

The Role of Curriculum Management in Strengthening Students' Character Development Among Student in Islamic Madrasahs

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Abstract :

This study aims to describe the role of curriculum management in strengthening students' character in madrasah as an effort to improve the quality of Islamic – based education. Character strengthening is an essential aspect of modern education, particularly in Islamic educational institutions that emphasize the integration of academic competence and moral values. This reasearch employed a qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were collected throught in-depth interviews with the principal, vice principal of curriculum affairs, teachers, and students, as well as direct abservation and curriculum document analysis. The findings indicate that curriculum management plays a strategic role throught three main aspect : curriculum planning that integrates Islamic character values, collaborative and contextual learning implementation, and continuous evaluation based on habituation and role modeling. In addition, madrasah leadership and school culture significantly influence the success of character – strengthening programs. These findings highlight that effective curriculum management serves as a strong foundation for developing students who are virtuous, disciplined, and responsible.

Keywords : Curriculum Management, Character Education, Character Strengthening, Madrasah, Islamic Education.

Abstrak :

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsika peran manajemen kurikulum dalam menguatkan karakter peserta didik di madrasah sebagai salah satu Upaya pengembangan mutu Pendidikan berbasis nilai – nilai islam. Penguatan karakter menjadi aspek penting dalam Pendidikan modern, khususnya pada Lembaga Pendidikan Islam yang menekankan integrasi antara kompetensi akademik dan akhlak. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan kepala madrasah bidang kurikulum, guru, dan peserta didik, serta observasi langsung dan analisis dokumen kurikulum. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa manajemen kurikulum memiliki peran strategis melalui tiga aspek utama perencanaan kurikulum yang memasukkan nilai – nilai karakter Islami, pelaksanaan pembelajaran yang kolaboratif dan kontekstual, serta evaluasi berkelanjutan berbasis pembiasaan dan keteladanan. Selain itu kepemimpinan madrasah dan budaya sekolah berpengaruh signifikan terhadap keberhasilan program penguatan karakter. Temuan ini menegaskan ahwa integrasi manajemen kurikulum yang efektif dapat menjadi fondasi dalam membangun karakter peserta didik yang berakhlak, disiplin, dan bertanggung jawab.

Kata Kunci: Manajemen Kurikulum, Pendidikan Karakter, Penguatan Karakter, Madrasah, Pendidikan Islam

INTRODUCTION

Character education has become a central focus in developing students who are not only academically competent but also morally grounded, disciplined, and responsible—particularly in Islamic-based educational institutions such as madrasahs. In today's era of globalization and rapid technological development, the challenges of cultivating strong character are increasingly complex. Schools and madrasahs are therefore expected to function not only as centers of knowledge transmission but also as institutions for moral and character formation (Khoiriyah, Makhshun, Muthohharoh, & Rusydiyah, 2023).

Within this context, curriculum management plays a strategic role. Through the curriculum, character values can be integrated into learning activities—whether through core subjects, local content, co-curricular, or daily school routines. Previous studies highlight that successful character education implementation requires synergy between curriculum planning, instructional practices and continuous evaluation. It is not merely about delivering moral content but embedding values into school culture through habituation and exemplary behavior (Konsep & Salim, 2011).

Although research on character education in madrasah is quite extensive, studies that specifically examine how curriculum management (planning, implementation, and evaluation) contributes to strengthening students' character remain limited, especially from a qualitative perspective. Therefore, this study is necessary to provide an empirical description of the role of curriculum management in character building within madrasahs, including supporting and inhibiting factors (Guru, Ibtidaiyah, Islam, Hasan, & Probolinggo, 2022).

Based on this rationale, the main research question is : *How is curriculum management implemented in madrasahs to strengthen students' character?* (Sekolah, n.d.) This study is expected to contribute both theoretically to Islamic character education and practically to the development of curriculum management models in madrasahs (Education, 2023).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design, as the research aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of how curriculum management contributes to strengthening students' character in a Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs). The qualitative approach was chosen to enable the researcher to explore meanings, processes, and participants' experiences more comprehensively through direct interaction in a natural setting. The research site was selected purposively based on the consideration that the madrasah had implemented character-strengthening programs intensively. The primary data sources consisted of eight informants, including one principal, one vice principal for curriculum affairs, three teachers, and three students, who were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement in curriculum implementation and character education programs. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis, including curriculum structures, work programs, lesson plans, and records of daily habituation activities.

Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles, M. B., Huberman, A., M., & Saldana, 2014). The credibility of the findings was ensured

through source and technique triangulation, prolonged engagement, and member checking to validate the accuracy of the collected data. Through this research design, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive description of how curriculum management practices contribute to character strengthening among students in a madrasah setting (Penguatan et al., 2019).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The result of this study show that curriculum management in the madrasah plays a significant role in strengthening students' character through three major components : curriculum planning, curriculum implementation, and curriculum evaluation.

In the planning stage, the madrasah develops curriculum documents that explicitly, and integrity. These values such as discipline, responsibility, religiosity, and integrity. These values are integrated into the Core Competencies, Basic Competencies, annual programs, and co - curricular activities such a Qur'an memorization, Scouting, and daily religious habituation. Planning is conducted through annual meetings involving the principal, curriculum coordinator, teacher, and the school committee.

In the implementation stage, teachers embed character values into learning processes through modelling, habituation, and value - oriented classroom practices. Observations indicate that teachers consistently begin lessons with prayer, Qur'an recitation, or moral reminders before delivering academic content. Routine activities - such as congregational prayers, class duty assignments, and weekly character programs - reinforce students' positive behavior. Teacher - student interaction becomes the key factor in maintaining consistent character development (Sekolah, n.d.).

In the evaluation stage, the madrasah assesses character development through daily character journals, behavior portfolios, and affective assessments that appear in students' report cards. Evaluation is conducted collaboratively by subject teachers, homeroom teachers, and activity supervisor. The data show that evaluation goes beyond cognitive measurement and includes continuous observation of students' attitudes and behavior.

The study also identifies supporting factors, including the madrasah's strong religious culture, the principal's leadership, and parental involvement. Meanwhile, barriers include limited teacher training, inconsistent student discipline, and inadequate supporting facilities. Overall, the result indicate that well - structured curriculum management contributes significantly to strengthening students' character when all components function consistently and integratively.

The findings of this study reinforce the argument that curriculum management plays a crucial role in shaping students' character in Islamic educational institutions. The integration of character values into curriculum planning demonstrates that character formation is not treated as a separate program but embedded within the academic structure of the madrasah. This is in line with previous studies showing that character education becomes more effective when it is systematically incorporated into curriculum documents and school policies rather than being implemented sporadically or informally.

The implementation stage further confirms that character education in madrasahs relies heavily on teacher modelling and daily habituation. Teachers serve not only as instructional facilitators but also as moral role models whose behavior strongly influences students' attitudes. This aligns with Islamic education principles, which emphasize *uswah hasanah* (good example) as a foundational method in shaping learners' character. Routine activities - such as

congregational prayer, religious literacy, and behavior monitoring – serve as practical manifestations of curriculum integration and contribute to the development of students' discipline, responsibility, and religiosity.

Evaluation practices in the madrasah reflect an understanding that character development cannot be captured solely through cognitive assessment. The use of daily journals, behavior portfolios, and affective scoring demonstrates a holistic approach to evaluating students' moral and behavioral growth. This corresponds with contemporary character education framework, which emphasize the importance of continuous and multi – perspective assessment methods.

Supporting factors identified in this study – particularly leadership, school culture, and parental involvement – highlight the importance of a collaborative ecosystem in sustaining character education. A religious school culture reinforces consistency, while strong leadership ensures that the curriculum is implemented with clear direction and accountability. However, the barriers identified, such as limited teacher training and inconsistent student behavior, indicate the need for ongoing professional development and strengthened school – home collaboration (Safi'i, 2022).

Practically, this study provides a concrete model for madrasahs by demonstrating that systematic curriculum management-supported by strong leadership, teacher modeling, and a religious school culture-can effectively strengthen students' character through daily learning practices and institutional habituation.

Overall, the discussion suggests that character strengthening through curriculum management is most successful when planning, implementation, and evaluation are aligned; when teachers are equipped to deliver value – based learning; and when the school environment reinforces the values embedded in the curriculum. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature that positions madrasahs as effective institutions for integrating academic learning with character formation, particularly within the framework of Islamic education.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that curriculum management plays a pivotal role in strengthening students' character in madrasahs by systematically integrating character values into curriculum planning, implementation, and evaluation. Character education is most effective when supported by teacher modeling, daily habituation, and value-based learning practices, as well as reinforced through comprehensive evaluation methods. Furthermore, strong leadership, a religious school culture, and parental involvement significantly contribute to the success of character-strengthening programs. Overall, an integrated curriculum management approach enables madrasahs to effectively foster students', discipline, responsibility, religiosity, and integrity within Islamic educational institutions.

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