

REVIEW

## Cognitive-Based Learning of Morals for Social Tolerance Character in Elementary School Students: A Systematic Literature Review

### Aprendizaje cognitivo de la moral para el desarrollo de la tolerancia social en estudiantes de primaria: una revisión sistemática de la literatura

Fitriyani<sup>1</sup> , Dede Rahmat Hidayat<sup>2</sup> , Ika Lestari<sup>3</sup> 

<sup>1</sup>Program studi Doktoral Pendidikan Dasar, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia.

<sup>2</sup>Program Studi Bimbingan dan Konseling Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia.

<sup>3</sup>Program studi Pendidikan Guru Sekolah Dasar, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia.

Cite as: Fitriyani, Hidayat DR, Lestari I. Cognitive-Based Learning of Morals for Social Tolerance Character in Elementary School Students: A Systematic Literature Review. Salud, Ciencia y Tecnología. 2025; 5:1715. <https://doi.org/10.56294/saludcyt20251715>

Submitted: 06-11-2024

Revised: 02-03-2025

Accepted: 09-06-2025

Published: 10-06-2025

Editor: Prof. Dr. William Castillo González 

Corresponding author: Fitriyani 

#### ABSTRACT

This study presents a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) aimed at analyzing the measurable contributions of cognitive-based learning to the development of social tolerance character in elementary school students. In response to increasing incidents of social intolerance among youth, this review synthesizes empirical findings from both national and international studies that explore the intersection of cognitive learning strategies, moral development, and inclusive education. Guided by the PICO framework—Population (elementary students), Intervention (cognitive-based learning), Comparison (conventional methods), and Outcome (improved social tolerance)—this study identifies effective instructional models such as moral dilemma discussions, perspective-taking exercises, and inclusive classroom practices. These strategies have been shown to significantly improve empathy, respect for diversity, and conflict resolution skills among young learners. Furthermore, the review utilizes bibliometric analysis via VOSviewer to map prevailing research themes, strengthening the evidence base and highlighting knowledge gaps. Implementation challenges such as limited teacher training, insufficient policy support, and lack of resources are also addressed. The article concludes with strategic recommendations for integrating cognitive-based learning into character education curricula, emphasizing cross-sector collaboration among educators, policymakers, and families. The novelty of this study lies in its methodological integration of thematic and bibliometric analysis, and in offering a practical framework for enhancing moral and social competence through structured cognitive learning in diverse educational settings.

**Keywords:** Cognitive-Based Learning; Social Tolerance; Character Education; Elementary School; Moral Development; Inclusive Education.

#### RESUMEN

Esta investigación es una revisión sistemática de la literatura (Revisión Sistemática de la Literatura/SLR) destinada a analizar la contribución del aprendizaje basado en la cognición en el desarrollo del carácter de tolerancia social entre los estudiantes de la escuela primaria. En medio de la creciente intolerancia social y la importancia de la educación del carácter inclusivo, este estudio revisa críticamente la literatura académica que analiza la relación entre el desarrollo moral, la teoría del aprendizaje social y las estrategias de aprendizaje cognitivo. El enfoque PICO se utilizó para aclarar el enfoque del estudio, con la población compuesta por estudiantes de escuela primaria, intervenciones de aprendizaje basadas en la cognición, una comparación con enfoques convencionales y resultados en forma de un carácter de tolerancia social mejorado.

Los hallazgos muestran que estrategias como las discusiones de dilemas morales, la adopción de perspectivas y la creación de entornos de aprendizaje inclusivos son eficaces para fomentar la empatía, el respeto mutuo y las habilidades de resolución de conflictos. La visualización de datos con VOSviewer fortalece el mapeo de temas dominantes, mientras que la síntesis temática revela desafíos de implementación, como la falta de formación docente y de apoyo institucional. Este artículo contribuye al desarrollo de currículos de carácter basados en evidencia y proporciona recomendaciones estratégicas para educadores, formuladores de políticas e investigadores para optimizar la integración de enfoques cognitivos en la educación del carácter. La novedad de este estudio radica en mapear las últimas estrategias en el contexto de la educación primaria y el fortalecimiento metodológico a través de la combinación del enfoque PICO y el análisis bibliométrico.

**Palabras clave:** Aprendizaje Cognitivo; Tolerancia Social; Educación del Carácter; Escuela Primaria; Desarrollo Moral; Educación Inclusiva.

