness and reciprocity characterizes it. This collaborative process entails the active participation of all group members in completing tasks or attaining objectives collectively, resulting in greater effectiveness and efficiency.

The concept of *pawongan* in *Tri Hita Karana* provides a strong philosophical foundation for developing *gotong royong* (cooperation) character. Through the habituation of the values embedded in this concept, a harmonious and mutually supportive society is expected to be realized (Dewanti *et al.*, 2023). *Gotong royong*, as a noble value of the Indonesian nation, plays a significant role in shaping students' character and quality. Through *gotong royong* activities, students can cultivate empathy, care for others, and the ability to work collaboratively. In their role as learning facilitators, teachers hold a strategic responsibility to implement the values of *gotong royong* within the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* and to foster students' character development. This role aims to produce a resilient and compassionate younger generation.

Previous Studies on *Gotong Royong* in Education

Several studies have examined *gotong royong* (cooperation) in the context of education. The findings indicate a significant influence between the independent variable (Socratic-based *bakiak* traditional game) and the dependent variable (*gotong royong* character). This suggests that the traditional *bakiak* game can

be an effective medium to facilitate students' development of gotong royong character. *Gotong royong*, cooperative learning, and traditional games based on the Socratic method are interrelated concepts that complement one another (Salam & Nur, 2023). By integrating these three concepts, it is expected that a younger generation can be cultivated, one that is strong in character, intelligent, and compassionate toward others.

A similar study was conducted by observing and improving the learning process in two stages. The results showed that the Teams Games Tournament (TGT) method effectively enhanced students' *gotong royong* (cooperation) attitudes. *Gotong royong* is a foundation: its values underpin cooperative learning and the TGT model. These two instructional approaches foster and develop the spirit of *gotong royong* within students (Asrian & Airlanda, 2023). Another study examined how collaborative learning and group work could help sixth-grade students develop social skills. The researchers employed a qualitative method by observing and interviewing the children to identify changes that occurred. The findings revealed that a learning approach emphasizing cooperation and *gotong royong* improved students' communication, teamwork, problem-solving, and empathy skills. This study also provided strong evidence that cooperative learning grounded in *gotong royong* values can effectively enhance students' social competencies (Mardiani et al., 2023). By engaging students in group activities and encouraging them to help one another, we can better prepare them to become responsible and productive citizens.

Theoretical Foundations of Character Development

Several theoretical foundations relevant to character development include:

Character development is a complex process that involves various philosophical approaches, including ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations (Badri et al., 2023). The following is an explanation from the perspective of each of these foundations.

1. Ontology in Character Development

Ontology is the study of existence or the nature of being. In the context of character development, ontology explores the nature of humans as moral beings and how character exists or evolves within a person. Ontologically, character development is rooted in the understanding that humans possess an innate potential to grow into individuals of character. Character is considered an essential part of human existence, encompassing outward behavior and inner aspects such as morality, virtue, and values. This perspective may vary according to different philosophical and religious traditions. For example, in the Aristotelian tradition, humans are viewed as beings with the potential to achieve virtue through practice and habituation. In contrast, existentialist philosophy may see character as more dynamic and subject to change, depending on individual choices.

2. Epistemology in Character Development

Epistemology is the study of knowledge, specifically, how we come to know something. In character development, epistemology highlights how individuals understand values, morality, and virtues. Character development involves normative knowledge gained through education, life experiences, moral reflection, and social and cultural influences. For example, in character education at school, children are taught values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy through formal and informal teaching methods. Epistemology also addresses how individuals learn to distinguish between right and wrong, good and bad. This learning can occur through various approaches, such as rational, empirical, or even intuitive methods.

