

## The Culture and Tradition of Educational Practice In Madrasah

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### Abstract

This article aims to explore the tradition and culture of education in madrasahs. Madrasah to see the educational construction found in the reinforcement of a nation's character. This study used a qualitative approach of ethnography study, which emphasizes the importance of the central role of culture in understanding the way of life of observed groups through the ethnography method. Furthermore, the data source consists of primary data such as the words or spoken stuff and the behaviors from the subjects related to the Madrasah's educational instruction in the reinforcement of characters and secondary data such as text, recording, or pictures, which is related to educational practices conducted. The findings show that the educational culture and tradition of the Madrasah have transformed the characters' values scientifically through the tradition implemented in the daily activity of the people in the Madrasah. The uniqueness of characteristics of people in the Madrasah is shown through the individual or group behavior, language, and tradition, which can reflect the values of honesty, togetherness, tolerance, respect, and others, which all values are part of the substance in reinforcing characters. The reinforcement of students' character at Madrasah is through the process of self-establishment, the habituation of good students' behavior through every activity until they become strong cultural characters.

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### Kata kunci:

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### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali tradisi dan budaya pendidikan di madrasah untuk melihat konstruksi pendidikan yang terdapat dalam penguatan karakter bangsa. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif studi etnografi yang menekankan pentingnya peran sentral budaya dalam memahami cara hidup kelompok yang diamati melalui metode etnografi. Selanjutnya sumber datanya terdiri dari; data primer berupa kata-kata atau ucapan dan perilaku mata pelajaran yang berkaitan dengan pembelajaran pendidikan madrasah dalam penguatan karakter; dan data sekunder berupa teks, rekaman, atau gambar yang berkaitan dengan praktik pendidikan yang dilakukan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa budaya dan tradisi pendidikan madrasah telah mentransformasikan nilai-nilai karakter secara ilmiah melalui tradisi yang diterapkan dalam aktivitas sehari-hari masyarakat di Madrasah. Keunikan karakteristik masyarakat madrasah ditunjukkan melalui perilaku individu atau kelompok, bahasa, dan tradisi yang dapat mencerminkan nilai-nilai kejujuran, kebersamaan, toleransi, menghargai, dan lain-lain, yang kesemua nilai tersebut merupakan bagian dari substansinya. dalam memperkuat karakter. Penguatan karakter siswa di madrasah melalui proses pemantapan diri, pembiasaan perilaku siswa yang baik melalui setiap aktivitas hingga menjadi karakter budaya yang kuat.

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## INTRODUCTION

Madrasah possesses distinctive features that set them apart from conventional educational institutions. Their primary mission is to cultivate future generations capable of contributing to the nation's development (Calora, Arif, & Rofiq, 2023; Fauzi & Kartiko, 2023). Additionally, the provision of knowledge, technology, and arts is a defining trait of Islamic education (Ma'zumi, 2012; Rusydi, 2014; Syukur, 2015). Moreover, madrasahs hold certain advantages over typical schools as they prioritize the cultivation of morals, democracy, humanity, and social consciousness within their educational framework. This tradition endures to this day.

Madrasah is not only an icon of pride but also one of the most crucial Islamic educational institutions for fostering religious spirit, developing various scientific competencies and skills among students, and nurturing the morality of the younger generation, all of which should align with Indonesia's life philosophy (Nurhasnawati, 2015). Therefore, the role of madrasah in shaping the nation's character holds significant importance, given its status as an Islamic educational institution. Normatively, this stems from a universal religious foundation, enabling it to endure over time (Ansori, 2020; Fitria, Alwasih, & Hakim, 2022). This aspect underscores the resilience and enduring value of madrasah education.

Many characteristics of education in Madrasah have been studied. However, studies focusing on the role of Madrasah in shaping the nation's character are difficult to find. Various studies and findings, such as those by (Dewi Sadiyah, 2011), have indicated that recent student behaviors often diverge from religious values. This shift in values can lead to negative effects, including increased moral decline among teenagers and adults, as well as the erosion of students' positive personalities (Arifin, Utama, Aryani, Prayitno, & Waston, 2023; Jubba, Pabbajah, Abdullah, & Juhansar, 2022). Thus, there is a need for the development of religious values education to guide students' character development, which can be implemented within madrasahs (Berglund, 2017).

