

CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES: THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION IN INDEPENDENT CURRICULUM AT ISLAMIC SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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ABSTRACT

Character education becomes the main focus of Islamic education at Islamic Senior High School (MAN) as an effort to form a generation of young people with good qualities and morals. This article explores the main problem faced in the implementation of education character in Madrasah Aliyah and effective strategies for overcoming challenges. A review of literature, study cases, and articles also identify the role of important stakeholders, such as teachers, parents, and communities, in strengthening the character of students. This analysis gives an outlook deep about how Madrasah Aliyah can become an institution of effective education in the form of appropriate character with Islamic values in the modern era. The purpose of implementing education character at tMadrasah Aliyah curriculum is to form Madrasah Aliyah students in order to become individuals who own strong Islamic characters, such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and work hard that are appropriate to the teachings of Islam. The novelty of this study is the development of Independent Curriculum in which the innovation of integrated curriculum in a holistic way between education, character, and learning academics, so values and character become an integral part of every lesson.

Keywords: Character Education, Implementation, Independent Curriculum

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INTRODUCTION

A crucial step in the growth of the human being is education. Education deals with the entire process of human learning through which knowledge is transmitted, faculties are taught, and various abilities are created, schooling is only one method of providing

education. Another definition of education is the act of teaching, the practice of instilling moral values in the mind, or the development of character (Adesemowo & Sotonade, 2022). The phrase "education" is wide and encompasses learning, teaching, experience, and knowledge. It is the process of gaining the information, abilities, attitudes, convictions, and routines that allow a person to advance and change throughout their life either for their own benefit or the benefit of society as a whole (Verma et al., 2023). It is a lifelong process of human learning with the goal of improving oneself. The goals and purposes of national education are outlined in Law Number 20 of 2003 Article 3 concerning the National Education System, which states that national education serves to educate the people of a nation while fostering the development of their abilities and forming their civilization with dignity (Dwi & Mukhamad Murdiono, 2020).

Then, education cannot be separated to character education as character education has become the main focus of attention in the context of Islamic education, especially at Madrasah Aliyah, as an effort to educate the younger generation so they are not only intelligent in an academic way but also have morals which is in line with Islamic values. The importance of character education in the sphere of education has grown (Sumiharsono et al., 2023). Character education, which is crucial to the formation and development of students' character, is an effort to teach religious, moral, and ethical principles to kids through the scientific method with the support of parents, educators, and the community (Yolanda Mutiara, 2023). The goal of character education, which has gained popularity recently, is to maximize students' moral behaviour (Singh, 2019).

An Islamic school in Indonesia known as a madrasah combines both general education and religious instruction into its curriculum. The Madrasah Aliyah is one of the kinds. Madrasah Aliyah are higher madrasahs, comparable to secondary schools. Here, the emphasis is still on teaching Arabic and religion, but general courses like physics, math, and languages are also included (Maryati et al., 2023). Madrasah Aliyah, as an education institution in intermediate level that integrates Islamic religious education with general curriculum, does not have quite enough answer in forming students' character and morality in accordance with Islamic teachings. In this context, implementing character education in Madrasah Aliyah is not regardless from a number of complex challenges. Challenges cover diverse understandings about draft of character education. This challenge requires the right strategy to overcome obstacles and assure the implementation of character education is effective. These strategies cover the development of holistic curriculum, training, and coaching for internal teachers, implementing character education, retaining close collaboration with parents and students, as well as building supportive madrasah environments in which strong character and morals are glorious.

This study aims to serve as a comprehensive review of the challenges faced as well as possible strategies applied in implementation of character education at Madrasah Aliyah. There are numerous significant aspects toward this part. The first aspect is the development of independent curriculum. Innovation in the development of integrated curriculum in a holistic way among education, character, and learning academics, so values and character become an integral part of every lesson. The second aspect is the utilization of technology and digital media in order to increase effectiveness in education, for example, by using an application or an online platform that provides interactive and interesting contents. The third aspect is the development of innovative learning model in

order to emphasize character formation through several approaches such as learning-based projects, learning-based problems, or learning-active method. By deepening understanding of internal challenges and strategies, it is expected that this study can contribute to enrich research about Islamic education and provide practical guides for practitioner education to increase effectiveness of character education in the madrasa.