3. Axiology in Character Development

Axiology is the study of values, particularly moral and aesthetic values. In the context of character development, axiology explores which values are considered important and appropriate to cultivate

within an individual. It concerns questions such as: What moral values should be upheld? Which values are regarded as universal virtues? In character education, values such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, cooperation, and justice are often used as foundational principles for character development. Various axiological theories offer different approaches to character formation. For instance, deontological theories emphasize the importance of moral duties and rules, while utilitarian theories focus more on values that promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people.

Cooperative Learning Model

Cooperative learning enables students to acquire social skills and collaborate within a supportive learning environment. In such an environment, each student feels responsible for the progress of their group members (Ali, 2021). Cooperative learning aims to optimize each individual's contribution within the learning group, creating synergy that allows members to learn from one another. Consequently, conceptual understanding becomes deeper and broader through social interaction within the group (Aiman, 2018). The cooperative learning model allows each team member to contribute and achieve collective success, making it well-suited to enhance the spirit of collaboration in the learning process and foster more active student participation.

The following are examples of relevant cooperative learning models:

1. Student Teams Achievement Divisions (STAD): This model emphasizes group goal attainment and individual accountability (Halimah, 2017).
2. Jigsaw: This model divides the group task into several parts, with each member responsible for a specific section (Fariyani, 2019).
3. Think-Pair-Share: This model involves three stages: individual thinking, discussion with a partner, and sharing ideas with the group (Mutia *et al.*, 2020).
4. Learning Together: This model emphasizes shared responsibility to ensure all group members understand the learning material (Hasibuan, 2020).

The Concept and Fundamental Principles of Developing the Character of *Gotong Royong* through Cooperative Learning

Developing the character of *gotong royong* (cooperation) through cooperative learning involves the integration of *gotong royong* values into the teaching and learning process. The key principles that support this development include. (Pamungkas *et al.*, 2020):

1. Cooperation and Collaboration: Cooperative learning emphasizes group work, where students must collaborate to solve problems, complete tasks, or achieve specific goals. This teaches students the importance of sharing roles and responsibilities and the fact that cooperation is more effective than working individually.
2. Development of Social Skills: Cooperative learning helps students develop social skills such as communication, empathy, mutual respect, and the ability to adapt within a group. Students learn to listen to others' opinions, express ideas clearly, and value the contributions of other group members.
3. Collective Responsibility: In cooperative learning, students are responsible for not only their own success but also for the success of the group. This teaches social responsibility, where collective success is prioritized over individual achievement.

4. **Positive Conflict Resolution:** Conflicts are inevitable when working in groups. Cooperative learning provides students with the opportunity to learn how to resolve conflicts in a constructive and peaceful manner through open communication and collaborative problem-solving.
5. **Building Solidarity and Empathy:** *Gotong royong* requires a sense of empathy and concern for others. In cooperative learning, students are taught to support and understand the needs and challenges of their peers. This fosters strong social bonds and increases awareness of the importance of solidarity.
6. **Achieving Common Goals:** Cooperative learning encourages the achievement of common goals, where one student's success is closely tied to the success of the entire group. This motivates students to collaborate effectively and overcome challenges together.

METHODS

This study employs a case study method. The case study approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to explore the practice of *gotong royong* within this context (Assyakurrohim *et al.*, 2022). The qualitative research adopts a post-positivist philosophy, which acknowledges that knowledge of social phenomena is relative and contextually influenced (Surawardi & Maulidi, 2022). This philosophical foundation underpins the qualitative case study design used to gain a deep understanding of the *gotong royong* phenomenon at SD Muhammadiyah 16 Karangasem, Surakarta. The research was conducted at SD Muhammadiyah 16 Karangasem, Surakarta, from September to December, from the preparation stage to completion.

This research was conducted from September to December, focusing on data collection through interviews, observations, and documentation. Data were gathered from the principal, teachers, and students at SD Muhammadiyah 16 Karangasem. The interview procedure involved structured questions to guide participants in describing their experiences related to *gotong royong*. Observations were done by recording social interactions and *gotong royong* activities during school hours. Documentation included the analysis of teaching materials and activity reports related to *gotong royong*. The researcher collected data through interviews, observations, and documentation (Jailani, 2023). The research sample involved all principals, teachers, and students at SD Muhammadiyah 16 Karangasem. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, which involves selecting relevant participants to answer the research questions based on specific criteria.

