

Research Article

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Implementation of Character Education in Elementary Schools (Comparative Study between SDIT and Public Elementary Schools in West Lombok)

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the implementation of character education in Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (SDIT) and Public Elementary Schools (SDN) through a comparative approach. Character education plays a crucial role in shaping students' personalities, fostering responsibility, and promoting integrity. The research adopts a case study methodology to explore how character education is implemented in two distinct school environments. Data was gathered through observations, interviews, and documentation at SDIT and SDN schools in West Lombok. The findings indicate that SDIT offers a more structured, religiously oriented, and integrated character education program within the curriculum. This includes practices such as morning dhikr, prayer guidance, and the use of habit tracking books at home. SDIT also conducts formal evaluations using quantitative data, such as recording violations and assessing students' affective values. These evaluations are discussed during monthly meetings and annual work reviews. In contrast, SDN focuses on a simpler, habit-based approach, emphasizing activities like prayer before class, class duties, and extracurricular activities. However, there are no formal tools in place for evaluation. As a result, SDIT tends to be more attractive to parents compared to Public Elementary Schools.

Keywords: Character Education, Integrated Islamic Elementary School, Public Elementary School

Introduction

Moral degradation presents a significant challenge in the field of education today (Prihatmojo & Badawi, 2020). Many cases of deviant behavior, such as fighting, bullying, drug abuse, sexual harassment, and the use of pornography, are becoming increasingly common among students. Teachers often encounter students who are dishonest, disrespectful toward adults, and overly indulgent in social media (Prihatmojo & Badawi, 2020). One of the most alarming statistics is that 68 percent of students have accessed pornographic content online (Zubaidah, 2013). This issue is critical and must be addressed to protect students from further moral degradation. One way to combat this is through character education. Character education

plays an essential role in preventing moral decline among students (Prihatmojo & Badawi, 2020). It is an integral part of personality development, aiming to instill knowledge, good attitudes, values, and behaviors. Character education is a deliberate effort to cultivate ethical values for individual growth and societal benefit (Dalmeri, 2014). The primary goal of character education is to teach certain traditional values that promote responsible and morally sound behavior (Dalmeri, 2014).

Research by As and Sofyan (2023) suggests that character education is most successful when a comprehensive approach is applied. They found that character development in students requires the integration of the curriculum, teaching practices, and social

environments, rather than focusing on just one educational aspect. By instilling noble values from an early age, the younger generation can grow into responsible, virtuous individuals who can positively contribute to society and the nation.

In the context of education in Indonesia, student character development is expected to thrive through various educational approaches that prioritize moral, ethical, social, and spiritual values. According to Andiarini and Nurabadi (2018), the formation of student character can be achieved through the implementation of school programs designed to strengthen character education. Character development in elementary school children can be shaped through consistent character education from the family, school, and the surrounding community (Kurniawan, 2015). There is a noticeable difference between the education models applied in religious schools or private schools (such as Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools, or SDIT) and public schools (State Elementary Schools, or SDN), which operate under the national education system. SDITs have unique characteristics in implementing character education, as they integrate religious education with character formation. The curriculum in SDITs tends to emphasize Islamic values that foster moral, spiritual, and ethical development in line with religious teachings. On the other hand, State Elementary Schools (SDNs), governed by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia, focus more on developing character based on Pancasila (the state ideology) and national values. The SDN curriculum is generally more inclusive and culturally diverse, reflecting the national principles for all of Indonesian society. Public schools primarily rely on simple habits and extracurricular activities.

Sari and Linda (2019) found that character education in SDITs is integrated into personal development programs, learning activities, and school culture. These include routine activities, exemplary behavior, spontaneous activities, and a

conducive environment. Character values are incorporated into lesson plans and syllabi, ensuring they are embedded in daily school activities. In contrast, SDITs place a strong emphasis on character education through habit formation and reinforcement. The study by Amazona (2016) highlighted that the character education program at Hidayatullah Integrated Islamic Elementary School in Yogyakarta focuses on instilling values such as honesty, diligence, discipline, and responsibility through school habits and culture. Fauziyah et al. (2019) found that character education in Islamic schools integrates both methods: an integrated approach, where Islamic values are embedded in learning, and a classical approach, based on monotheism. Fauziyah and Suyatno (2024) concluded that the implementation of character education is carried out in three critical stages: planning, which involves identifying religious activities and integrating them with learning activities; management, which includes organizing school activities and developing students; and preparation, including facilities, infrastructure, and curriculum planning.