(Hibana, Kuntoro, & Sutrisno, 2015), who reviewed the development of religious-humanistic education in Madrasah, identified a conceptualization of madrasah development as humanistic-religious. They emphasize the importance of developing basic humanistic values such as freedom, creativity, teamwork, honesty, and self-actualization within the framework of religious values. Religious education in madrasahs contributes to realizing the educational objectives that enable students to understand their lives (Adela & Ritonga, 2023; Aliani, Alam, Rofiq, & Srinio, 2023). This statement provides hope for the future, suggesting that the demand for Islamic education will continue to grow and become a societal trend. This is justified because developing students' skills, attitudes, and behaviors is challenging for general schools compared to their academic knowledge development (Sutomo, 2014). As (Purwowidodo, 2017) asserts, madrasahs, as strategic educational institutions in nurturing qualified human resources, should possess personalities that are healthy, strong, reliable, and capable of addressing the nation's social problems. Achieving this requires conceptual, strategic, and practical management.

The reviews above suggest that the presence of madrasahs is expected to address the challenges posed by modernization, globalization, and information technology. This is unsurprising, given that the national education system still struggles to demonstrate significant educational quality, and education in Indonesia often follows a pragmatic pattern (Azizah & Apdila, 2021; Fatchurochman, 2021). Despite the diverse and pluralistic nature of Indonesian schools and communities, which face various issues and possess local knowledge (Ma'arif, 2018; Ma'arif, Dardiri, & Suryo, 2015; Mujtahid, 2011), the characteristic of madrasahs goes beyond merely providing Islamic educational materials. The primary focus lies in embodying Islamic values in the daily lives of its constituents.

However, the problematic reality faced by madrasahs in Indonesia is the need for optimal public interest. Public schools are often favored due to their perceived prestige, leading people to believe that their children's futures will be better served there than in madrasahs (Anwar, 2018; Rusydi, 2014). This perception stems from the belief that madrasah graduates cannot compete with those from public schools and are limited to roles such as religious teachers or *ustad* (Kholik, Mujahidin, & Munif, 2024; Muslimin & Kartiko, 2020). In contrast, graduates from public schools have greater opportunities for further education and better prospects. However, Constitution No. 20 of 2003 formally recognizes madrasahs and other religious schools as part of the national education system. Therefore, madrasahs must prepare, compete, maintain, and improve the quality of education while remaining integrated into the national education system.

The integration of madrasah education into the subsystem of the national education system highlights certain characteristics unique to madrasahs, particularly their emphasis on spirituality and values in the learning process compared to other educational institutions, where the emphasis on fostering religious spirituality values is minimal (Kasman, 2018; Rouf, 2016). Madrasahs continuously strive for improvement to maximize their understanding of their function and role in achieving national education goals, thus becoming a vital part of shaping the nation's character, exemplified by efforts such as those undertaken by Madrasah Aliyah Negeri (MAN) Insan Cendekia Gorontalo.

MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo prioritizes spiritual guidance as the cornerstone of students' knowledge, which is evident in various guidance programs and the emphasis on religious development. To further enhance student potential, the school offers the Tahfidz Al-Qur'an program as a primary local content learning focus, along with opportunities for scientific research, boarding school experiences, Arabic and English language programs, spiritual guidance initiatives, and student mentoring. These efforts underscore the institution's status as an internationally standardized Madrasah Aliyah. Given the centrality of religion in life, serving as a guiding principle without exception, the study of education at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo holds significant value. It serves as a model for other Islamic educational institutions, particularly madrasahs in Indonesia, in countering fundamentalism and extreme radicalism, thereby contributing to the bright future of Islamic civilization in the country.