METHODS

This study employed bibliographic review since it is possible for researcher for doing research references through series activity of data collection such as by reading, recording, and proceeding research data. The bibliographic review article is a retrospective, systematic approach to observational research that focuses on the selection, analysis, interpretation, and discussion of theoretical stances, findings, and conclusions found in recently published scientific articles on a chosen topic. The goal is to gather pertinent data that aids in problem-solving (Maryati et al., 2023). The research data study was displayed in a descriptive way. Therefore, this study used a qualitative approach. Unlike quantitative research, which uses numerical data to quantify and test hypotheses, qualitative research uses non-numeric data to explore and provide a deeper, more thorough, and detailed account of events (Borgstede & Scholz, 2021). The main source of research data was taken from scientific knowledge such as books, articles, journals as well as the internet, and related writings. There are several steps for doing library, namely: (1) searching primary and secondary sources, (2) processing data/citation references, (4) displaying data, (5) interpreting data, and (6) having conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The Greek verb "charassein," which meaning "to engrave," is where the word "character" originates. sculpting a persona is like sculpting hard iron surfaces or gemstones. Additionally, character which is characterized as a distinctive indication or behavioural pattern is formed (Pamungkas & Wantoro, 2020). Since character issues rank highest among life's concerns, character education that highlights religion's ethical component becomes applicable (Romijn et al., 2021). Broadly speaking, character education is the process of imparting positive ideals to pupils while fostering a stronger sense of self (Syarnubi et al., 2021). Character education is concerning to implement expected moral, ethical, and personality values in learning and student's daily life. Instilling in moral values that might be applied in everyday lives to students is the aim of character education (Banyumas, 2024). One component of the Indonesian educational system that is crucial for students before they face the real world is character education (Lindqvist et al., 2021). The deliberate, proactive efforts made by states, districts, and schools to inculcate in their children fundamental moral principles such as justice, accountability, kindness, and respect for oneself and others are known as character education (Singh, 2019).

There is a number of crucial aspects in implementing character education. The first aspect is planning. A key component of instructional management in schools is planning (Syahrin et al., 2021). This covers formulation of vision, mission, and objectives which include short and long periods. The second aspect is training. The teachers and school

staffs need to be trained to understand character education and how to implement it in learning and interacting with students effectively. The third aspect is integrating curriculum. Without the limitations that come with topic boundaries, children can pursue learning holistically with an integrated curriculum. Character education must be integrated appropriately in curriculum in the formal education. This can be achieved by developing learning units, activities, extracurriculars, and special programs that support learning values and characters.

The fourth aspect is consistent approach. Successful implementation needs consistency in all aspects of school life including learning, management class, social interaction, and outside activities class. The fifth aspect is role models in which the teachers and school staffs should become good figures in showing values and desired character. What they do should reflect values such as integrity, honesty, hard work, and empathy. The sixth aspect is evaluation and adjustment. It is crucial to evaluate the effectiveness of implementing character education. This can be conducted through a survey, observation class, and feedbacks from students, parents, as well as the school staffs. After having the results, it is required to adjust and improve character education in order that the goal can be reached optimally.

Implementing character education is not only teaching moral values but also creating a supportive environment to learn and develop character comprehensively. Implementing character education in the Independent Curriculum at Madrasah Aliyah (MA) is an effort to integrate Islamic morals, ethics, and personality values in the educational process for students. There are several aspects to implement character education in the context of Independent Curriculum in MA. The first aspect is selection of character values. This can be accomplished by choosing values that will be implanted in curriculum. The values include honesty, discipline, sincerity, love, help, and tolerance.

