Implementation of class-based character education strengthening: A case study at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo

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Abstract: This study aims to comprehensively describe the outcomes of an analysis of classroom-based character education values within the core competencies of various subjects, the integration of these values into teaching practices, and the overall implementation of classroom-based character education. Conducted as an intrinsic case study, the research followed three stages: data collection, description, and analysis, to elucidate the unique narrative of classroom-based character education implementation. The research took place at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo from October 2022 to June 2023, involving educators from the disciplines of Chemistry, Physics, Biology, and Mathematics. Key data sources included the Principal, Vice Principal for Student Affairs, homeroom teachers, subject teachers, students, and supporting documents. Data were meticulously collected through interviews and observations, with the credibility of the data being ensured through triangulation of methods and sources. Analysis was conducted using Atlas.ti version 8 software. The findings reveal that the character education framework at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo is centered on core values such as cooperation, devotion to God, and integrity. Teachers play a crucial role in consistently monitoring student behavior and developing lesson plans that seamlessly integrate these character values. This integration is reflected in students’ social interactions and collaborative spirit within the classroom setting. Furthermore, character evaluation is conducted holistically, considering not only academic performance but also behavior, social interactions, and psychomotor skills. This comprehensive approach ensures that character education is embedded in the everyday experiences of students, fostering a well-rounded development that goes beyond academic achievement.

Keywords: class-based, SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo, strengthening character education

1. Introduction

Character education has become a primary focus in Indonesia’s educational system, recognizing the importance of developing a generation that is not only intellectually proficient but also morally sound (Nugraha et al., 2023; Puri, 2021; Widyawati & Cahayu, 2023). Since the Old Order period, the concept of character education was introduced by President Soekarno through the Nation and Character Building, aimed at fostering a solid national identity (Aman & Singh, 2022). During the New Order era, the Pedoman Penghayatan dan Pengamalan Pancasila (P4) program was introduced to instill Pancasila values in citizens’ daily lives (Arifin, 2021). The reform era brought significant changes with the birth of the National Mental Revolution Movement (GNRM), which prioritized character education strengthening (PPK) (Rahman et al., 2021). PPK aims to enhance students’ character by harmonizing heart, taste, thought, and physical activities involving educational units, families, and communities.

In the era of globalization and modernization, which influence the nation’s moral and cultural values, character education is increasingly recognized as essential (Alhadika et al., 2021; Mulyono, 2017). Character education is expected to equip the younger generation with positive values such as honesty, responsibility, hard work, and respect for others (Retnasari et al., 2021). However, despite character education being a part of national education policy, its implementation in schools faces various challenges (Asri & Deviv, 2023; Jhon, 2021; Kurniasih et al., 2018). Some schools have attempted to implement character education through special programs, but the results are unsatisfactory.

At SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo, implementing classroom-based character education encounters obstacles such as a lack of synergy between academic learning and the inculcation of character values. The school faces challenges integrating character education into the curriculum and daily classroom activities. Moreover, parental and community involvement in supporting the school's character education program must be enhanced. These challenges indicate the need for in-depth
research to understand and address the barriers to implementing PPK at the classroom level.

This research is motivated by the phenomenon that despite various efforts, the outcomes of character education implementation have yet to be entirely satisfactory (Hamadi et al., 2022; Tamjidnor & Nazi Ismail, 2022). Many students have yet to show significant behavioral changes, and character values are not fully internalized daily (Achadah et al., 2022; Rahim Saidek et al., 2016). Therefore, it is crucial to examine further how classroom-based character education is implemented at the SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo and the factors influencing its success.

This study aimed to explore and analyze the implementation of classroom-based PPK at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo. The specific objectives of this research are (1) to identify the programs and strategies applied in character education at this school, (2) to analyze the factors that support and hinder the implementation of classroom-based PPK, and (3) to provide recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the PPK program at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo. This research is expected to make a tangible contribution to strengthening character education in schools, particularly integrated Islamic schools.