Given the educational characteristics of MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo, there is an urgent need for a thorough review to assess the role of education in shaping the nation's character. This review should aim to identify appropriate educational strategies that align with cultural roots, addressing prevalent issues such as corruption, the decline of Pancasila values, the crisis of role models, and ongoing moral decay in Indonesian society. Consequently, studying the educational system in madrasahs becomes imperative and essential for strengthening the nation's character, given their emphasis on religious and humanistic education, as well as the cultivation of cultural character traits.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative approach, specifically employing ethnographic methods that emphasize the central role of culture in understanding the observed group's way of life. Ethnography enables the exploration of cultural differences and interactions among individuals with diverse perspectives. Several key concepts underpin ethnographic research. (Spradley, 1979, 2016) emphasizes the significance of language, both in conducting the study and documenting findings verbally, suggesting that researchers learn the local language and begin by formulating ethnographic questions. Another crucial concept is the informant, who serves as the primary source of information for the ethnographer.

The chosen ethnographic method is the Developmental Research Sequence, utilizing an ethnographic writing strategy that adheres to five principles: selecting data collection techniques, recognizing study steps, conducting research systematically, approaching each step methodically, conducting original research practices, and providing problem-solving solutions as a manifestation of social responsibility. The researcher has opted for a qualitative approach employing ethnographic methods to describe and analyze participants' experiences within the context of culture and educational practices in madrasahs. This approach aims to gather data on participants' perspectives regarding their experiences and their relationship to the cultivation of the nation's character.

The data collection techniques used in this research included observation, interviews, and documentation. These methods were complemented by specific research instruments: a) Observation sheets were employed to guide observations of teachers' and staffs' activities, as well as student activities at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo. b) Interview guidelines were designed to further explore aspects that remained unclear during observation, particularly concerning the cultural habits of the madrasah in reinforcing the nation's character at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo. c) Documentation guidelines were utilized to review documents related to the culture and habits of the madrasah in strengthening the nation's character at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo.

Validation and selection of data reliability were based on four criteria of data validity achievement as proposed by (Lincoln & Denzin, 2005), namely: 1) Credibility, 2) Dependability, 3) Confirmability, and 4) Transferability/fittingness.

Given the research approach, the chosen data analysis technique was the new model of Spradley ethnography known as the "*Developmental Research Sequence*." This sequence, as outlined by Spradley, comprises twelve steps: 1) Selecting informants, 2) Conducting interviews with informants, 3) Making ethnographic notes, 4) Formulating descriptive questions, 5) Analyzing ethnographic interview data, 6) Conducting domain analysis, 7) Formulating structural questions, 8) Conducting taxonomic analysis, 9) Formulating contrast questions, 10) Conducting component analysis, 11) Identifying cultural themes, and 12) Writing the ethnography.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

Culture and tradition practiced at MAN Insan Cendekia concerning the reinforcement of the nation's character begin with the development and implementation of all character reinforcement activities, whether academic or non-academic, oriented towards realizing the madrasah's culture. Within the determined culture of MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo, there exists a habit of mutual service, where everyone serves each other. This includes the head of the madrasah serving the vice principals, teachers, students, and so on, as the culture of serving each other is prioritized over being served. When everyone adopts a sense of service, vanity and other negative traits diminish.

One of the working cultures at MAN Insan Cendekia is integrity, which ensures that students adhere to the rules and are instilled with basic values such as responsibility and refraining from blaming or accusing others without evidence. The madrasah consistently monitors and enforces rules agreed upon by all involved parties. Integrity is demonstrated through values such as assuming responsibility and refraining from blaming others when facing challenges or realities.

To foster integrity at MAN Insan Cendekia, students must understand and adhere to the school rules comprehensively. If rules are broken, the system automatically responds. For instance, if a student brings a laptop at an inappropriate time, consequences follow. The madrasah rigorously upholds rules, imposing sanctions for rule violations in every building, including educational facilities and dormitories. Consequently, the established system operates under the supervision of leaders, particularly the vice principals.

