

Management of Strengthening Character Education in Junior High School

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ABSTRACT. This article aims to analyze the management of character education at MTs Raudlatasy Syubban Pati (Junior high school). This research uses a case study research model using a qualitative approach. The data collection techniques used in this study are observation, interview, and documentation. The results of research related to the management of strengthening character education in the case of studies at MTs Raudlatasy Syubban in this study, supporting education must fulfill the following aspects, referring to the school's vision and mission, conducting assessments to identify school potential, formulating and determining the main character values to be developed, school programs are compiled jointly with all school components, and teachers make character-based learning devices RPP (lesson plan). Character education in MTs Rudlatasy Syubban must continue to be improved because character is the main element that proves that education is successful. The more successful an education is, the better the character of the students will be. This reason is also the background for character education at MTs Raudlatasy Syubban to continue to be intensified.

Keywords: *School Management, Character Education, Islamic School.*

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INTRODUCTION

Education is an ongoing process that aims to enhance students' knowledge and skills in various fields. It plays a vital role in shaping individuals' identities and fostering their development in the field of science (Berglund, 2017; Huang et al., 2021). As society evolves, the education system also undergoes significant changes, leading to a shift in people's mindsets from traditional to more modern perspectives (Martin et al., 2024). This transformation has a profound impact on the advancement of education in Indonesia, where the development of human resources is crucial for national progress (Fasya et al., 2023). To cultivate a cultured nation that upholds values such as religiousness, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, nationalism, love for the country, respect for achievements, effective communication, peace-loving attitude, enthusiasm for reading, environmental awareness, social responsibility, and care for others, the government recognizes the importance of character education (Hur et al., 2022; Komalasari & Yakubu, 2023; Lickona, 2009).

This article is a critical analysis review of the implementation of character education, which until now still has a lot of homework. So, character education experts assume that character education is considered a failure in shaping student character (Lee et al., 2013; Rokhman et al.,

2014). One of them is the Professor of Value and Character Education at UPI Bandung, (Handoko & Sakti, 2023), who revealed that one of the factors causing the failure of value and character education (moral and religious) is driven by the focus of schools that still prioritize the delivery of moral knowledge but do not reach the stage of becoming an honest human being where children continuously implement their moral actions. The character education strengthening program (PPK) that has been implemented in schools has yet to reach the desired target. The results of the thesis research (Faiz & Soleh, 2020) on "*strengthening character education in schools has not yet reached the goal*". This strengthening character is because, in the implementation setting, stakeholders need to understand the theories and concepts that should be implemented following the desired rules.

According to (Realita & Rahmawati, 2016), a survey conducted by the Data Center of the Family Planning Population Coordinating Agency (BKKBN) in 2008 found that 63% of junior high school (SMP) and senior high school (SMA) adolescents had engaged in sexual activity. This data highlights a moral decline in society, evident through increasing instances of violence against children and adolescents, widespread promiscuity, drug abuse, pornography, theft committed by teenagers, physical altercations, verbal abuse, cheating, and other unruly behaviors that remain unresolved by the government. Consequently, it emphasizes the importance of character education and religious education in the realm of education.

Research conducted by (Panoyo et al., 2019) which in his research describes aspects that can affect character education and that affect students' character education. In addition, the results of research conducted by (Chowdhury, 2018) show that exemplary is the main key to the formation of character in the school environment, especially the example of a leader in the school, in this case, the principal. Character education was also researched (Palunga & Marzuki, 2017) which shows that the teacher is the one who inspires students to act and behave, while other supporting factors are the environment and the principal. Research conducted by (Badrudin et al., 2021; Ülger et al., 2014) determines 3 ways to develop character education, namely by applying character education values in the school environment, formulating subjects, and evaluating character education in schools.