The literature on character education discusses the importance of integrating character values into curricula and implementation strategies (Suherman, 2018). However, limited research has explicitly explored implementing classroom-based PPK in integrated Islamic schools (Martina et al., 2021; Wardi et al., 2023). Most existing studies focus more on theoretical aspects and provide less practical insight into applying PPK in specific school environments (Nurhayati et al., 2021). Therefore, this research aims to fill this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of the practice of PPK implementation at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo, including the supporting and inhibiting factors and applicable solutions.

A study by Rohman & Mentari (2024) and Zurqoni et al. (2018) revealed that the success of character education heavily depends on the involvement of all parties, including teachers, students, parents, and the community. However, these studies need more emphasis on practical implementation in the classroom, particularly in integrated Islamic schools with unique educational approaches. This research seeks to address this gap by focusing on a detailed analysis of PPK implementation at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo.

This study offers several novel aspects that are significant to character education. First, it provides empirical insights into implementing classroom-based PPK in integrated Islamic schools, which has yet to be discussed in the literature. Second, this study highlights the importance of a collaborative approach among schools, families, and communities in supporting character education, which is highly relevant in the Indonesian cultural context. Third, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for other schools in developing practical and sustainable PPK programs. Thus, this research contributes academically and practically to efforts to strengthen character education in Indonesia.

Implementing character education in schools is crucial for achieving the national educational goal of producing graduates with excellent character. SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo, as an integrated Islamic school, has significant potential as a model for the effective implementation of character education. However, to achieve this, there is a need for comprehensive and in-depth research on how character education can be effectively integrated into classroom learning. This study is expected to significantly improve the quality of character education in Indonesia, particularly at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo.

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design to uncover the phenomenon of implementing character education strengthening (PPK) based on the SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo classroom. Using a natural setting where the researcher acts as the key instrument, the data obtained are descriptive. The qualitative approach was chosen to describe and analyze the process of implementing classroom-based PPK. This study follows the stages of data collection, description, and analysis to produce a unique narrative reflecting an intrinsic interest in the case under investigation.

This study’s subjects include chemistry, physics, biology, and mathematics teachers at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo. Additional data sources include the Principal, Vice Principal of Student Affairs, homeroom teachers, students, and other supporting documents.

The research was conducted from October 2022 to June 2023. The research process involved interactive communication with various parties at the school, such as students, teachers, school leaders, and the foundation, to understand the meaning of classroom-based PPK implementation from their perspectives. The researcher did not intervene with the respondents but focused on describing and analyzing the meanings derived from their experiences.

The data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. Method and source triangulation techniques were employed to enhance the data credibility. The interviews were conducted with various stakeholders to obtain comprehensive perspectives. Data analysis was performed inductively using Atlas version 8 software. The collected data were interpreted to reveal the meaning of the phenomenon occurring. This study emphasizes the interpretation and analysis of data in a natural context to understand how character values are integrated and applied in teaching and learning activities at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Implementation of Class-Based Character Education Strengthening at SMAIT Nur Hidayah
Character Education Strengthening (PPK) is an educational movement in schools aimed at enhancing student character through the harmonization of ethical values (ethics), aesthetic values (aesthetics), literacy (cognitive), and kinesthetic (physical) activities, supported by public involvement and collaboration among educational units, families, and communities as part of the National Mental Revolution Movement (GNRM) (Perpres, 2017).

Interviews, observations, and literature studies reveal that teachers' planning in teaching involves preparing syllabi and lesson plans (RPP) that must include character values to be developed. This aligns with the Indonesian Minister of National Education Regulation No. 41 of 2007 concerning the Standard Process for Primary and Secondary Education Units, which states that the planning of the learning process must include a syllabus and lesson plans (RPP).

In the context of learning, planning serves as a scenario that guides the implementation of educational programs for educators and provides students with systematic and compelling learning experiences. This planning encompasses the curriculum, syllabus, RPP, and teaching materials. Such planning supports the execution of the teaching process.