The established working norms and traditions at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo include the principal receiving information from teachers to confirm attendance and teachers in turn communicating students' learning difficulties. The working patterns of the madrasah's principal, teachers, and staff are governed by norms and rules. Before commencing classes, teachers are expected to provide affirmation to create a more engaging and enjoyable learning environment. Additionally, if a teacher is unable to attend school, they are required to inform the school so that another teacher can cover the class – a practice indicative of the norms the madrasah seeks to instill.

Furthermore, communication patterns during class vary, encompassing interactions from teachers to students and vice versa. Outside of the learning environment, communication extends to interactions between teachers and the

principal, as well as between teachers and students, fostering an atmosphere of collaboration. Typically, during the learning process, students are divided into groups or work individually, depending on the learning objectives. Communication among all stakeholders in the madrasah is tailored to maintain a positive and harmonious atmosphere.

Teachers employ various methods to deliver learning materials, adapting their approach based on the content being taught. For instance, when teaching expressive subjects, such as dialogue-based topics, instruction typically begins with dialogue. Different communication patterns are observed in classroom learning processes, tailored to the specific teaching methods utilized. To validate these observations, researchers conducted observations, identifying communication patterns both within and outside the classroom. The communication patterns between teachers and students at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo are commendable, involving all stakeholders.

Moreover, the facilities provided by the madrasah support the integrity of MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo, serving as a medium for fostering honesty in learning. Students have access to laptops and can share or borrow facilities such as internet service or WiFi among themselves. The learning environment is crucial for facilitating effective learning activities, and MAN Insan Cendekia prioritizes maintaining a conducive and supportive atmosphere. Consequently, the madrasah enhances the learning environment to promote honesty in learning and create dynamic and enjoyable learning experiences, including lively classroom interactions, the development of appropriate instructional materials, utilization of available learning resources, and encouragement of active student participation in both academic and extracurricular activities.

The facilities contributing to a conducive learning environment encompass all educational resources available within the madrasah, including buildings, learning media, and other educational materials. A conducive learning environment is essential for supporting effective teaching and learning processes. For instance, providing students with laptops enables teachers to assign tasks and presentations, fostering interactive learning experiences. These laptops serve as tools for accessing information and presenting assignments, thus enhancing the learning process. However, the use of these facilities is closely monitored, and misuse results in their retrieval by the madrasah.

Every teacher and staff member at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo is required to adhere to established working hours, exemplified by the principal, who arrives early and leaves late. This adherence to working hours effectively instills discipline among teachers and staff. Those who arrive late or leave early face discomfort, as they are reprimanded by the principal and fellow colleagues, thereby encouraging high levels of discipline. The principal rewards diligent and disciplined behavior, while consequences are imposed on those who fail to adhere to rules or arrive late. This strict adherence to rules underscores the importance of discipline among teachers and staff, crucial for fostering character development among students at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo.

Furthermore, tolerance serves as a key indicator of students' good character at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo, demonstrated through behaviors such as respecting

others' opinions, accepting criticism and suggestions from various sources, and forming friendships with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Observations conducted by researchers in the field reveal a strong sense of harmony, peace, and friendship among students, despite their differences.

MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo adheres to various moral norms encompassing academic, student life, work, and dormitory regulations. For instance, regarding student conduct, some rules support the cultivation of students' character, such as guidelines on interaction ethics, which require students to maintain Islamic attire and tidy appearances without excessive accessories. Consequently, the reinforcement of character within school activities is evidenced by actions such as punctuality, adherence to uniform guidelines, compliance with madrasah regulations, active participation in classes, and timely completion of homework assignments. These activities contribute to establishing a foundation for achievement at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo on regional, national, and international levels. Such achievements are the result of dedication, discipline, and teamwork exhibited by all members of the MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo community.