## INTRODUCTION

Character education at the elementary school level is becoming increasingly important in the context of rapidly growing globalization and multiculturalism. In this context, the character of social tolerance is one of the fundamental aspects that needs to be instilled in children. Effective character education must be able to develop moral and social values that support harmonious living in a diverse society.<sup>(2)</sup> Research shows that the application of cognitive-based learning can increase students' moral understanding and social tolerance.<sup>(1)</sup> The integration of 21st century character values is carried out on three bases, namely class, school culture and society. The positive impact of integration, namely: balanced cognitive abilities, sensitivity to the surrounding environment is built, self-confidence is formed, empathy is formed, a soul full of responsibility is developed, and emotional intelligence is possessed.<sup>(3)</sup> Therefore, this article aims to review existing literature regarding cognitive-based learning in developing the character of social tolerance in elementary school students.

The importance of cognitive-based learning in character education cannot be separated from the understanding that character is formed through experience and structured learning. According to Bandura, social learning theory states that individuals learn from their social environment, including applicable norms and values.<sup>(4)</sup> In the school context, cognitive-based learning can help students understand and apply moral values and develop an attitude of tolerance towards differences.<sup>(5)</sup> This is very relevant considering that Indonesia is a country with various ethnicities, religions and cultures.

Recent studies show an alarming rise in intolerance among children and teenagers around the world. According to a UNESCO report (2022), schools in several countries have become hot spots for discriminatory attitudes, with increasing cases of bullying based on religion, ethnicity and gender identity.<sup>(6)</sup> This trend is reinforced by findings from the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD), which highlight how online platforms, especially social media, expose young people to hate speech and extremist ideologies at an early age.<sup>(7)</sup> Furthermore, a global study by the OECD (2021) on student well-being revealed that many students feel unsafe or excluded because of their cultural or religious background, indicating increasing polarization among young people.<sup>(8)</sup> These international findings point to a broader pattern in which intolerance is not only reproduced but also normalized in youth environments, both online and offline.

This study aims to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize scientific literature that measures the effectiveness of cognitive-based learning in shaping the character of social tolerance among elementary school students. Specifically, the study sets out to (1) identify learning models that have demonstrated measurable success in fostering social tolerance; (2) analyze the implementation challenges and enabling factors of these models in elementary education settings; and (3) formulate practical, evidence-based recommendations for integrating cognitive-based learning into character education curricula. In doing so, this article seeks to support the development of a more adaptive and inclusive curriculum by presenting a synthesis of empirical findings. It also aims to guide educators, policymakers, and researchers in applying these insights to promote the growth of tolerant, empathetic, and socially resilient learners. The novelty of this study lies in its use of the PICO approach to structure the literature analysis and in providing a VOSviewer-based thematic visualization, which enhances the methodological clarity and practical relevance of the findings.

## METHOD

This research uses a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach to examine the contribution of cognitive-based learning in shaping the social tolerance character of elementary school students. This study begins with the formulation of the main research question: how does cognitive-based learning contribute to the development of the character of social tolerance in elementary school students? To answer this question, the PICO approach was applied to clarify the focus of the study, namely: Population (P) is elementary school students, Intervention

(I) is cognitive-based learning, Comparison (C) is a non-cognitive or conventional approach, and Outcome (O) is the development of the character of social tolerance.<sup>(9)</sup>

Inclusion criteria included articles published between 2000 and 2024, written in English or Indonesian, and focused on basic education, moral development, and cognitive-based learning strategies. Empirical and theory-based articles, as well as educational program evaluation reports are included.<sup>(9)</sup> Conversely, articles that were not peer-reviewed, were duplicates, or were not relevant to the main theme were excluded.

Data analysis was carried out through thematic synthesis of selected articles,<sup>(10)</sup> and supported by trend visualization using VOSviewer software.<sup>(11)</sup> This analysis aims to identify dominant themes and patterns of contribution of cognitive learning to the formation of the character of social tolerance at the basic education level.

This article takes data based on metadata from several research articles that have been carried out previously, the following results were obtained.