In implementing character education in schools, the RPP ensures that each teacher is prepared for teaching activities and develops students' competencies and characters. According to Mulyasa (2011), a character-based RPP is essential for effective learning processes and character formation in students as planned.

Teachers must understand how to develop RPPs and learning objectives and establish assessment indicators in planning. A teacher's understanding of implementing learning is reflected in the planning before the teaching process begins. Thus, teachers directly implement classroom-based character education through four methods: integrating character values into the thematic learning process within subjects as per the curriculum; planning classroom management and teaching methods/guidance according to student characteristics; evaluating learning and guidance; and developing local content curricula based on the needs and characteristics of the region, educational units, and students (Permentikbud, 2018).

Lesson planning at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo also involves preparing and developing teaching materials from a character perspective. Preparing teaching materials to implement and strengthen character education is crucial for achieving learning objectives. Oemar Hamalik (2002) states that teaching materials are a significant part of the teaching and learning process and are related to achieving learning objectives, thus requiring careful consideration in their planning.

As educators, teachers aim to ensure that instilling character education can be effective. Therefore, they must understand how to develop lesson plans (RPPs) by preparing materials for focused group discussions (FGD) and designing classroom activities. As a common practice, teachers also start each learning session with a prayer.

From the above explanation, it can be concluded that the planning stage of character education implementation involves preparing syllabi, RPPs, and teaching materials. Syllabi and RPPs must incorporate values and behaviors to enhance the learning process and form and strengthen student character as planned. Teaching materials must be carefully considered because they are an essential part of the teaching and learning process for achieving learning objectives.

3.2. Integration of class-based character education in the learning process at the SMAIT Nur Hidayah

3.2.1 Steps of Learning

From the observations during the implementation phase of character education strengthening, the steps taken in the learning process encompass three stages: the initial activities, the core activities, and the closing activities. These stages stimulate student engagement and foster interaction in the classroom. This aligns with Masnur Muslich's view that the subcomponents of learning implementation are directed at three aspects: (1) learning activities, (2) core activities, and (3) closing activities (Muslich, 2007).

Learning outcomes result from interacting with external stimuli and students' internal knowledge. According to Gagne, activities such as performance and transfer of learning are essential in learning. External factors, including stimuli and the learning environment, and internal factors, reflecting students' cognitive states and processes, play crucial roles in learning (Rumiyati, 2008).

In integrating classroom-based character education strengthening, teachers at SMAIT Nur Hidayah are responsible for delivering knowledge and fostering good and civilized character among their students. The role of teachers in character education is critical. For instance, in teaching physics, educators convey general knowledge and create a classroom environment that promotes positive habits, aiming to develop students' good character.

The explanation above concludes that the learning process implementation includes initial, core, and closing activities. These stages must incorporate stimuli or prompts to foster interaction, which helps shape students' potential and makes learning more meaningful.

Moreover, it is essential to consider the educational concept put forward by Ki Hadjar Dewantara, the founder of Taman Siswa and recognized as the Father of National Education, particularly regarding character education strengthening. He proposed the "tripusat pendidikan" concept, emphasizing the integration of three educational centers to strengthen student character.

The Tripusat Pendidikan recognizes three educational environments: (1) family education, (2) school education, and (3) community or youth education. These three centers significantly influence the character development of children or students.
(Subkhan & Annisa, 2018). Therefore, the involvement of family, school, and community is crucial in shaping the noble character of children, as envisioned by the father of education.

3.2.2. Methods of Learning

The method is perceived as essential in delivering instructional material to ensure effective learning implementation. With an appropriate method, the learning objectives can be achieved. Rumiyati explains that a teaching method can be defined as implementing a plan for concrete and practical activities to achieve learning goals. Various teaching methods can be employed to implement learning strategies, including lectures, demonstrations, discussions, simulations, laboratory activities, field experiences, brainstorming, debates, etc. (Rumiyati, 2008). Consistent with Sagala’s view, Rumiyati asserts that how teachers process information, such as facts, data, and concepts during the learning process, can constitute a strategy. Teachers should be adept at using or choosing appropriate methods that align with the material and the students' conditions (Rumiyati, 2008).