Furthermore, MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo offers various spiritual guidance programs for dormitory students, including: a) *Tahfiz* program: A memorization program for students to collectively memorize the Quran, either in the mosque or dormitory. b) *Kultum* program: A religious speech program conducted seven minutes before the *Maghrib adzan* (call to prayer), which all students are required to attend consecutively. This program aims to build students' confidence in speaking in front of an audience. c) Islamic book (*kitab Kuning*) learning program: This program includes studying various Islamic texts such as *Tafsir*, *Tafsirul Ahkam*, *Ulumul Qur'an*, *Fiqh*, *Ushul Fiqh*, *Nahwu*, and others. d) Independent learning guidance program: Tailored to each student's personality, this program focuses on developing specific competencies. Each student is required to achieve the personal development targets set for them. This activity takes place from 8:00 to 10:00 PM, with all students expected to participate under the supervision of teachers.

To tailor the rules for students, MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo has a team tasked with monitoring students' daily activities, both within and outside the dormitory. This team also oversees various programs outlined in the studentship guidelines. Student guidance efforts involve effective and efficient actions undertaken by the school to optimize students' potential in various aspects of life, whether within or beyond the school environment, ensuring that students align with the educational objectives. Additionally, the supervisory team at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo actively monitors and intervenes to prevent deviations. In cases where issues are identified during supervision, prompt and positive action is taken to identify and implement solutions.

The provision of rewards and punishments in the development of competencies at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo serves as a means to enhance organizational commitment, thereby influencing the job satisfaction and achievements of all members of the madrasah. Therefore, the administration of rewards and punishments by MAN Insan Cendekia is an effective measure in monitoring students' progress. Moreover,

MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo acknowledges that punishment essentially entails reprimanding someone for their mistakes. Consequently, the administration of punishment is carried out only when necessary and with careful consideration. Punishments are employed at the madrasah to enforce adherence to rules. They are educational in nature and aimed at instilling discipline and fostering awareness of learning among students.

Students at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo reside at the madrasah around the clock. All participants are required, without exception, to adhere to the activities outlined by the madrasah, maintaining a systematic and disciplined lifestyle, especially within the dormitory (Source: <https://icg.sch.id/jadwal-aktifitas-siswa/>) Before commencing any activity, students are expected to engage in prayer. Given that the students possess great potential, the madrasah finds it easier to guide and educate them. The madrasah's role primarily involves facilitating students, as both teachers and students reside in the dormitory, allowing them to pray together, which significantly influences the implementation of religious values. Additionally, student activities incorporate religious values, evident in their daily, weekly, and monthly routines throughout the semester, as follows:

**Table 1. The schedule of students' daily activity**

No	Time	Activity	Note
1.	04.00 – 04.30	Wake up, prepare for praying subuh	Dormitory teacher
2.	04.00 – 05.00	Praying subuh, reciting Qur'an	
3.	05.00 – 05.15	Public Speaking ( <i>Kultum</i> )	<i>Kultum</i> in Arabic and English
4.	06.00 – 06.00	Students' activities; making bed, cleaning the table, room, and take a bath.	
5.	06.00 – 06.20	Breakfast	At canteen
6.	06.20 – 06.30	Students go to the class	
7.	06.30 – 07.00	Tahfidz Al-Qur'an	Conducted third times a week (Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday)
8.	07.00 – 12.00	Study in the class	
9.	12.00 – 13.00	Praying Dzuhur, Lunch	The activity is under the supervision of the vice principal of academic affairs
10.	13.00 – 15.15	Study in the class	
11.	15.15 – 15.45	Praying Ashar	Dormitory teachers



12.	15.45 – 17.15	Students' activity, guidance, subject mentoring, or sports	The activity is under the supervision of the vice principal of academic affairs
13.	17.15 – 18.00	Take a bath, Preparation for Praying Maghrib	
14.	18.00 – 18.30	Praying Maghrib, Public Speaking ( <i>Kultum</i> )	<i>Kultum</i> in Arabic and English
15.	18.30 – 18.45	Dinner	
16.	18.45 – 19.30	Tahfidz Al-Qur'an	Tahfidz building
17.	19.30 – 19.50	Praying Isya	
18.	19.50 – 20.00	Preparation for independent learning, clean the bedroom	
19.	20.00 – 21.45	Independent learning	
20.	21.45 – 22.00	Qiro'ah Qabla Naum	
21.	22.00 – 04.00	Sleep	