Year	Scimago Journal Rank						Sub Total
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	NQ	NI	
2020	1	0	1	6	0	96	104
2021	1	2	1	0	0	112	116
2022	2	1	0	0	0	145	148
2023	1	0	3	2	0	236	242
2024	0	0	0	0	0	347	347
2025	0	0	0	0	0	43	43
Total results							1000

Figure 1. Dates

The Scimago Journal Rank table above presents the distribution of articles published in reputable journals based on quartiles (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4), uncategorized journals (NQ), and non-indexed journals (NI) during the period 2020 to 2025, with a total of 1000 articles. This data provides an overview of the trend in the quality of publications in that period, which discuss moral cognitive learning to build the character of social tolerance.

In 2020, of the total of 104 articles discussing this topic, the majority were published in non-indexed (NI) journals with 96 articles, while the rest were spread across reputable journals in Q1 to Q4 quartiles, with Q4 dominating with 6 articles. The following year, namely 2021, shows an increase in the quality of publications with the discovery of articles in Q1 (1 article), Q2 (2 articles), and Q3 (1 article), while the other 112 articles still come from non-indexed journals.

In the first stage, the article identification and search process was carried out through several electronic databases, including: Google Scholar, Academia, ResearchGate, Publish or Perish, Elsevier, Wiley, Emerald, ERIC, and Sage. A comprehensive search produced 347 articles based on a number of key words entered, namely “moral cognition”, “moral character”, “social tolerance character”, “social tolerance and character strengthening”, and “student character in the 21st century”. Apart from that, keywords that have equivalent meanings were also noted, such as “cognitive learning technology”. Additional keywords used included “moral cognitive learning”.

Based on the identification of articles that have been carried out, there is a synthesis or results obtained, namely: The four psychological stages in Piaget’s theory of cognitive development are not knowledge itself, but rather a set of mechanisms that enable knowledge to be achieved. According to this theory, these stages will be formed completely by the entire human mind from infancy to early adulthood. Environmental influences, cultural changes, advances in various content areas, didactic techniques, technology, and the like can influence the formation of structures in various ways, especially in terms of the speed of their formation, but do not fundamentally influence the process. Subsequent analysis Social cognitive theory provides a conceptual

framework for agents to examine the determinants and mechanisms of these influences.<sup>(12)</sup> Human behavior is often explained in terms of one-way cause-and-effect relationships. In this conception, behavior is shaped by environmental events as determining factors that interact and influence each other in two directions.<sup>(13)</sup> The educational process can be identified with growth or development, not only physically but also intellectually and morally. Theories regarding the four basic dimensions of religion—namely Belief (*Belief*), Attachment (*Attachment*), Behavior (*Behavior*), and Sense of Belonging (*Belonging*)—along with accompanying cognitive, emotional, moral, and social motives and functions, are used to investigate cross-cultural consistencies. The behaviorist perspective and its influence on moral behavior has been challenged by the cognitive development approach, which states that moral behavior cannot be understood in its entirety without also examining the structural aspects of human cognition. In addition, situational factors and how cognitive and affective processes guide moral decision making are also important concerns in this approach.<sup>(14)</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study are presented in several important points including: 1. Cognitive-Based Learning and Moral Development; 2. Social Tolerance and Its Importance in Education; and 3. Strategies for Implementing Cognitive-Based Learning in Character Education.

### 1. Cognitive-Based Learning and Moral Development

Character education at the elementary level is becoming increasingly essential in the context of rapid globalization and growing multiculturalism. Within this framework, the development of social tolerance stands out as a fundamental aspect that must be instilled in children from an early age. According to <sup>(15)</sup> effective character education should foster moral and social values that support harmonious coexistence in diverse societies.

Studies indicate that cognitive-based learning approaches can enhance students' moral understanding and social tolerance.<sup>(1,16)</sup> Therefore, this article aims to conduct a systematic review of the literature concerning the role of cognitive-based learning in developing social tolerance among elementary school students.

The importance of cognitive-based learning in character education is rooted in the understanding that character is shaped through structured experiences and learning processes. According to <sup>(13)</sup> social learning theory asserts that individuals acquire knowledge and behavior from their social environment, including its norms and values. In the context of schools, cognitive-based learning can assist students in understanding and applying moral values, as well as in cultivating attitudes of tolerance toward differences. This is particularly relevant in Indonesia, a nation characterized by a rich diversity of ethnicities, religions, and cultures.