The methods used by teachers must be appropriate. Thus, teachers must continually innovate to ensure the learning process is easily understood and prevent students from becoming bored. For instance, problem-based and contextual learning methods can be employed. Informants rarely use the lecture method because it is considered monotonous and boring.

Furthermore, various teaching methods are employed at SMAIT Nur Hidayah. According to Sagala, Rumiyati states that the methods used in the learning process include the lecture method, which is perceived as allowing students to understand the overview of the learning process and involves explaining material verbally. The question-and-answer method encourages students to ask questions about topics they do not understand and aims to draw students' attention and focus on the learning process. This method can deepen students’ understanding and stimulate their concentration through interactive questioning. The discussion method fosters collaboration among students, allowing them to generate ideas. Sagala (Rumiyati, 2008: 59) posits that the discussion method is particularly suitable for developing complex skills, critical thinking, and problem-solving abilities, thereby encouraging students' creativity in generating solutions. The problem-solving method involves thinking and solving problems, where students are presented with a problem and asked to resolve it. The assignment method involves tasks given by the teacher to the students, often to be completed at home or outside school due to the longer time needed. This method is typically used after lessons to help students internalize what has been taught. Assignments are discussed collectively to achieve better outcomes (Rumiyati, 2008).

Numerous methods can be applied in teaching. The correct choice of method will lead to the achievement of learning objectives. Additionally, teachers must create a conducive learning environment that is more focused and meaningful for students.

3.2.3. Learning Media

Media is perceived as a facilitative tool for students' understanding during learning activities. Therefore, media is a crucial component of learning that stimulates and fosters students' interest in learning. As Sagala in Rumiyati (2008) states, learning media is understood as a communication tool used in the learning process to convey information in the form of teaching material from the teacher to the students, making the students more interested in participating in learning activities (Rumiyati, 2008).

Media is essential to learning to stimulate and foster students' interest. Choosing the appropriate media that suits the student’s needs and the material's characteristics can effectively help achieve learning objectives. Thus, the learning process and its outcomes become more quality-oriented because the learning objectives are well achieved.

Therefore, the media used in the learning process must also be appropriate. Teachers use learning media to facilitate the achievement of learning objectives. The media used are not only inanimate objects but also living entities. Thus, teachers, as educators, can also be considered media in learning by providing real-life examples.

The media used in the learning process at SMAIT Nur Hidayah are not only material. According to Winataputra (2009), media can be material, immaterial, behavioral, or personal, serving as a means to facilitate, smooth, and ensure the success of the learning process and outcomes.

Thus, implementing classroom learning without using media would make it difficult for students to understand. However, with media, students become active, and interaction occurs in the learning process, making it easier to digest the learning material. Media for classroom learning are not limited to material objects but can also be immaterial, conditional, and personal.

3.3. Prominent character education values in learning objectives

A teacher not only bears responsibility as a disseminator of knowledge but also must act as a figure accountable, akin to a parent. They not only transfer knowledge to students but are also responsible for instilling excellent and cultured character. The role of a teacher in shaping students' character is crucial. In the context of the physics subject, the informant not only
teaches general knowledge but also shapes a classroom environment that fosters positive habits, with the aim of students developing good character.

Teachers must actively instill character education values through concrete actions and actual habits in the form of direct behavior. During the learning process, teachers must consistently emphasize the values of integrity and discipline to students by implementing classroom routines and habits, such as praying before commencing lessons and reciting verses from the Holy Quran. Thus, teachers impart subject matter and instill ethical norms and etiquette in the classroom before beginning the learning process.

In the execution of teaching and simultaneously in the effort to instill character in students, teachers should also provide insights into applying moral knowledge. Teachers apply moral expertise to students and reflect on themselves in this context. This step is expected to support the strengthening of moral education for students. For instance, a teacher understands and carefully considers arranging the learning framework. In self-recognition, the informant acting as a teacher realizes that in creating reinforcement and instilling character values in students, it is crucial to understand the characteristics of character education advocated by the state.

