

Enhancing Students' Environmental Stewardship Through Teacher-Led Classroom Cleanliness Innovations At Sd Assunniyyah

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to explore teacher innovation in fostering students' love for the school environment through classroom cleanliness programs at SD Assunniyyah Kencong. A clean and comfortable school environment is a crucial element in creating a conducive learning atmosphere while shaping environmental awareness from an early age. This research employs a descriptive qualitative method, with data collected through observation and in-depth interviews. The results indicate that the teacher's role is vital in increasing student awareness through various innovations, such as creative class duty programs, cleanliness competitions, award systems, clean living practices, and the integration of environmental education into the curriculum. These innovations are proven effective in increasing student engagement in maintaining cleanliness and fostering a sense of belonging to the school. Program success is supported by active collaboration between teachers, students, and the school, despite challenges regarding low student awareness and limited facilities. It is concluded that teacher creativity is the determining factor in developing environmentally conscious characters in elementary students. This initiative must be implemented continuously with the support of all school members so that a culture of cleanliness becomes deeply ingrained in the students' character. Well-planned teacher innovation significantly influences the creation of a clean, healthy, and sustainable learning environment for the students' future.

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INTRODUCTION

The school environment is a significant factor influencing students' comfort and academic success. A clean, healthy, and comfortable school environment fosters an enjoyable atmosphere for learning (Aziz & Riyanto, 2025). which encourages students to feel at ease and more enthusiastic about attending classes. Conversely, an unkempt and poorly maintained school environment can cause discomfort and impede the teaching and learning process (Manda & Darmayanti, 2025). Therefore, all members of the school community, particularly teachers, must strive to instill a love for the environment in students from an early age. In primary education, character development is vital for shaping students' attitudes and behaviors. One essential trait that should be taught is environmental stewardship regarding school cleanliness (Rosela & Gunansyah, 2022). Environmental awareness can be cultivated through simple activities, such as maintaining classroom cleanliness, disposing of waste properly, carrying out classroom cleaning duties (piket), and caring for school facilities.

Classroom cleanliness is fundamental to establishing a healthy and conducive school environment. A clean classroom not only enhances comfort during lessons but also helps foster discipline, responsibility, and environmental consciousness among students (Biantoro & Istiqlal, 2025). Consequently, it is crucial to introduce the importance of classroom hygiene to primary school students from the outset so that they integrate these habits into their daily lives. Teachers play a pivotal role in character formation; beyond their role as instructors, they serve as mentors, motivators, guides, and models for students in practicing a clean lifestyle and environmental responsibility (Zachroh & Farhana, 2024). To enhance students' affinity for their school environment, teachers must employ creative strategies to motivate them to maintain the cleanliness of their classrooms and the school grounds. Such innovations may include implementing classroom sanitation programs, providing rewards for the cleanest classrooms, integrating environmental education into the curriculum, organizing communal cleaning events (gotong royong), and holding classroom cleanliness competitions. Through these initiatives, students go beyond theoretical learning to actively apply these principles in their daily school life (Wardhono et al., 2026).

SD Assunniyyah Kencong is committed to fostering environmental stewardship among its students through various active, student-involved classroom cleaning initiatives. Teachers provide guidance, encouragement, and routine practice to ensure students consistently maintain the cleanliness of their classrooms and the wider school environment. This program aims to build a sense of responsibility and strengthen students' connection to their school. However, during implementation, several challenges remain, such as a lack of awareness among some students and inconsistent discipline in carrying out scheduled cleaning duties.

Given these circumstances, it is necessary for teachers to adopt new methods and appropriate strategies to further motivate students to maintain cleanliness within the school environment (Alfani et al., 2024). One such innovation is the implementation of classroom cleanliness competitions, which aim to boost student enthusiasm for creating a clean and comfortable learning atmosphere. Based on this background, the author intends to examine the innovative strategies employed by teachers to foster students' love for the school environment through classroom cleanliness at SD Assunniyyah Kencong. This research is expected to be beneficial for the school, teachers, and students in cultivating a culture of environmental care and creating a clean, healthy, and comfortable learning environment.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. This approach was selected to provide an in-depth, systematic, and factual overview of teachers' innovations in fostering students' affinity for the school environment through classroom cleanliness programs at SD Assunniyyah Kencong (Rosyidah et al., 2026). Through this method, the researcher is able to explore the implementation process of the strategies, the challenges encountered, and students' responses in a narrative and contextual manner.

The subjects of this study consist of teachers and students at SD Assunniyyah Kencong, selected via purposive sampling based on their active roles in the execution of cleaning activities and the school's innovation programs. Primary data were collected through three main techniques: first, participant observation to directly observe teacher-student interactions and the implementation of classroom cleanliness. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers to explore perspectives on innovation strategies, and with students to understand their motivations and level of awareness. Third, documentation was gathered, including program plans, photographs of communal cleaning activities (gotong royong), and evaluation records from cleanliness competitions (Wahyudin & Darmiyanti, 2025).

Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model, which encompasses data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Ulfah & Subadi, 2021). Data reduction was performed by selecting and focusing on teacher innovations relevant to the development of environmental care character. Subsequently, the data were presented in the form of descriptive narratives to clarify behavioral patterns and the effectiveness of the applied strategies. The final stage involved verification to ensure the validity of the findings through source triangulation, which involved cross-referencing results from observations, interviews, and documentation. Thus, this study is expected to present a comprehensive portrait of teachers' strategic efforts in building a culture of discipline and environmental stewardship in primary education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on observations and interviews at SD Assunniyyah Kencong, it was found that teachers have implemented various strategic innovations to foster students' love for the school environment through two primary, sustainable programs.