Recent statistics reveal an increasing trend of intolerance among children and adolescents. A survey conducted by the Setara Institute at 2020 found that 40 % of Indonesian teenagers displayed intolerant attitudes towards minority groups.<sup>(17)</sup> This alarming figure underscores the need for more effective educational approaches to foster social tolerance. Consequently, this study aims to examine various cognitive-based learning strategies implemented in elementary schools and assess their impact on the development of students' social character.

This review will systematically analyze relevant literature, including previous studies on cognitive-based learning, character education, and social tolerance. Through this approach, it is expected to identify effective educational models for enhancing the social character of elementary students. The study will also explore the challenges and opportunities related to the implementation of cognitive-based learning in school environments.

Ultimately, this article seeks to contribute to the improvement of character education curricula and provide recommendations for educators, policymakers, and researchers. By understanding and implementing cognitive-based learning, it is hoped that students' social tolerance can be significantly enhanced, enabling them to grow into respectful, responsible individuals who contribute positively to society.

Cognitive-based learning is an approach that emphasizes mental processes in understanding and processing information. In the context of character education, this learning focuses on how students can internalize moral values through critical thinking and reflection. According to Piaget <sup>(18)</sup> children's cognitive development occurs in several stages, where they begin to be able to understand more complex moral concepts as they grow older. This shows that cognitive-based learning can be adapted to students' developmental stages to ensure a deep understanding of morality. In psychology, morality is understood as individual behavior evaluated based on given socio-moral norms, or as any behavior determined by morally good motives and affects.<sup>(14)</sup> Moral education can be conceptualized as intercultural education that is closely related to their cultural values and ethnic identity, so moral education is needed to increase understanding and respect for other people.<sup>(19)</sup>

Cognitive moral development, often called moral reasoning, originates from the fields of cognitive developmental psychology and moral psychology. The early work done by Jean Piaget studying children's cognitive abilities to make moral judgments as they grow and mature created the foundation for the later work of Lawrence Kohlberg and James Rest in studying the moral reasoning abilities of adults. Thus, moral reasoning refers to the cognitive process of how a person reasons about ethical situations.<sup>(20)</sup> Morality is embedded in our



way of life, in ways that range from how we treat each other in everyday interactions.<sup>(21)</sup>

The education system provides students with the opportunity to equip themselves with moral values, skills and competencies that assist them in making positive personal and societal changes. To this end, teachers play an important role as moral agents, and students consider teachers as role models. Therefore, teachers' understanding and beliefs regarding moral education play an important role in shaping students' personalities.

<sup>(22)</sup> Piaget claims that the child, having reached the stage of formal, logical operations, reaches the final stage of mental development. Vygotsky on the other hand, saw the development of the mind as a lifelong process that depends on our capacity to arm and rearm human cultural/psychological and historical tools as we grow, as an aid to holistic development.<sup>(23)</sup>

One way to apply cognitive-based learning in character education is through the use of case studies and group discussions. Research by <sup>(24)</sup> shows that this method can improve students' ability to analyze moral situations and consider various perspectives. For example, in a case study regarding conflict between friends, students can be invited to discuss and find solutions that reflect the values of tolerance and empathy. Thus, students not only learn about morality, but also how to apply it in real situations. Moral cognitive development is characterized by changes in reasoning, feelings, and behavior regarding standards of right and wrong. The cognitive moral approach through dilemma stories can also be tested to develop moral education at all levels of education.<sup>(25)</sup> While storybooks are often used as pedagogical tools to convey moral lessons to children, the ability to spontaneously extract the "moral" of a story develops relatively slowly. In contrast, children tend to describe stories at a concrete level - highlighting surface features and downplaying more abstract themes.<sup>(26)</sup>

Spiritual and moral education is a national teaching about students' spiritual and moral values.<sup>(27)</sup> Moral cognitive development is characterized by changes in reasoning, feelings, and behavior regarding standards of right and wrong. The intrapersonal dimension in moral development regulates a person's activities when involved in social interactions and the interpersonal dimension regulates social interactions and conflict resolution.<sup>(28)</sup> Through rewards and punishment, children know which behavior is right and wrong, so that it has an impact on the child's character effectively and efficiently to be applied in everyday life,<sup>(29)</sup> through rewards children are more confident and brave in making decisions, while punishment can be done through behavioral actions, education and strengthening motivation to avoid unwanted behavior.