As teachers, one must understand that instilling the character values of Indonesia involves aspects of cooperation, integrity, and faith. In implementing the value of collaboration in the classroom, especially in physics, teachers encourage students to work together in groups to solve problems. To achieve this, teachers implement discussions in the form of Focus Group Discussions (FGD). Students are also taught to present the results of learning discussions and apply Student Worksheets (LKPD). The teacher hopes that through this learning system, students can internalize the values of cooperation.

A teacher should also demonstrate good character; one crucial aspect is integrity. Integrity in character instillation by teachers can be seen in correctly implementing learning components and character education for students. Regarding faith-based character values, teachers instill faith in Allah SWT by being devout to Him and reading the Quran. In the classroom, teachers teach students to start their learning by reciting prayers and verses from the Quran and encourage students to read, understand, and give meaning to each verse. Students are also taught to correlate and connect Quranic verses with the subject matter studied.

Based on the field findings described above, the Class-Based Character Education Implementation Model at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo can be presented in Figure 1 below:

![Figure 1 Model of Class-Based Character Education Implementation at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo](image)

Implementing class-based character education (PPK) at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo has successfully guided students in academic learning with a strong foundation of good character. The principle of the SMAIT NH emphasizes the need for collective and continuous efforts related to PPK through (1) instilling character values, (2) reinforcing character values, and (3) capitalizing character values. The school leaders, all class guardians, all subject teachers, and all educational staff are responsible for the emergence of well-charactered students in grades X, XI, and XII. The head of the SMAIT NH involves mentors from twelfth-grade students who pass the selection process to accompany younger students in grades X and XI. The success of
PPK is assessed through evaluations documented in the Lesson Plans (RPP) and observed behavioral practices based on the Student Code of Conduct resulting from student deliberations.

4. Conclusions

Based on the research conducted at SMAIT Nur Hidayah Sukoharjo regarding the strengthening of class-based character education, it can be concluded that character education at this school emphasizes the internalization of values such as cooperation, a sense of piety toward God, and integrity. The success of character education implantation is measured through students’ ability to understand morality, maintain integrity, and demonstrate piety toward God. Teachers at SMAIT Nur Hidayah consistently monitor students’ behavior inside and outside the school. They also prepare syllabi and lesson plans (RPP) that include character values, following the Regulation of the Minister of National Education of the Republic of Indonesia Number 41 of 2007. The learning process involves initial, core, and final activities, with various methods such as lectures, demonstrations, discussions, and simulations. Learning media are also tailored to the themes being taught.

Moreover, SMAIT Nur Hidayah has a unique institution called Bina Pribadi Islam (BPI) responsible for character education development. BPI focuses on religious aspects and develops students’ aspects through programs such as public speaking training. Implementing character education also involves teaching etiquette, academic responsibility, and full awareness as a Muslim. Students are taught to respect teachers, security guards, and cleaning staff and to perform religious rituals with discipline. In learning, students are encouraged to prioritize etiquette before knowledge. Teachers integrate Quranic teachings into learning materials and relate learning content to Quranic verses.

Character education is also strengthened through cooperation activities inside and outside the school. Teachers instill empathy by encouraging students to help classmates who have difficulty understanding the material. Nationalism is instilled through flag-raising ceremonies and energy conservation activities. Learning evaluations include academic assessments and student behavior inside and outside the classroom. If violations occur, teachers take firm action and involve class guardians and guidance counselors to guide the students involved. This approach is punitive and provides mentoring and understanding to students.

Ethical Considerations

To protect the anonymity of respondents, all collected data were encrypted and stored anonymously, with no personal identifying information linked to their responses. We also obtained written consent from each respondent after fully explaining the research objectives and their rights as participants.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that no conflicts of interest are associated with this research. All analyses and conclusions were conducted independently without any external influence.

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