Teachers have a huge influence on a student's education, and their dedication and professionalism are essential. However, effective school management also plays a key role in planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating character education in schools. These two factors work together to create a positive and effective educational environment for the development of student character. With committed teachers and good school management, character education can be successfully implemented and have a significant positive impact on students' moral and ethical development.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach that emphasizes meaning and understanding from within (*verstehen*), reasoning, and definition of a particular situation (in a specific context) in existing cases in the Implementation of Character Education at MTs Raudlatasy Syubban Pati. Qualitative research is a research method that focuses on an in-depth understanding of social phenomena or human behavior. In qualitative research, data is collected through observation, interviews, documentation studies, or other descriptive methods. This approach places more emphasis on meaning, context, and process than on quantitative measurements. Qualitative research is often used to explain, understand, and gain insight into complex aspects, such as values, attitudes, beliefs, and culture. This method focuses on theory development, deep understanding, and detailed exploration in a specific context. Methodologically, it is known that qualitative research is rooted in a natural background as a wholeness, relies on humans as research tools, utilizes qualitative methods of inductive data analysis, directs research targets in an

effort to find theory, is more concerned with process than results, chooses a set of criteria for writing data validity, research designs are temporary, and research results are agreed upon by research subjects (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Moleong, 1989).

The data sources in this study are: 1) Primary data is the main data obtained based on observations and interviews regarding supervision activities carried out by the Principal and teacher performance in learning Islamic Religious Education; 2) Secondary data is supporting data whose function is to strengthen primary data. The research object is related to the research problem, namely data on the profile of MTs Raudlatusy Syubban, including the profile of teachers and students, meeting documents, books, and magazines. The data analysis technique in this study uses descriptive analysis techniques with more descriptions and the results of interviews and documentation studies. The data that has been obtained will be analyzed qualitatively and described in descriptive form so as to obtain data related to planning, organizing, implementing supervision, and evaluating character education.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Character Education, also known as PPK, is an educational initiative aimed at enhancing the character development of students. It is the responsibility of educational institutions to foster the harmonization of emotions, values, intellect, and physical well-being through collaboration between schools, families, and communities. This is an integral part of the National Movement for Mental Revolution (Character Education, also known as PPK, is an educational initiative aimed at enhancing the character development of students. It is the responsibility of educational institutions to foster the harmonization of emotions, values, intellect, and physical well-being through collaboration between schools, families, and communities. This is an integral part of the National Movement for Mental Revolution.

Implementation of Management at MTs Raudlatusy Syubban

The curriculum used at MT's Raudlatusy Syubban is based on the national Standard curriculum set by the central government. However, the madrasah has the flexibility to develop and enhance the curriculum to meet the specific needs of its students. This means that the madrasah can deepen, enrich, and modify the curriculum without reducing the content that is mandated nationally.

In implementing the curriculum, the madrasah has the freedom to choose the most effective approaches, models, strategies, methods, techniques, and tactics of learning. This allows the madrasah to tailor the learning process to suit the characteristics of its students, teachers, and available resources. Student-centered learning approaches, models, methods, and strategies are encouraged, as they empower students and emphasize their active involvement in the learning process. Active learning, cooperative learning, and antum learning (according to children's abilities) are examples of active student learning methods that can be applied.

“As stated by the principal of MTs Raudlatusy Syubban, Mrs. Siti Zumaroh, at MTs Raudlatusy Syubban, the curriculum is adjusted to the needs of teachers. The main focus in curriculum development is regarding character education of students. Apart from character development, teachers also act as role models for students. as it is always said that teachers are ignored and imitated. Apart from that, teachers must also always evaluate the character development of students.”

Madrasahs are also authorized to conduct evaluations, particularly internal evaluations. These evaluations are carried out to monitor the implementation process and evaluate the outcomes of the programs implemented by the madrasah. This internal evaluation helps ensure the effectiveness of the curriculum and its alignment with the goals of the madrasah.

The curriculum at MT's Raudlatusy Syubban Pati is thoughtfully crafted to address the specific requirements of the educational unit, taking into account regional potential, local socio-cultural aspects, and the needs of the students. Even though interactive teaching methods are already part of the school's approach, some educators continue to favor the lecture method, especially in the context of religious or salaf subjects like Fiqh, AL-Qu'ran Hadith, Aqidah-Akhlaq, Islamic Culture History, and classical literature subjects. These particular subjects are believed to be effective in molding students' character development.