Data from research conducted by Durlak et al. menshow that social-emotional education programs integrated with cognitive-based learning can improve students' social skills and tolerance attitudes.<sup>(29)</sup> In the study, students who took part in a character education program showed significant improvements in their ability to collaborate and appreciate differences. This shows that cognitive-based learning can be an effective tool for building positive social character among students. Another example of the application of cognitive-based learning in character education can be seen in the "Character Counts!" which is implemented in several schools in the United States. The program teaches six core values: honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and citizenship. Through a cognitive-based approach, students are invited to understand and discuss these values in the context of everyday life, so that they can internalize and apply them in their social interactions. moral character, followed by "parental relationships," "teacher-student relationships," and "volunteer activities." The findings suggest that the government needs to organize and provide effective educational methods that take into account parent relationships, student-teacher relationships, and "voluntary activities" to improve the morality of elementary school students in the future.<sup>(30)</sup>

Although cognitive-based learning shows a lot of potential in developing social character, challenges remain. One of the main challenges is the lack of training for teachers in implementing this method effectively. The success of a character education program is highly dependent on teacher competence in designing and implementing cognitive-based learning.<sup>(31)</sup> Therefore, it is important to provide adequate support and training for educators so that they can make optimal use of this approach.

## 2. Social Tolerance and Its Importance in Education

Social tolerance is the ability to appreciate and accept differences in a diverse society. In the educational context, developing social tolerance is very important to create an inclusive and harmonious learning environment. According to a report from UNICEF (2017), education that teaches the values of tolerance can help reduce conflict and violence in schools, as well as strengthen social cohesion in society. Therefore, character education that focuses on social tolerance must be a priority in the basic education curriculum. social learning patterns differ as a function of whether children are exposed to positively or negatively valued information (e.g., content; informant characteristics) and that these patterns can be understood in the context of children's schemas for social groups, morality, and trait understanding.<sup>(32)</sup>

Statistics show that conflict between groups in schools is often triggered by a lack of understanding and tolerance for differences. Students who have a good understanding of the values of tolerance tend to be better able to resolve conflicts in a constructive way.<sup>(33,34)</sup> In the study, students involved in a character education program that emphasized social tolerance showed a significant reduction in incidents of bullying and conflict

between friends.

Social cognitive theory adopts a cognitive interaction perspective on moral phenomena.<sup>(13)</sup> Moral reasoning is a process in which multidimensional rules or standards are used to judge behavior. Situations with moral implications contain many decision elements that can be given lower or greater weight depending on the standards used to cognitively process them and the particular constellation of events in a particular moral situation. Moral behavior is motivated and regulated primarily by the ongoing exercise of self-reactive influence.

Social tolerance education is not only beneficial for individuals, but also for society as a whole. According to research conducted by <sup>(35)</sup> societies that have a high level of tolerance tend to be more cohesive and productive. This shows that character education that teaches the values of tolerance can contribute to the development of a better and more peaceful society. In the context of Indonesia, which is known for its motto “Bhinneka Tunggal Ika”, social tolerance education is very crucial to maintaining unity in diversity. A concrete example of the importance of social tolerance education can be seen in the programs implemented in schools in Indonesia, such as the “Peace School” program developed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This program aims to create a safe and inclusive school environment, where students are taught to respect differences and resolve conflicts peacefully. Evaluation results show that schools implementing this program experienced a significant reduction in violent incidents and an increase in mutual respect among students.

Although social tolerance education has many benefits, challenges in its implementation remain. One of the main challenges is the existence of stereotypes and prejudices that are deeply rooted in society. Therefore, it is important to create opportunities for students to interact and learn from each other in a supportive and safe atmosphere.