Previous studies show that while many schools have implemented character education programs, their effectiveness is still not maximized. Internal and external factors, such as leadership, motivation, parental support, and the social environment, can significantly influence the success of character education in schools (Huda et al., 2021). Therefore, this research aims to better understand the implementation of character education in both Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools and public schools by involving teachers and students. This study intends to analyze the implementation of character education in both types of schools, focusing on the program, approach, and evaluation.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, aiming to compare the implementation of character education between Integrated Islamic Elementary Schools (SDIT) and State Elementary Schools (SDN). The research was conducted at SDIT (X) and SDN (Y), located in West Lombok District. The subjects of the study included teachers and the curriculum documents from each school. The research instruments used were observation guidelines, interview protocols, and documentation.

Data collection was carried out to gather the necessary information to achieve the research objectives (W. Gulo, 2002: 110). The data collection methods in this qualitative research included observation, interviews, and documentation. The data analysis techniques employed were as follows: (a) Data Reduction,

which refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data from field notes; (b) Data Presentation, which involves organizing the data in a way that allows for the drawing of conclusions and action. In qualitative research, data is usually presented in the form of narrative text, organized and structured to illustrate relationships, making it easier to understand; (c) Drawing Conclusions, where the researcher derives meaningful conclusions about the comparison of character education implementation in SDIT and SDN, answering the research questions formulated at the outset and after synthesizing important information (Koesoema, 2010).

Results and Discussion

Following is results interview with subject study about implementation education characters in their respective schools.

Table 1. Interview Results

No	Aspect	SD IT	Public Elementary School
1	Programs and Activities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reception Morning 2. Dhikr Morning / Class Development 3. Active Speaker / Reminder via speaker periodic 4. Mentoring Eat 5. Mentoring cleanliness 6. Mentoring excuse me ' 7. Mentoring prayer 8. The Muhadharah 9. Book habituation / Control at home 10. Disciplinary police 11. Coaching from Waka. Student Affairs 	Education programs character: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Literacy school (Activities) in the form of co-curricular and intra- curricular) 2. Activity Extracurricular 3. Activity beginning and end learning (intra- curricular) 4. Habituation (S3, praying, ceremonies, etc.) 5. Determination of Rules of Procedure.
2	Integration in curriculum	School Integrating Character Education to in curriculum that is with enter all planting programs character into the timetable activity Study Teach student in a way scheduled with as well as do evaluation in a way periodically which will be entered into the mark report	Integrated in activity learning and extracurricular Scouts and Karate

		card student as report to parents and policies institutional in the future.	
3	Approaches and Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach Task • Approach Advice • Approach Exemplary • Approach <i>Rewards and Punishments</i> 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approach exemplary: giving good role model in the form of attitude , good words . 2. Inspirational: giving motivation to students for develop talent or interests that are owned. 3. Internalization value: instill values positive that already owned student with method give flattery or award other. 4. Learning do; learning in the form of practice like throw away trash in its place, students be an MC at an activity Imtaq, to become officer ceremony, and carry out picket class.
4	Tools and instruments	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. From the total data violations committed students (data from police discipline) 2. Affective values semester 	Nothing
5	Work with parents	There is, through book connector	There is no collaboration
6	Action Carry on	Summarized data based on results evaluation evaluated together moment meeting monthly and meetings Work end year	Evaluation results used For improve and compile the next program

Implementation of Character Education at SDIT (X)

Table 1 shows that the implementation of character education programs in schools is carried out through various activities designed to instill positive values in students. At SDIT, several routine programs are implemented, such as a morning reception with greetings and salutations, morning dhikr in the classroom, periodic reminders of character values through reinforcement, and mentoring students in daily activities like eating, maintaining cleanliness, performing ablution, and praying. Additionally, there are activities like Muhadharah to discuss religious and moral values, the use of behavior monitoring books for students at home, and disciplinary programs to record violations of

school rules. The deputy principal for student affairs also plays an active role in supporting the development of students' character.