The curriculum at MT's Raudlatusy Syubban Pati is designed to be responsive to the needs of the education unit, regional potential, socio-culture of the local community, and students. While the school already incorporates interactive learning methods, some teachers still prefer to use the lecture method, particularly for religious/salaf subjects such as Fiqh, AL-Qu'ran Hadith, Aqidah-Akhlaq, Islamic Culture History, and classical books subjects. These subjects are believed to effectively shape students' character development.

The education staff at MT's Raudlatusy Syubban has a diverse range of responsibilities, encompassing tasks related to education organization, training, research, development, administration, and the provision of educational support services. This staff includes teachers, educational unit managers, librarians, administrative personnel, and learning resource technicians. The management of education personnel entails several facets, such as maintaining personnel records, recommending staffing structures, proposing appointments, promotions, periodic salary adjustments, and handling transfers. It also involves overseeing employee welfare initiatives and the allocation of job responsibilities.

Developing an efficient system for managing education personnel is a shared responsibility among all stakeholders within the madrasah, including the educational and administrative staff, with particular emphasis on the role of the madrasah head.

“Mr. Heri Kiswanto said that the school principal plays an important role in realizing the learning objectives, namely character education. Because the school principal is in control of the realization of every program in the school. However, there must be good cooperation in all parts of the school. including administration, teachers, and all existing elements.”

To establish a highly skilled and dependable education staff within an educational institution, the presence of a competent and effective leader is crucial. Personnel management encompasses multiple phases, commencing with assessing needs, strategic planning, recruitment, professional growth, incentives and disciplinary measures, labor relations, and evaluating the performance of madrasah staff, which includes teachers, administrative staff, and other individuals.

Supporting Factors for the Implementation of Character Education at MTs Raudlatusy Syubban

Supporting factors for the implementation of madrasah-based management in an effort to improve character education at MTs Raudlatusy Syubban.

“Mrs. Siti Zumaroh said that in character education there are several things that really influence the success of this program, namely, the leadership experience of the madrasa head, teacher qualifications, teachers having professional competence in teaching, and adequate learning facilities.”

When looking at the conditions of the object in the field, the author found several supporting factors for the implementation of madrasah-based management implementation in an effort to improve student character, including:

“Experienced leadership of the madrasah head.: Effective leadership by the head of a madrasah plays a pivotal role in accomplishing the institution's educational objectives. It is often stated that the success of a madrasah hinges on its leadership, with effective madrasah leaders being described as individuals with high expectations for both the staff and students. These leaders are knowledgeable about their responsibilities and have the ability to shape the overall environment and culture within the madrasah.”

Teachers' academic qualifications are in accordance with the subjects taught. The teachers at MTs Raudlatusy Syubban Pati meet specific educational qualifications, including at least a high school diploma (SMA), a diploma-four (D-IV), or a bachelor's degree (S1), and possess teaching certificates relevant to their respective subjects. Furthermore, some educators even hold master's degrees in fields directly related to the subjects they teach. This aligns with the perspective of Wina Sanjaya, who emphasizes the importance of educators having appropriate qualifications to effectively fulfill their roles in their specialized fields.

Teachers already have professional competence: Through proper teacher training, educators are anticipated to attain a high level of competence. Wina defines competence as the logical and purposeful actions taken to attain desired objectives in alignment with the anticipated circumstances. In essence, competence is demonstrated through actions or performance that can be justified (logical) and contributes to enhancing the quality of education.

Adequate Learning Facilities: Facilities and infrastructure management involves a process that encompasses the planning, organization, acquisition, maintenance, removal, and oversight of equipment and logistical resources. This definition reveals that managing facilities and infrastructure essentially involves a continuous cycle of activities related to equipment, including assessing needs, establishing budgets, procurement, storage, utilization, maintenance, and disposal. The term "logistics" carries connotations of knowledge and expertise, referring to the skill of calculating and planning. Logistics represents the scientific and artistic approach to efficiently organizing and executing various aspects of production, warehousing, transportation, distribution, inventory management, and logistical support facilities, such as buildings, to ensure effective operations.