Creative Classroom Duty Program

This program serves as the primary foundation for creating a healthy learning environment. Teachers organize a regular, rotating, and equitable duty schedule, which is mandatory twice daily: before learning activities commence and after the break.

Students on duty hold full responsibility for sweeping, organizing furniture, and ensuring classroom ventilation is clear. An additional disciplinary mechanism is in place, requiring cleaning duties after school hours for classes where litter is still found. Furthermore, teachers routinely conduct "trash hunting" activities before school dismissal and guide students in upcycling waste materials into decorations or creative waste bins.

Classroom Cleanliness Competition Innovation

To increase student enthusiasm, the school holds periodic classroom cleanliness competitions. Assessments are based on criteria including neatness, cleanliness, creativity, and daily consistency. This program does not merely create competition; rather, it serves as a platform for character building.

A tangible impact observed is a shift in student behavior; students are now more proactive in clearing litter independently without waiting for instructions, and they no longer leave trash inside their desk drawers. The competition has also proven to strengthen *gotong royong* (communal cooperation) and coordination among classmates. Providing appreciation or rewards to active classes is the key factor in motivating students to continuously maintain the comfort of their classrooms. Overall, this program has successfully transformed students' perceptions, moving from viewing cleanliness as an obligation to seeing it as a collective identity and a source of pride to be maintained together.

Discussion

A clean, well-organized, and beautiful school environment is a determinant factor in the quality of the learning process. Physical school conditions do not only provide comfort but, psychologically, are able to increase student concentration, facilitate the absorption of materials, and foster a sense of pride in the educational institution (Meiliani et al., 2025). Conversely, an unclean environment acts as a distraction that breaks focus, rendering the knowledge transfer process less than optimal (Narti, 2025). Therefore, the steps taken by SD Assunniyyah Kencong to intervene in classroom cleanliness are crucial preventive measures in education.

Character building regarding environmental care at the primary school

level must be instilled from an early age. In this developmental phase, educators hold a major responsibility not only to transfer knowledge according to the curriculum but also to act as agents of behavioral change (Rahayu & Muliawati, 2025). The role of teachers at SD Assunniyyah Kencong reflects the application of Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational concepts: *Ing ngarso sung tulodo* (to the front giving an example), *ing madyo mangun karso* (to the middle building motivation), and *tut wuri handayani* (to the back providing support). By providing direct examples, such as disposing of trash in its proper place, teachers act as primary models for students to emulate (Apriana & Rojali, 2024).

Teacher innovation through the creative duty program and cleanliness competitions demonstrates that the effectiveness of character education is highly dependent on a teacher's creativity in designing relevant learning scenarios (Mea, 2024). In the context of integrated learning, teachers are required not only to master the material but also to be capable of managing interesting methods, media, and learning activities (Baher et al., 2024). The cleanliness competition program implemented is not merely a contest, but a strategy to transform "obligation" into "need" and "pride." When students take pride in their classroom, they tend to be more responsible in maintaining the cleanliness of that environment (Solviana, 2025).

The positive impact of this program is reflected in student behavior, which is more disciplined and possesses collective awareness. The habit of maintaining cleanliness, practiced consistently at school such as "trash hunting" activities and fair duty distribution provides a transformative impact that is not limited to the classroom area but is expected to carry over into the home and community environments. Thus, the school functions as a center for forming a sustainable culture of clean living (Kaseger et al., 2026).

The success of the program at SD Assunniyyah Kencong affirms that the synergy between teachers as facilitators and motivators and students as active subjects is decisive for the success of character education (Wibowo & Salfadilah, 2026). Providing appreciation for students' efforts is also proven to be an effective strategy for maintaining long-term motivation (Triana et al., 2024). If this program continues to be developed with the support of the entire school community, a culture of clean living will become an ingrained norm for every student, creating a generation that is not only intellectual but also possesses high concern for the natural surroundings for the sake of a sustainable future.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the research conducted at SD Assunniyyah Kencong, it can be concluded that teacher innovations in classroom cleanliness programs play a vital role in fostering students' love for the school environment. The innovations implemented by teachers at SD Assunniyyah Kencong, specifically the classroom cleanliness competition, have proven effective in increasing student engagement in maintaining the cleanliness of the school environment particularly within the classrooms while enhancing students' sense of responsibility for classroom hygiene and strengthening cooperation and *gotong*

royong (communal collaboration) among classmates.

The results of this study demonstrate that this classroom cleanliness program not only results in a cleaner, healthier, and more comfortable learning environment, but also contributes significantly to character building. Traits such as discipline, responsibility, teamwork, social awareness, and a love for the environment are cultivated through consistent and continuous habituation. Furthermore, the habit of maintaining cleanliness at school is also instilled in the students' home and community lives.

The success of this program is supported by effective synergy between teachers, students, and school stakeholders. Teachers have succeeded in shifting students' perspectives, transforming the act of maintaining cleanliness from a mere obligation into a shared necessity and a source of pride. The provision of appreciation and rewards has also been a key factor in the program's success, as it effectively boosts student motivation and enthusiasm to consistently maintain the cleanliness and comfort of the school environment.

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