To ensure data validity, the researcher employed source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation enhanced data validity by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation (Susanto & Jailani, 2023). For technique triangulation, data collected through different methods (interviews and observations) were compared to identify consistency and discrepancies in the findings. Data analysis was conducted in three stages: reduction, display, and conclusion drawing (Rijali, 2018). Data reduction involved categorizing and filtering relevant information, while data display was organized into key emerging themes. Conclusions were drawn by linking the findings to the research objectives and existing theoretical frameworks.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data from observations, interviews, and documentation involving the principal, teachers, and students at SD Muhammadiyah 16 Karangasem were analyzed using coding techniques. The analysis yielded several key findings, including: (1) students' collaborative activities related to *gotong royong*; (2) the implementation of the cooperative learning model to enhance students' sense of *gotong royong*; and (3) the challenges encountered and the solutions applied during the implementation of the cooperative learning model to foster students' collaborative character.

Gotong Royong Activities in the Implementation of Learning

The results of interviews with the principal, Grade 5A teacher, Grade 5B teacher, and students indicate that within the implementation of cooperative learning, several forms of activities are conducted: (1) students work in groups to complete assignments; (2) students collaborate to carry out classroom cleaning duties; (3) students participate in extracurricular activities; and (4) students clean the school environment. Detailed information is available in **Table 1** below.

Table 1. Interview Results on *Gotong Royong* Activities in the Implementation of Learning

No	Information	Informant
1	Secara umum, saya melihat bahwa peserta didik senang bekerja dalam kelompok, terutama jika tugas yang diberikan bersifat kreatif. Misalnya, saat mereka harus membuat proyek sederhana atau presentasi bersama, mereka biasanya antusias. Mereka merasa lebih ringan karena bisa berbagi tugas, dan ada juga yang jadi lebih termotivasi karena bekerja bersama teman-teman.	Guru 1
2	Piket kelas adalah salah satu aktivitas rutin yang saya terapkan setiap hari. Secara umum, anak-anak bekerja sama dengan baik, tetapi ada juga beberapa tantangan yang muncul. Kebanyakan dari mereka sudah paham tugas-tugas dasar seperti menyapu, membersihkan papan tulis, dan merapikan bangku, dan mereka cenderung menikmati bekerja bersama-sama, terutama jika dilakukan dengan cara yang menyenangkan.	Guru 2
3	Saya sangat mendukung penerapan pembelajaran kooperatif dalam ekstrakurikuler. Aktivitas seperti drumband, futsal, dan tahsin memang sangat cocok dengan pendekatan ini karena mereka mengutamakan kerja sama, saling mendukung, dan berkolaborasi untuk mencapai tujuan bersama. Saya melihat dampak positifnya pada perkembangan karakter peserta didik, baik secara individu maupun kelompok.	Kepala Sekolah
4	Menurut saya, membersihkan lingkungan sekolah secara kelompok itu menyenangkan. Kami biasanya dibagi ke dalam beberapa kelompok, dan setiap kelompok punya tugas berbeda, seperti menyapu halaman, membersihkan taman, atau memungut sampah di sekitar lapangan. Dengan pembelajaran kooperatif, kami bisa berbagi tugas sehingga tidak ada yang merasa terbebani. Selain itu, bekerja bersama teman-teman membuat pekerjaan terasa lebih ringan dan cepat selesai.	Peserta didik 1
5	Awalnya, saya berpikir tugas seperti ini akan membosankan, tapi karena kami bekerja sama dan setiap orang punya peran masing-masing, jadi malah terasa seru. Misalnya, ada yang menyapu, ada yang mengumpulkan sampah, dan ada yang membersihkan tempat pembuangan. Kami juga saling membantu kalau ada teman yang kesulitan, jadi semuanya terasa lebih adil.	Peserta didik 2