Factors that hinder the Implementation of Character Education at MTs Raudlatusy Syubban

The factors that hinder the implementation of efforts to improve character education at MTs Raudlatusy Syubban. According to Mrs. Siti Zumaroh are teachers who are too strict, teachers who are rude, friends who don't care about their friends' morals. The explanation of this is as follows:

Teachers who are too fierce: Based on the researcher's experience as an educator, it's evident that many teachers often confuse being firm with being harsh. This misunderstanding leads to students being less open because of the fear of reprimand. Such teaching practices tend to make students compliant, but it also restricts their abilities as they hesitate to express their thoughts, fearing that the teacher is always right. From a psychological perspective, overly stern teachers may inadvertently contribute to aggressive behavior in students. It's possible that many student conflicts and fights result from the mismanagement of character education by teachers. If this situation persists, it's clear that students won't develop strong moral values. As Megawangi suggests, teachers should create a positive moral atmosphere in the classroom, providing students with a healthy moral environment that nurtures their character. This is essential since children

spend their entire day in school, and when teachers offer love and respect, it positively influences students' character development.

It is natural for teachers to correct students' wrong behavior, one of which is with negative reinforcement so that students do not repeat their mistakes. But sometimes, the response given by the teacher is not proportional. The meaning of disproportionate here means, if the student makes a mistake at level 3 (range 1-10), then give a response at the same level as well so that it is proportional. Do not let when students make mistakes at level 3, the teacher responds to the student's behavior at level 8, then this is disproportionate and not healthy for the moral climate in the school or in the classroom.

Indifferent teachers: Indifferent teachers are also one of the inhibiting factors in character education. It is not justified if a teacher has an indifferent attitude towards students who make mistakes. Researchers have experienced for themselves that there are teachers who do not care about their students, one of which is when a student is seen bullying his friend, there is a teacher who says "just let it go, not my child, want this it's up to them". The attitude of some teachers who have such thoughts is certainly not justified. Ideally, teachers who have the mandate to become educators are not allowed to have such thoughts. Moreover, teachers (civil servants) who have received salaries from the state, when they have these thoughts, then that is a teacher's betrayal to the state because it is not trustworthy.

The thing that a teacher must do when seeing students make mistakes, at least give advice with a humanist approach. Taking a humanist approach psychologically is certainly very necessary for students. If the psychological closeness is well established, it is easy for the teacher to correct or give advice to students.

Need a colleague who is willing to advise: When a teacher corrects a student's wrong behavior, you should avoid scolding the student in front of his friends. This is to avoid overreaction from the student, it could even be that the student rebels because he feels disrespected by his teacher. Although positioned as a student, in essence, students have the right as individuals who want to be respected by others including by their teachers. A personal approach needs to be taken to advise the student by inviting him to talk nicely (Raka and Butuantara, 2020). Because it will better position the student as an individual who has the potential to improve his behavior, rather than treating him like a prisoner.

After I conducted research by observing and interviewing school principals and questioning teachers, I came to conclusions about educational development. The characters at MTs Raudlatusy Syubban are as follows:

Table 1. Research findings on character education at MTs Raudlatusy Syubban

No	Activity	Information
1	Implementation of Management at MTs Raudlatusy Syubban	The implementation of management to improve character education at MTs Raudlatusy Syubban is influenced by several things, including: The curriculum is used and developed according to student needs. the teacher evaluation process of student character development. the role of all elements in the school.
2	Supporting Factors for the Implementation of Character Education at MTs Raudlatusy Syubban	Supporting Factors for the Implementation of Character Education at MTs Raudlatusy Syubban, including : Experienced leadership of the madrasah head. Teachers' academic qualifications are in accordance with the subjects taught. Teachers already have professional competence

3	Factors that hinder the Implementation of Character Education at MTs Raudlatasy Syubban	Adequate Learning Facilities Factors that hinder the Implementation of Character Education at MTs Raudlatasy Syubban, Including : teachers who are too fierce Indifferent teachers Need a colleague who is willing to advise
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Discussion

Character education in secondary schools is very important because this is a crucial period of adolescent development in shaping their personality (Komariah & Nihayah, 2023). Character education aims to help students develop positive values, attitudes and behaviors in everyday life. There are several reasons why character education should exist in secondary schools. First, character education helps students in developing good morality (Muassomah et al., 2022; Wringe, 2006). Through values such as honesty, integrity and empathy, students will learn to become responsible and ethical individuals.