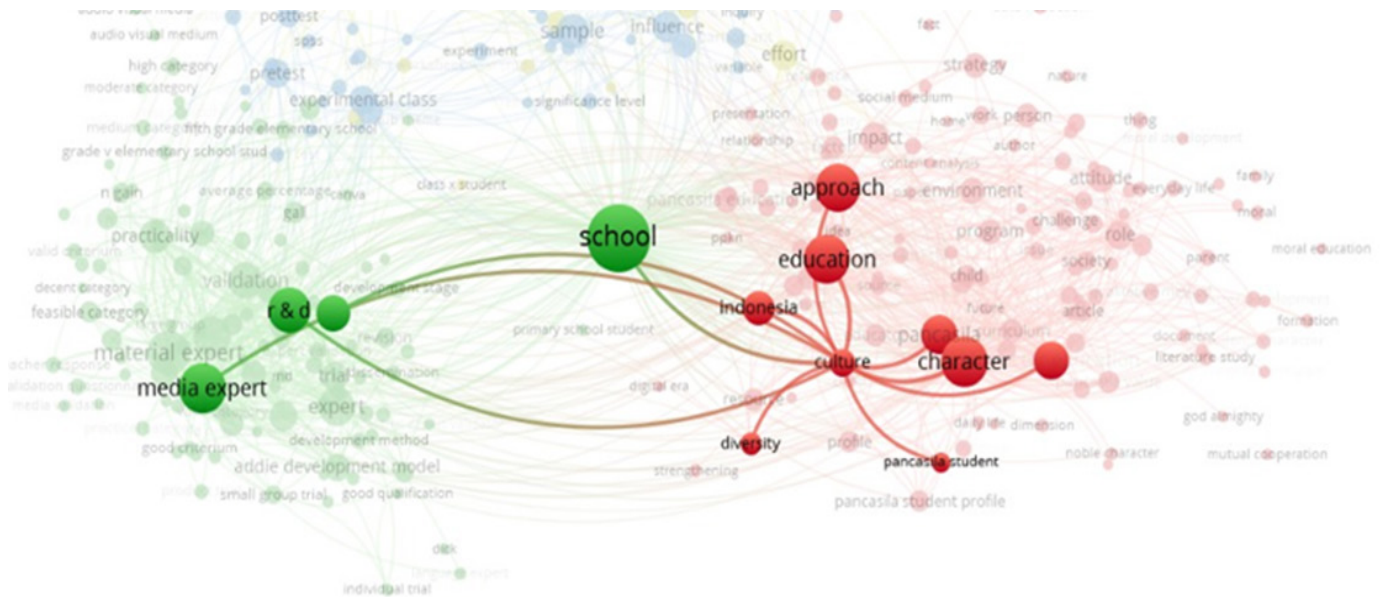
### 3. Strategies for Implementing Cognitive-Based Learning in Character Education

Implementation of cognitive-based learning in character education requires appropriate strategies to ensure its effectiveness. One strategy that can be used is the integration of cognitive-based learning with the existing curriculum. According to Dewey, education must be relevant to students’ experiences and their social context.<sup>(36)</sup> By integrating moral and social values into the subjects taught, students can more easily understand and internalize these values. The use of technology in learning can also increase the effectiveness of cognitive-based learning. Research by Hattie shows that the use of technology can increase student engagement and facilitate deeper learning.<sup>(37)</sup> For example, the use of online learning platforms can provide students with access to multiple sources of information and assist them in analyzing moral situations from multiple perspectives. Thus, technology can be an effective tool in supporting cognitive-based learning.

Apart from that, collaboration between teachers, parents and the community is also very important in supporting the implementation of cognitive-based learning. Research by Epstein shows that parental and community involvement in education can increase student motivation and achievement.<sup>(38)</sup> Therefore, it is important to involve all parties in developing cognitive-based character education programs, so that students can receive consistent support in various environments. Examples of other strategies that can be implemented are the use of active learning methods, such as group discussions, role plays, and collaborative projects. Research by Prince shows that active learning methods can increase student engagement and help them develop social and emotional skills.<sup>(39)</sup> By using this method, students can learn to work together, respect differences, and resolve conflicts constructively. Drawing on Piaget’s theory and related empirical research, the development of perspective taking, autonomy, and self-regulation, as well as examining the impact of various teaching and parenting practices on children’s moral development can provide examples of autonomous moral reasoning and behavior in preschool and early elementary grade children, and explain how teachers can encourage optimal moral development through the establishment of a socio-moral atmosphere in which mutual respect is continuously practiced.<sup>(40)</sup> Teachers’ beliefs about teaching character values are very important in cultivating strong student characters starting from an early age in the elementary school environment, through good habits that can be applied in students’ daily lives.<sup>(41)</sup>