Source: Research 2023

Table 1 presents the results of interviews regarding cooperation (*gotong royong*) activities in implementing learning at school. Based on interviews with various informants, the following explanation and discussion summarize the findings: The interview results indicate that Teacher 1 observed students' enthusiasm in working within groups, especially for creative tasks such as projects and presentations. This suggests that group-based approaches reduce individual workload and enhance student motivation through collaboration. Meanwhile, Teacher 2 explained that the children carry out routine activities such as classroom duty (piket), although some challenges exist. The children understand basic tasks such as sweeping and tidying up the classroom, and they enjoy these activities when approached in an engaging manner. This demonstrates that the structure and supervision of tasks can affect the effectiveness of cooperation in routine activities. The Principal supports the implementation of cooperative learning in extracurricular activities such as the drum band and futsal, which promote teamwork and collaboration, and positively impact students' character development both individually and as a group.

This affirms that the cooperative approach in extracurricular activities contributes to developing students' character through firsthand experience in team-based work. Student 1 expressed that cleaning the school environment is enjoyable for a group. The division of tasks makes the work feel lighter and quicker to complete, while enhancing a sense of togetherness among peers. This indicates that cooperative learning can transform seemingly tedious and more engaging and efficient activities. Initially, Student 2 found the *gotong royong* tasks tedious, but this perception became an exciting experience due to role distribution and mutual assistance. This demonstrates that active involvement and shared responsibility within a group can shift students' perceptions of tasks, making them feel fairer and more enjoyable.

Overall, the interview results indicate that cooperation (*gotong royong*) activities in learning significantly impact students in terms of motivation, learning, and character development. Cooperative learning and cooperation activities provide several key benefits, such as increased motivation and enthusiasm among students for creative and routine tasks, character development through extracurricular activities, efficiency and effectiveness in task delegation, and changes in students' perceptions of tasks, making them more enjoyable and motivating. Implementing *gotong royong* activities has proven to be effective in enhancing motivation, efficiency, and character development in students, as well as helping them in academic aspects and social skills that are crucial for their future lives.

Gotong royong activities in implementing learning play an important role in shaping students' collaborative and supportive character. Through these activities, students learn the subject matter and practice working together, sharing responsibilities, and helping one another achieve common goals. Implementing *gotong royong* in the classroom allows students to apply values of cooperation and solidarity in a practical context. To ensure that these activities are effective in shaping students' character, it is essential to identify and extract indicators that reflect the character of *gotong royong*. These indicators, such as active involvement in group work, the ability to share tasks, and support and mutual assistance among group members, provide a clear picture of the extent to which the character of *gotong royong* develops among students. By linking *gotong royong* activities with character indicators, we can assess and improve teaching methods to ensure these values are truly instilled in students. As a result of the research, the following points highlight the characteristics of *gotong royong* among elementary school students. (Ismail *et al.*, 2020).

1. Demonstrating care for others:

The research results indicate that some students are willing to help friends with difficulties, share food or toys, and show empathy toward others. This is based on the interviews conducted with the students "*Saya suka membantu teman saya yang kesusahan*"

2. Feeling happy when working together

The observations clearly show that students feel happier and enjoy the learning process when collaborating with their classmates. Students expressed happiness and satisfaction when they could share ideas and work together to complete tasks. The observations indicate that students feel more motivated and enthusiastic when working in groups.

3. Willing to yield and compromise

Based on the observations, students demonstrated emotional maturity by being willing to yield and compromise when disagreements arose, thus creating a positive classroom atmosphere that supports the learning process. The students' ability to respect one another and compromise in the face of differing opinions indicates positive social and emotional development.