This program is integrated into both the curriculum and extracurricular activities. It becomes part of the structured timetable for teaching and learning, with periodic evaluations, the results of which are included in students' report cards. Character education is also reinforced through an approach that involves parents. Parents are provided with habit-tracking books to monitor and record their children's activities at home, which are then periodically evaluated by the teachers. In the learning process, teachers incorporate character values through various approaches, such as assigning tasks that require more than simple answers, giving advice,

serving as role models, and implementing a reward-and-punishment system. Teachers also entrust students with responsibilities, such as serving as discipline officers to monitor rule violations committed by their peers.

The success of character education programs is evaluated based on data such as the number of student violations and the assessment of affective outcomes each semester, which are reported on the students' report cards. Special tools, such as discipline officer records and habit books filled out by parents, are used to monitor students' character development. Violations are addressed progressively, starting with advice and escalating to intensive coaching when necessary. Actions like assigning tasks, making presentations, and involving parents are also implemented. For serious violations, consultations with a psychologist are conducted if needed. The actions taken based on program evaluations are carried out by the Deputy Principal for Student Affairs, who compiles evaluation data from various sources. The evaluation results are discussed in monthly meetings and annual work meetings to further develop the character education programs for the upcoming year. This process ensures that the program is continually improved and adapted to meet evolving needs, so that character education can be applied optimally and sustainably.

Implementation of Character Education in Public Elementary School (Y)

The implementation of character education programs at SD Negeri (Y) consists of five main components: school literacy through intra- and co-curricular activities, extracurricular activities such as scouting and karate, daily habits like the 3S (Smile, Greet, Say Hello), prayers before and after lessons, and the observance of ceremonies and school rules. These programs aim to instill values such as discipline, responsibility, and teamwork among students.

Character education is integrated into both classroom learning and extracurricular activities. In the classroom, students are accustomed to starting and ending lessons with prayer, engaging in five minutes of reading before learning, and completing assignments individually or in groups. Extracurricular activities, such as scouting and karate, are designed to teach discipline, responsibility, and physical fitness. Teachers employ approaches such as role modeling, providing inspiration, and engaging students in practical activities, such as disposing of trash properly, acting as ceremony officers, and participating in classroom cleaning duties.

Parental involvement is also emphasized through the school committee, participation in maintaining the school environment, and engagement in religious events, further strengthening the program's implementation.

Program evaluation focuses on monitoring the extent to which good habits, such as greetings, smiles, and classroom cleanliness, are consciously practiced by the school community. Indicators of success include smooth learning activities, a safe school environment, and cooperative attitudes among students. However, the school does not yet use specific tools to monitor students' character development. In cases of violations, teachers provide direct advice or assign tasks suited to the students' interests and talents to address errors.

The evaluation results are used to refine the character education programs. Effective programs are maintained and continued, while less effective ones are revised or discontinued. This comprehensive evaluation process ensures that the programs are continuously developed and adapted to meet the needs of students and the school.

Character education programs in SDIT and State Elementary Schools (SDN) demonstrate different approaches in their implementation, even though the underlying programs share similarities. Both schools integrate character

education into their curricula, encompassing both intracurricular and extracurricular activities. However, differences arise in their implementation, particularly in the activities and evaluation tools used.