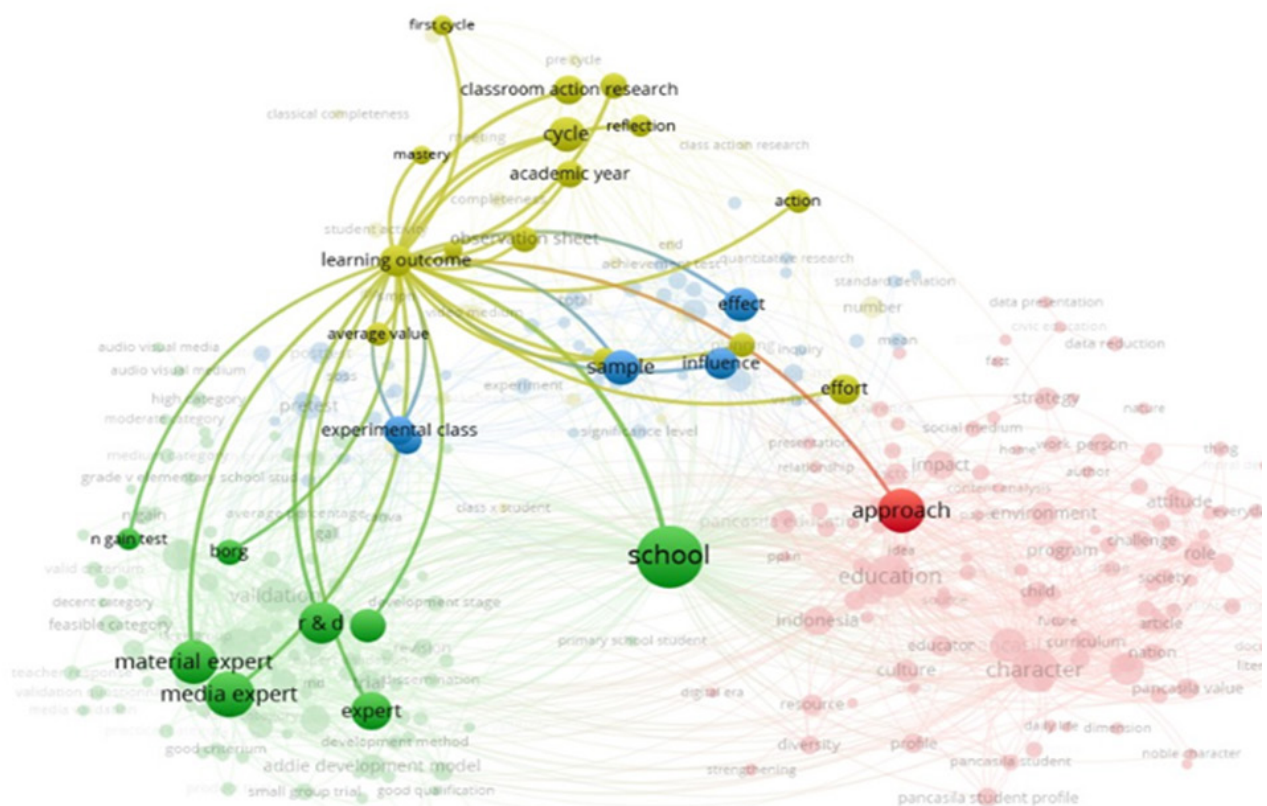
Although many strategies can be implemented, challenges in their implementation remain. One of the main challenges is the lack of resources and support for teacher training in implementing cognitive-based learning. Research by Darling-Hammond shows that quality training for teachers can improve teaching effectiveness and student learning outcomes.<sup>(42)</sup> Therefore, it is important to provide adequate support and resources for teachers so that they can successfully implement cognitive-based learning in character education. Character education in elementary schools is carried out well with various efforts and can be done in various ways. The ways schools can do this can be verbal or non-verbal, including integration in self-development programs, integration in subjects, and integration in school culture. Integrating the value of caring in self-development programs through school activities including routine, spontaneous, exemplary, and conditioning.<sup>(43)</sup>

This article takes data based on metadata from several research articles that have been carried out previously, the following results were obtained:



**Figure 2.** VosViewer Corelation of Culture and student character

In figure 2, the VosViewer results show that culture can shape student character. Character education is a learning outcome that is formed from the learning process, with good habits carried out in students' daily lives and the presence of cultural factors which are also one of the backgrounds for being able to unite diversity within the school environment. This can be started by conducting research and development research to be able to produce learning media that is effective and in accordance with student needs through validation tests from media experts (experts) that suit the level of student needs.