The Implementation of the Cooperative Learning Model to Strengthen the Character of *Gotong Royong* Among Students

Implementing the cooperative learning model at SDM 16 Karangasem is a strategic step aimed at improving the effectiveness of the learning process and fostering collaboration among students. This model emphasizes the importance of cooperation and social interaction in achieving academic goals and developing students' social and communication skills. In order to successfully apply this model, SDM 16 Karangasem has established a series of planned and systematic steps. The steps taken to implement the cooperative learning model at SDM 16 Karangasem are as follows:

1. Group formation
 - a. Heterogeneity: Students in each group are encouraged to help each other and learn together, as each group consists of students with diverse academic and social backgrounds.
 - b. Group size: Ideally, each group consists of 4-5 students.
 - c. Group stability: To create stable groups, the teacher has considered the group composition over a specific period, allowing students to get to know each other and build mutual trust.
2. Determination of roles
 - a. The teacher assigns clear roles, where each group member has a different responsibility, such as leader, secretary, reporter, and resource gatherer.
 - b. Role rotation: The teacher periodically rotates roles so all students can develop various skills.
3. Presentation of material
 - a. Brief presentation: The teacher presents the material briefly.
 - b. Assignment of tasks: The teacher gives challenging tasks that require group collaboration.
 - c. Teacher Guidance: During the learning process, the teacher is a facilitator and assists students.
4. Discussion and collaboration
 - a. Adequate time: The teacher provides sufficient time for students to discuss and complete tasks together.
 - b. Interaction among members: The teacher encourages students to actively interact, share ideas, and provide feedback to their group members.
 - c. Use of aids: The teacher utilizes various aids, such as task cards, worksheets, or digital media, to assist students in discussions.
5. Evaluation
 - a. Individual evaluation: At the end of the learning activity, the teacher conducts individual assessments to evaluate each student's understanding of the material.
 - b. Group evaluation: Additionally, the teacher evaluates the group to assess its success in completing the tasks and collaborating effectively.
 - c. Reflection: Students are asked by the teacher to reflect on their learning experiences, both individually and as a group

Furthermore, **Picture 1** visually illustrates the implementation of the cooperative learning model, providing a clear depiction of how these evaluation steps are integrated into the learning process.



Picture 1. Implementation of the Cooperative Learning Model
Source: Author Documentation 2023

Picture 1 displays the implementation of the cooperative learning model aimed at strengthening the *gotong royong* character in students. A group of female students, wearing uniforms and hijabs, can be seen sitting on the floor in a classroom with green walls. They are divided into small groups focused on completing a craft project using materials such as colored paper. The students appear to be interacting, discussing, and helping one another complete their tasks. Although the teacher is not visible in Figure 1, it is clear that this activity is designed to encourage collaboration, communication, and the spirit of *gotong royong* among the students. This activity reflects the principles of cooperative learning, where students work together in small groups to achieve a common goal. Through activities such as cutting, folding, and shaping colored paper alternately with their groupmates, the students not only develop practical skills but also reinforce important social values such as cooperation, empathy, and shared responsibility. This learning approach is practical in building the *gotong royong* character, which is one of the essential values in community life in Indonesia.

This activity also reflects the learning theories underlying cooperative learning. According to Vygotsky's social constructivism theory, students support each other to achieve higher cognitive potential through group interactions. Bandura's social learning theory is manifested as students observe and imitate prosocial behaviors from their peers, such as cooperation and helping each other. Motivation theory is fulfilled by meeting the social needs of students, which increases their intrinsic motivation to learn. Meanwhile, exchanging ideas within the group stimulates more complex cognitive development in line with Piaget's theory. Further explanation is provided below:

1. Social Constructivism Theory

According to Vygotsky, the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) describes the range of abilities where students can optimally learn with the help of more competent individuals (Sulistiyowati, 2021). In cooperative learning, interactions among students allow them to support each other and reach higher cognitive potential. As Bruner emphasizes, active learning and discovery are key to building deep understanding. In cooperative groups, students are actively involved in constructing knowledge through dialogue and social interactions (Tohari & Rahman, 2024).

2. Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory is a psychological concept emphasizing the importance of observation and imitation in the learning process (Wahyuni et al., 2022). This means that we learn from personal experience but also by observing the behavior of others, especially those we consider role models or figures of influence. Bandura highlights the crucial role of modeling and reinforcement in the learning

process. In a cooperative environment, students observe and imitate prosocial behaviors of their peers, such as cooperation and mutual assistance. This process reinforces positive social norms. (Lubis *et al.*, 2023).

3. Motivation Theory

The theory of cooperation motivation is a concept that attempts to explain why and how humans are driven to engage in cooperation. Cooperation is a social value unique to Indonesia, which represents collective efforts to overcome challenges, reflects collaboration in achieving common goals, and indicates a spirit of helping one another to solve problems (Khairunisa & Utami, 2023). Maslow and Alderfer, in their motivation theories, emphasize the importance of human social needs (Zebua, 2021). Cooperative learning meets the need for belonging and social attachment, enhancing students' intrinsic learning motivation.

4. Cognitive Development Theory

Cognitive development theory helps understand how human thinking develops. By understanding this theory, we can better appreciate the differences in thinking at each stage of age and provide appropriate support (Almadani, 2022). Piaget emphasized that social interaction is the main catalyst in children's cognitive development (Khoiruzzadi & Prasetya, 2021). In cooperative groups, exchanging ideas and diverse perspectives stimulates more complex cognitive development.

Through this activity, students develop practical skills and strengthen important social values such as cooperation, empathy, and shared responsibility. This learning approach is practical in building the character of *gotong royong*, which is one of the essential values in Indonesian community life, while also providing practical benefits such as improved social skills, active participation, a sense of responsibility, and the quality of interactions among students.

Research on enhancing *gotong royong* in cooperative learning provides several practical benefits in applying the cooperative learning model in the classroom. Below are some of these practical benefits.

1. Improving students' social skills

Cooperative learning helps students develop social skills such as communication, collaboration, and problem-solving collaboratively. Students become more capable of working effectively in teams, interacting well with peers, and managing conflicts better. These are important social skills needed outside the classroom and in everyday life.

2. Enhancing student participation and engagement

With cooperative learning, each student has a clear role and a significant contribution within the group, encouraging them to participate actively. This increases student engagement in learning activities, ensuring they do not feel neglected and are more motivated to learn. This can enhance learning outcomes and student satisfaction with the educational process.

3. Strengthening a sense of responsibility

Cooperative learning instills a sense of individual responsibility for the group's success, motivating students to contribute their maximum effort. Students learn to become more responsible for their tasks and commitments, which can be translated into academic and other activities at school.

4. Enhancing the quality of student interactions

The cooperative learning model emphasizes positive student interactions through group activities that require collaboration. This helps build better relationships among students, reduces social isolation, and creates a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

5. Fostering a spirit of *gotong royong* and empathy

Through cooperative learning, students learn to help each other and understand the perspectives of their peers. This fosters a spirit of *gotong royong* and empathy, essential in social life and work culture, while strengthening positive values that contribute to character development.

6. Providing effective classroom management strategies

The cooperative learning model offers a structured approach to classroom management by dividing students into groups and assigning specific tasks. This makes it easier for teachers to manage the class and organize learning activities, ensuring that each student is engaged in the learning process..

By understanding the practical benefits of this research, teachers and educators can be more effective in implementing the cooperative learning model in the classroom, thus achieving better educational outcomes and supporting the holistic development of students.