The daily activities outlined above are further reinforced by various routine activities, such as those held in the mosque. As stipulated in the regulations, students are required to pray together in the mosque while adhering to specific dress codes, which include the following criteria: (1) for male students: sarong, Islamic robe (*gamis/koko/shirt*), black head covering (*kopiah*), and (2) for female students: prayer gown (*mukena*), Islamic attire for women, and socks. The students' attire is tailored to the activity, and they are expected to observe and adhere to the norms within the mosque, including signing attendance lists. Students are encouraged to prioritize the front rows during prayer and maintain cleanliness and a conducive atmosphere within the mosque.

**Table 2. The Schedule of Students' Weekly Activity**

No	Day	Time	Activity	Note
1.	Friday Night	19.00 – 19.30	Tamyiz	Grade X
			Tahfidz Qur'an	Grade XI, XII
		20.00 – 22.00	Pemakaian Handphone	
2.	Saturday Night	19.00 – 19.30	Qiratul Kutub	Week I, Week III
			Tarbiyah Islamiyah	Week II, Week IV
3.	Sunday Night	19.00 – 19.30	Mahfudzot	Week I, Week III
			Tematic Discussion	Week II, Week IV
4.	Sunday	05.00 – 06.00	Muhadatsah	Continued with <i>at-taujihaat wa al- irsyadat</i>
		07.00 – 07.30	Khidmat	Washing the dishes

08.00 – 15.00 Vacation

Conducted separately between the male and female

The weekly activity for students is Tahfiz/Qira'atul Kutub, which is mandatory for all students to participate in as per regulations. Students are required to meet the memorization target of the Qur'an as specified to fulfill certain requirements. It is expected that students achieve at least 80% of the given target. Additionally, students are encouraged to participate in other activities such as language activities. Furthermore, the monthly activities for students at MAN Insan Cendekia are as follows:

**Table 3. The Schedule of Monthly and Semester Activity of Students**

No	Activity/Day	Time	Activity	Note
<b>A. Monthly Activity</b>				
1.	Saturday night	20.00 – 22.00	Taujihat Irsyadaat	Week III
2.	Saturday Night	20.00 – 22.00	Watch movie together	Week IV
<b>B. Semester Activity</b>				
1.	Rolling room	Rolling room is conducted one semester		
2.	Rolling Dormitory	Rolling dormitory is conducted every two semester		

The observation of the learning process via Zoom can be discerned through various behaviors exhibited by teachers. These include communication with students, delivery of spiritual messages embedded within the learning materials, and imparting guidance on proper conduct in life. The manner in which teachers develop engaging learning activities is also crucial. For instance, when a student poses a question, the teacher may prompt other students to provide answers, thereby allowing students to expand their thinking. In cases where adequate responses are not forthcoming, the teacher will intervene and address the question. Furthermore, teachers frequently offer suggestions to encourage virtuous behavior and emphasize the importance of prayer. Additionally, Islamic values are integrated into the learning process, with teaching materials and evaluations aligned with Islamic principles such as spiritual attitudes, etiquette, and discipline.

**DISCUSSION**

The values of character reinforcement learned by students cannot be separated from cultural factors. As an educational institution with Islamic characteristics, madrasahs naturally prioritize everything related to religion. Additionally, madrasahs have their own distinct school culture, which is instrumental in maintaining these values within the institution. The integration of values and culture aims to cultivate competent students through educational traditions, contributing to the reinforcement of the nation's character, as elaborated below:

Arthur (Arthur, 2002) revealed that character education is typically perceived as a specific approach to moral education. The argument regarding this issue is that character education involves not only acquiring social skills but also fostering students' growth and development. On the other hand, a culture-based school emphasizes habit-based character education by prioritizing the implementation of character values in its vision, mission, and school branding (Chaironi, 2019). This culture encompasses various aspects, including rules and discipline. This implies that establishing a culture of discipline in both work and study is essential for creating a conducive environment in madrasahs. This discipline should be based on the commitment of all components within the madrasah.