**Figure 3. VosViewer Correlation of Learning Outcomes and School Environment**

In figure 3, the VosViewer results show learning outcomes that can be correlated with the school environment, the role of research and development in producing learning media which is supported by validation test results by experts to help the learning process in schools be effective.



Based on the VosViewer results, it was found that the results of learning, especially those oriented towards Pancasila education, are to shape students' character, through an approach to learning, one of which is learning media which can help the process of understanding and learning in the classroom with a diversity of both characteristics and students' cognitive abilities. Cognitive-based and constructivist learning methods, particularly moral dilemma discussions and multicultural/religious moderation programs, show strong evidence in encouraging moral reasoning and social tolerance among elementary school students, with important contributions from research emphasizing Vygotskian scaffolding, perspective taking, and inclusive classroom environments. Cognitive and constructivist-based strategies, particularly discussions of moral dilemmas and inclusive and culturally sensitive programs, have strong support for fostering moral reasoning and tolerance in elementary school-aged children, although long-term studies and cross-cultural frameworks are still needed for refinement. Cognitive-based and constructivist learning methods, particularly moral dilemma discussions and multicultural/religious moderation programs, show strong evidence for fostering moral reasoning and social tolerance among elementary school students, with important contributions from research emphasizing scaffolding, perspective taking, and Vygotskian inclusive classroom environments. As classrooms continue to diversify, there is an increasing need to understand children's inclusive behavior and moral reasoning. Epistemic beliefs (beliefs about knowing and knowing) can influence reasoning for adults, but we know little about this relationship in younger children or how classroom context relates to epistemic beliefs for moral reasoning.<sup>(44)</sup> Collaboration between schools, teachers and parents plays an important role in forming attitudes of tolerance and inclusivity through religious moderation education in elementary schools. This study concludes that instilling the values of religious moderation at the basic level is a practical approach to fostering a more peaceful and harmonious society in the future.<sup>(45)</sup> A constructivist perspective on social and moral development to examine how children's social interactions with computer technology can be used to improve their moral education.<sup>(46)</sup> The role of schools with an inclusive-based environment that always innovates in implementing interesting learning models can be an important foundation in forming tolerance for diversity among students in elementary schools.<sup>(47)</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Cognitive-based learning plays a measurable and strategic role in fostering the social tolerance character of elementary school students. The reviewed studies indicate that structured approaches—such as moral dilemma discussions, perspective-taking exercises, and inclusive classroom practices—consistently enhance students' empathy, appreciation of diversity, and prosocial behavior. These outcomes demonstrate that cognitive strategies can be effectively integrated into character education with observable behavioral impacts. Bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer reinforces these findings by revealing dominant research themes related to moral development, inclusive school culture, and 21st-century character competencies.

Despite its potential, the implementation of cognitive-based learning faces practical obstacles, including insufficient teacher training, limited educational resources, and weak policy integration at the elementary level. To address these challenges, this study recommends concrete actions: embedding cognitive learning strategies into the formal curriculum, providing sustained professional development for educators, and involving parents and school communities in character-building initiatives.

This review offers an evidence-based foundation for designing a more adaptive, inclusive, and contextually relevant character education curriculum. Future research is encouraged to investigate the long-term effects of cognitive learning models and to conduct cross-cultural comparative studies, in order to further refine strategies for cultivating social tolerance in diverse primary education settings.

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#### **FINANCING**

The authors did not receive financing for the development of this research.

#### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

#### **AUTHORSHIP CONTRIBUTION**

*Conceptualization:* Fitriyani, Dede Rahmat Hidayat, Ika Lestari.

*Data curation:* Fitriyani, Ika Lestari.

*Formal analysis:* Fitriyani, Dede Rahmat Hidayat, Ika Lestari.

*Research:* Fitriyani, Dede Rahmat Hidayat, Ika Lestari.

*Methodology:* Fitriyani, Dede Rahmat Hidayat.

*Project management:* Fitriyani.

*Resources:* Fitriyani.

*Software:* Fitriyani.

*Supervision:* Dede Rahmat Hidayat, Ika Lestari.

*Validation:* Dede Rahmat Hidayat, Ika Lestari.

*Display:* Fitriyani.

*Drafting - original draft:* Fitriyani, Dede Rahmat Hidayat, Ika Lestari.

*Writing - proofreading and editing:* Fitriyani, Dede Rahmat Hidayat, Ika Lestari.