The Relationship Between Cooperative Learning and the Strengthening of the Value of *Gotong Royong*

The relationship between cooperative learning and strengthening the value of *gotong royong* is intrinsically linked. Through intensive social interaction within groups, students develop essential interpersonal skills such as communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution (Akmaliah et al., 2022). Furthermore, the shared responsibility in achieving group goals fosters a sense of ownership and concern for collective well-being. The value of mutual assistance, which underpins cooperative learning, aligns with the spirit of *gotong royong*. Finally, meaningful and relevant learning experiences encourage students to apply their knowledge and skills in broader social contexts.

Advantages, Challenges, and Solutions Faced by Teachers in the Implementation of the Cooperative Learning Model

Based on the results of interviews and observations, several advantages, challenges, and solutions were identified in implementing the cooperative learning model faced by teachers. Detailed information is provided in **Table 2**.

Table 2. Advantages, Challenges, and Solutions Faced by Teachers in the Implementation of the Cooperative Learning Model

No	Advantages	Challanges	Solutions
1	It can train students to work together in order to achieve learning goals and adhere to group norms, such as mutual respect and appreciation among group members.	Some students are more dominant within the group, which causes other students to participate less.	Role rotation: The teacher can implement role rotation within the group so that all students can be the leader, secretary, or reporter.
2	Based on the results of the teacher interviews, cooperative learning can enhance students' critical thinking skills.	Differences in students' abilities and the disparity in abilities among students in the group make some students feel bored.	Formation of heterogeneous groups: Students with different abilities can complement and learn from one another by forming heterogeneous groups.
3	It increases students' motivation to learn, as stated in the class teacher's interview "peserta didik cenderung lebih termotivasi ketika bekerja dalam kelompok. Mereka saling mendukung, berbagi ide, dan membantu satu sama lain."	Limited time, cooperative learning requires considerable time, making it difficult to achieve all learning objectives within the limited time available.	Use of aids: The teacher can use various aids such as task cards, worksheets, or presentations to help students manage their time and tasks.
4	It also boosts students' self-confidence, as they receive support	Because of a lack of individual responsibility, some students may tend to rely on other group	Individual and group evaluation: The teacher can conduct individual and group evaluations

No	Advantages	Challenges	Solutions
	from their groupmates and feel more confident.	members, which reduces individual responsibility.	to ensure that all students are responsible for their learning outcomes.

Source: Research 2023

The cooperative learning model has various advantages and challenges in its implementation in the classroom, as illustrated in **Table 2**. One of its main strengths is the ability to train students to collaborate and adhere to group norms, although sometimes domination by a few students may occur. Teachers can implement a role rotation system within the group to address this. This method has also proven effective in enhancing students' critical thinking skills; however, differences in students' abilities may lead to boredom. The solution is to form heterogeneous groups, allowing students to complement and learn from one another.

Enhancing learning motivation is also a significant advantage of this model, as students support each other and share ideas. However, time limitations often pose a challenge in achieving all learning objectives. The use of teaching aids such as task cards or worksheets can help manage time and tasks more efficiently. In addition, cooperative learning also plays a role in boosting students' self-confidence through the support of their group members. Nevertheless, problems may arise due to a lack of individual responsibility, as some students rely on other group members. To address this, teachers can conduct evaluations both individually and in groups, ensuring that each student is accountable for their learning outcomes. Educators can optimize their benefits by understanding the advantages, challenges, and solutions in implementing this cooperative learning model while minimizing potential issues. A balanced and adaptive approach in applying this method can significantly enhance the quality of learning and the development of students' social skills.

Schools, as places for developing noble values, must emphasize the importance of improving discipline and order within the school environment. This is crucial given the frequent disciplinary violations by students (Saventino *et al.*, 2023). Teachers can train students to collaborate in achieving learning goals and adhere to group norms, such as respecting one another and others within the group. Therefore, the enforcement of discipline and order, as outlined in school regulations, must be prioritized. The increase in student activity, teacher involvement, and critical thinking skills in implementing the cooperative learning model in science subjects is due to the effectiveness of the learning process. This occurs because improvements are made in each learning cycle (Yuhana *et al.*, 2024). The cooperative learning approach can enhance student motivation by encouraging collaboration, active participation, and deeper student interaction. Through group collaboration, students feel more motivated to learn and contribute to the learning process (Jariyah, 2023).