The findings above are in line with a study conducted by (Fadli, 2021), which demonstrated that the implementation of socio-cultural-based character education can serve as an alternative solution and learning model to instill character values that consider the advancements of local culture and the potential of socio-cultural values. This design of character education is integrated into various subjects. Additionally, (Kasiyan & Sulisty, 2020) integrated local-culture-based character education through life skill learning, such as wood crafting for disabled individuals. Similarly, (Rohmatulloh, Aan Hasanah, & Ruswandi, 2020) conducted a study that integrated the local cultural values of Cirende, which involves a culture of cassava-based food. Furthermore, (Lutfiana, R, & Handayani, 2021) focused on implementing school culture to shape the religious character of students through daily, weekly, and annual activities, all while adhering to the institution's vision and mission.

These studies indicate that all institutions have their own culture that can be integrated into character education, thereby conducting character reinforcement based on the institution's culture or characteristics. This educational characteristic has the potential to strengthen the character of the nation. According to (Margerison & Ravenscroft, 2020), cultural learning provides individuals with the opportunity to reflect on their identity and culture. Therefore, (Arthur, 2008) specifically stated that character education should teach respect for others, which includes appreciating different cultures. This notion is further reinforced by the opinion of (Birhan, Shiferaw, Amsalu, Tamiru, & Tiruye, 2021), who emphasized that the need for character education programs has become a hot issue in several countries. This need is evident from statistics on school violence, absenteeism rates, dropout rates, and academic achievement (Christopher (Was, Woltz, & Drew, 2006).

The culture taught to students is that of the madrasah itself. Most of the cultural learning activities become educational traditions, which play a significant role in shaping students' character development (Haniyyah, 2021). If these traditions successfully foster students with good character and broad knowledge, they will positively impact the development of the nation's character. (Cheung & Lee, 2010) conducted a study that demonstrated the contribution of character education to social competence. Moreover, education is often regarded as the nucleus of excellence,

particularly in preparing quality human resources with strong characters (Rokhman, Hum, Syaifudin, & Yuliati, 2014).

Various educational approaches are employed in madrasahs, particularly to encourage students' involvement in activities related to character building. The traditional approach is frequently utilized in character education, emphasizing habits, imitation, modeling, instruction, reward, and punishment (Handoko & Sakti, 2023; Ulum & Syafi'i, 2022). Many traditions are frequently observed by students to enhance their studying experiences, often related to learning methods such as memorization and repetition (Manullang, Mardani, & Aslan, 2021). Additionally, a conducive environment is maintained through adherence to rules. All traditions simultaneously practiced by madrasahs represent positive activities that become ingrained as traditions for both the environment and the students. These traditions involve activities repeatedly performed by students, eventually becoming deeply ingrained habits. These traditions have the potential to influence the reinforcement of the nation's character significantly.

However, during the process of practicing these traditions, students may become bored. Nevertheless, a conducive environment will facilitate students' development, enabling them to overcome feelings of laziness and boredom. (Nerizka, Latipah, & Munawwir, 2021) emphasized that a child can develop into a well-characterized individual if surrounded by an environment that fosters good character traits. Therefore, the educational traditions practiced in madrasahs can serve as activities to reinforce the nation's character, supported by various facilitating facilities.

## CONCLUSION

The culture and traditions fostered at MAN Insan Cendekia have organically shaped the development of character values. These values are manifested through the daily practices within the Madrasah community. The distinctive characteristics of individuals or groups in the madrasah are evidenced through their language, beliefs, and traditions, which reflect virtues such as honesty, unity, tolerance, and respect. These virtues serve as the foundation for reinforcing character. The process of strengthening students' characters at MAN Insan Cendekia Gorontalo involves self-development and the cultivation of positive behaviors through a variety of activities, ultimately leading to the establishment of a cultured character.

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