Secondly, character education helps students in developing healthy social and emotional skills. In an inclusive school environment, students will learn to work together, respect differences, and manage their emotions well. This will help them to build positive relationships with others and resolve conflicts in a constructive way. Third, character education helps students in facing challenges and overcoming obstacles in life. By teaching values such as perseverance, hard work and self-confidence, students will learn not to give up easily and remain optimistic in the face of difficulties (Haq et al., 2022).

In Indonesia, the current focus of the learning process is primarily on intellectual development (cognitive) rather than on cultivating students' morals or non-academic soft skills, which are essential elements of moral education. As a result, students often encounter contradictions in real life because moral education or ethics is only taught through theoretical texts. However, in the field of education, all three domains - cognitive, psychomotor, and affective are interconnected. Therefore, it is crucial to balance academic education with character education in order to effectively educate students for their everyday lives.

Teachers have always been and will continue to be crucial in determining the quality of education a student receives. They play a vital role in shaping the future human resources of a nation. In fact, teachers are considered the second most influential individuals in a child's life, after parents, when it comes to education and guidance towards their educational and life aspirations (Hur, 2021). Given the significant impact teachers have on student performance, it is essential for them to possess a high level of dedication and to view teaching as a full-time profession. Principal leadership also holds great importance in the educational process, as highlighted in a study by (Hsiao, 2021).

Finally, character education also helps students in becoming good and responsible citizens. By learning values such as openness, tolerance and social responsibility, students will be able to participate in community life by making positive contributions (Rehren & Sauer, 2022). Overall, character education in secondary schools is very important as it helps students in forming a good personality, developing social and emotional skills, facing challenges well and becoming responsible citizens. With strong character education, students can grow into good individuals who are ready to face a complex world (Begum et al., 2022).

The implementation of character education in schools is closely tied to effective school management. Character education involves the careful planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating of character education within educational activities. It encompasses various aspects

such as instilling core values, designing curriculum content, shaping teaching and learning methods, conducting assessments, and ensuring competent educators and education personnel are involved. Hence, school management serves as an effective platform for the successful application of character education in schools. Another study (Bauer & Hermann, 2022) emphasizes the importance of comprehensive management in character education.

Character education in schools has an important role in forming individuals who are not only academically intelligent, but also have good morals, values and ethics. This helps in: 1. Forming responsible citizens: Character education helps students understand the importance of their obligations to the country and society (Balg, 2023). 2. Develop positive attitudes: Help students develop attitudes such as honesty, discipline, cooperation and responsibility. 3. Overcoming behavioral problems: Character education can help overcome negative behavioral problems, such as bullying, violence, and other destructive behavior. 4. Improve social relationships: Students who have good character tend to build more positive social relationships with friends, teachers, and community members. 5. Improve quality of life: Good character helps students face challenges in life better, such as dealing with conflict, making good decisions, and feeling happier. 6. Build moral values: Character education helps students understand moral and ethical values, which are important in making good decisions. Thus, the character of education in schools has a significant impact in forming individuals who make positive contributions to society and the surrounding environment.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data exposure, research findings, analysis, and discussion of the results, the conclusions of this study are as follows: The curriculum used at MTs Raudlatasy Syubban is the national Standard curriculum developed by the central government. The curriculum at the school is adjusted to the specific characteristics of the region, the socio-cultural context of the local community, and the needs of the students. While the school already implements an interactive learning process, some teachers still prefer to use the lecture method, particularly in subjects related to religious education such as Fiqh, AL-Qu'ran Hadith, Aqidah-Akhlak, Islamic Culture History, and classical books. These subjects are believed to play a significant role in character education. The education personnel at MTs Raudlatasy Syubban include educators (teachers), education unit managers, librarians, reports, and learning resource technicians. The management of education personnel involves various tasks such as inventorying employees, proposing employee formations, making appointments, promotions, periodic salary increases, and transfers.

Additionally, they are also responsible for managing welfare efforts and allocating tasks effectively. Creating effective management of the education workforce is the collective responsibility of all elements within the madrasah, including the teachers, administrative staff, and especially the madrasah head. Furthermore, it is highly expected that schools can continue to improve innovations in efforts to improve the management of student character education because character is a very important thing to continue to develop.

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