Based on the results of teacher interviews, cooperative learning can improve students' critical thinking abilities, but several challenges still need to be addressed. In modern education, cooperative learning strategies have become a primary focus in enhancing student motivation. This method encourages collaboration and interaction among students, allowing them to learn together and support each other in achieving academic goals (Lathifa *et al.*, 2024). Increasing student motivation, as stated in the teacher's interview, "peserta didik cenderung lebih termotivasi ketika bekerja dalam kelompok. Mereka saling mendukung, berbagi ide, dan membantu satu sama lain." Lastly, with support from group members, students feel more confident. However, the cooperative learning model has some drawbacks. First, some students dominate the group, which causes other students to participate less. Second, the differences in students' abilities within the group make some students feel bored. Third, limited time, as cooperative learning requires a significant amount of time, making it difficult to achieve all learning objectives within the available time. Fourth, there is a lack of individual responsibility, as some students may tend to rely on

other group members, reducing their sense of individual responsibility (Ali, 2021). The solutions that can be offered include role rotation, group formation, learning aids, and evaluation.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the relatively short duration of the research may not be sufficient to observe the long-term effects of cooperative learning on the development of students' *gotong royong* character. Second, other uncontrolled variables, such as differences in teaching methods or students' socio-economic backgrounds, could influence the research results but were not fully identified. Third, the measurement of the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile) as a reference might still be unclear or difficult to assess qualitatively, which means the evaluation of the strengthening of *gotong royong* may not be accurate or consistent. Finally, not all students may actively participate in cooperative learning, so the research findings may not fully represent all students' experiences or reflect the cooperative approach's overall success.

CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that implementing the cooperative learning model significantly contributes to students' development of *gotong royong* character. First, there was an improvement in *gotong royong* skills, as evidenced by students' participation in group activities. Students learn to help each other, communicate, and collaborate more effectively through collaboration in completing tasks. These interactions not only enhance academic abilities but also strengthen solidarity and empathy among students. Students showed progress in their ability to work together across various group activities, such as projects, discussions, and other tasks. Second, implementing the cooperative learning model in this school involved strategies such as group formation, role assignment, and joint evaluations. These activities were designed to encourage active participation and collective responsibility, ultimately reinforcing the *gotong royong* values. Finally, this study supports the objectives of the *Merdeka Belajar* Curriculum, which emphasizes the importance of strengthening students' character. By integrating the values of *gotong royong* into the learning process, the school has succeeded in shaping students' character in alignment with the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile), where students demonstrate respect, tolerance, and the ability to cooperate effectively.

The recommendations from this study encompass several important aspects for developing the *gotong royong* character among students. Other schools are advised to consider implementing the cooperative learning model as a strategy for developing students' *gotong royong* character. Further research is also recommended to involve more schools with varying student backgrounds to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term effects of cooperative learning on student character. Long-term studies with extended durations are necessary to integrate changes in the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile) and assess the sustained effects of cooperative learning on the *gotong royong* character. It is important to control external variables such as teaching methods and student backgrounds to improve the accuracy and interpretation of research results. The development of more standardized and valid measurement tools for the *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* (Pancasila Student Profile) is also needed to ensure that the assessment of the enhancement of *gotong royong* is consistent and accurate. Researchers are also encouraged to develop more innovative cooperative learning methods to measure their impact on other character aspects, such as independence and creativity. To ensure that all students actively engage in cooperative learning, strategies for enhancing active participation need to be designed. This is crucial to ensure that every student benefits from cooperative activities, so that the learning objectives are achieved academically and in the development of students' character.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest related to the publication of this article and affirms that the data and content of the article are free from plagiarism.

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