SDIT emphasizes religious habituation, such as morning dhikr, prayer mentoring, monitoring through habit books at home, and formal evaluations integrated into student report cards. This program actively involves parents, employs a gradual approach to addressing student violations, and utilizes data-driven evaluations to refine character education policies. In contrast, SDN focuses on fostering universal character traits through simpler routines, such as prayer before lessons, literacy activities, and extracurriculars like scouting and karate. However, evaluations at SDN are primarily observational and lack formal tools, making it challenging to measure the program's overall impact accurately. This limitation hinders the development and improvement of character education programs, as the absence of structured evaluation tools like journals, rubrics, or other written assessments restricts informed decision-making.

Based on Thomas Lickona's theory, SDIT more effectively fulfills the three pillars of character education: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. This is because SDIT employs a systematic approach, incorporating daily reinforcement and habituation, as well as behavior monitoring to holistically shape students' character. A structured system of rewards, punishments, and formal evaluations ensures that students not only understand moral values but are also capable of applying them in their daily lives. Research by Berkowitz and Bier (2005) and Lapsley and Narvaez (2006) supports the effectiveness of this approach, highlighting the role of parental involvement, strict supervision, and data-based evaluations. These practices align with the 11 principles of effective character education as outlined by Lapsley and

Narvaez (2006). Moreover, the daily habituation and control efforts implemented by SDIT are consistent with the findings of Hendriana and Jacobus (2016), who emphasized that student character can be cultivated through continuous teacher modeling and sustained habituation.

This approach is referred to as the value inculcation approach (Lickona, 1991), which emphasizes self-directed moral development in students. Learning methods within this approach include modeling, positive and negative reinforcement, simulations, and role-playing. The alignment of reinforcement and habituation with Lickona's theory—encompassing moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action—is further supported by mentoring techniques. According to Lickona (1991), mentoring acts as a corrective feedback mechanism, offering students guidance to align their behavior with moral standards.

Research by Solissa et al. (2024) on culturally responsive character education for Society 5.0 underscores the need for adaptive approaches to social changes. This aligns with the character education model in SDIT, which incorporates evaluations and active parental involvement, making it more prepared to address the dynamic challenges of modern society. On the other hand, while SDN fosters moral feeling through collaborative activities, the lack of formal evaluation mechanisms undermines consistency in character education outcomes.

Considering these theoretical and empirical findings, the character education program in SDIT is more effective compared to that in public elementary schools. SDIT's program is not only comprehensive but also results-oriented, leveraging structured evaluation tools to create significant and long-term impacts on students' character development.

Conclusion

This study explores the implementation of character education in Integrated Islamic

Elementary Schools (SDIT) and Public Elementary Schools (SDN). While both types of schools share the overarching goal of developing students' character through intracurricular and extracurricular programs, their approaches to implementation differ significantly. SDIT employs a more structured and religiously integrated program, embedding Islamic values deeply into the curriculum. Activities such as morning dhikr, prayer guidance, and the use of habituation books at home are central components of SDIT's character education efforts.

Evaluation at SDIT is conducted formally and measurably, utilizing quantitative data such as records of violations maintained by disciplinary officers and assessments of students' affective values. This structured approach ensures that the impact of the program can be measured accurately. Furthermore, the involvement of the entire educational ecosystem—students, teachers, and parents—enhances the effectiveness of SDIT's character education program. The clear and measurable strategies employed by SDIT have also contributed to increased parental interest in enrolling their children in these schools, as parents value the transparency and accountability in the character-building process.

In contrast, SDN adopts a simpler, habit-based approach, relying on daily routines and extracurricular activities such as scouting and karate. While SDN integrates Pancasila values and national character into its curriculum, its evaluation methods are largely qualitative, lacking formal tools to measure the effectiveness of these programs. This absence of measurable evaluation tools makes it difficult for teachers to assess changes in students' behavior accurately or make data-driven improvements to the program.

To enhance the effectiveness of character education in both school systems, close collaboration between schools and parents is crucial. Reinforcing the values taught at school with consistent practices at home can lead to more impactful character education, helping to

cultivate a responsible, virtuous, and socially impactful younger generation. Additionally, the implementation of formal evaluation tools is recommended to track and measure behavioral changes in students. Without such tools, teachers lack the means to systematically assess and understand the outcomes of character education initiatives.

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