The second aspect is deep integration for every aspect of learning. The best approach is to integrate values and character in every lesson and school activities. For example, in Islamic education, some values such as taqwa (piety), patience, and sincerity can be taught through the study of Qur'an and hadith. Whereas, in other lessons, such as mathematics or science, values as thoroughness, working together, and honesty can be applied as well. The third aspect is learning-based project. One type of learning that is student-centered is called project-based learning (PjBL). Students participate actively during teaching and learning process. Students' problem-solving skills will be enhanced through this PjBL learning approach (Nurhidayah et al., 2021). In the context of MA, the projects can be designed to push students to apply Islamic values in solutions to social or environmental issues. The four aspect is learning material development in which the teachers need to develop learning material which includes character values. This can be performed by integrating moral stories or examples from the life of the Prophet Muhammad SAW and his companions.

The fifth aspect is integrating character education in the Independent Curriculum at Madrasah Aliyah. It is expected that students are not only capable of having knowledge academically but also growing into individuals who own morality based on Islamic teachings. Islamic education has a crucial role in developing character and morals in the industrial era 1.0 to 4.0. Character education needs to be strengthened since it is a necessary solution to the problems of the industrial era. 4.0 (Syarnubi et al., 2021).

Implementing values, character, and morals in the Islamic education curriculum is expected to form a generation that has high morality and is capable of adapting to changing times.

The sixth aspect is implementation process. Implementing character education into curriculum of Madrasah Aliyah faces a number of complex challenges. The first challenge is contextual challenge in Madrasah Aliyah. It deals with how to integrate values such as honesty, discipline, and tolerance. To overcome this challenge, a discussion as comprehensive approach needs to be done. The second challenge is integration of values into curriculum. To overcome this challenge, the values should be integrated into every lesson as one unit and are not separated one another. The third challenge is the involvement of parents and community. Parents and community should support the implementation of character education. The fourth challenge is evaluation and monitoring. In order to measure the effectiveness of implanting character education, continuous evaluation and monitoring should be conducted. The evaluation covers students' behaviour, learning methods, and feedbacks received from several holders. The fifth challenge is the utilization of technology. To overcome this challenge, the teachers can use applications, online platforms, or other digital media for conveying material regarding character education character.

Discussion

Implementing character education in the Independent Curriculum at Madrasah Aliyah (MA) faces a number of challenges and it needs to overcome with the right strategy. The first challenge of implementing character education is how to integrate religious values with universal character values without reducing substance from religious education. The solution can be achieved by having modules and special programs. The second challenge is the limitations of resources. There are numerous Madrasah Aliyah facing this challenge so that trained teachers and adequate infrastructure to support learning should be carried out. Then, the teaching materials should be developed too such as books. The third challenge is consistency in implementing character education. The school policy is required to be evaluated in order to reach continuity and consistency for implementing character education. Then, having a long-term plan can be a solution for being consistent as well. The fourth challenge is evaluation. It is challenging to measure and evaluate the success of implementing character education, thus continuous evaluation needs to be conducted. The fifth challenge is cultural and social challenge. Madrasah Aliyah is commonly located in environments where cultures and societies are varieties so that all parties including community and students should support character education. This can be achieved through extracurricular programs, seminars, or other activities. The other solutions are (1) developing a flexible and adaptive curriculum that is capable of integrating values, character, and morals in academic and non-academic; (2) Utilizing digital technology and social media as tools for spreading Islamic moral and ethical; (3) retaining close collaboration among institution, family, and society.

CONCLUSION

Implementing character education in Madrasah Aliyah curriculum faces various challenges. The challenges include integrating religious values with universal character values, the limitations of resources, consistency in implementing character education,

evaluation, and cultural and social challenge. Then, the solutions include having modules and special programs, having trained teachers and adequate infrastructure, having a long-term plan, having continuous evaluation, and holding extracurricular programs, seminars, or other activities supporting character education. It is recommended to further discuss toward particular challenge and its appropriate solution for the future research.

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