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SCHOOL OF ETHICS PROGRAM IN DEVELOPING CHARACTER BASED ON ISLAMIC MANNERS AT SMP MUJAHIDIN SURABAYA, INDONESIA

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the School of Ethics Program in shaping students' character based on Islamic adab at SMP Mujahidin Surabaya. The research employs a qualitative approach using a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation involving the principal, vice principal for curriculum, teachers, and students. Data analysis was conducted using an interactive analysis model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, and was strengthened through triangulation of sources, techniques, and theories. The findings indicate that the implementation of School of Ethics is integrated into learning activities, habitual practices, and social interactions within the school environment. The internalization of Islamic adab values occurs through teachers' role modeling, religious routines, and a school culture grounded in Islamic values. This program has a positive impact on changes in students' behavior, both at school and within their family environment. The main supporting factors include a religious school environment and strong commitment from educators, while inhibiting factors stem from the influence of the home environment and rapid digital development. This study affirms that School of Ethics represents a contextual and applicable model of character education based on Islamic adab at the junior high school level.

Keywords: School of Ethics, character education, Islamic adab, school culture, qualitative case study

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic education in Indonesia in recent decades has undergone a paradigm shift, from a dominant orientation on cognitive achievement to strengthening the character of students based on Islamic moral values and manners. This shift is in line with the

global demand for education that not only produces intellectually intelligent individuals, but also has moral integrity, social ethics, and civilized personalities. In this context, Islamic schools have begun to develop various structured character strengthening

programs, one of which is through the implementation of *the School of Ethics* as a framework for fostering students' values and ethics. This program is seen as a systematic strategy to instill the values of responsibility, discipline, good manners, and social care in daily school life. However, the implementation of *the School of Ethics* in various educational units has not always run optimally due to differences in curriculum design, human resource capacity, and consistency of implementation in the field (Anisah, 2023).

Normatively, Indonesia's national education policy emphasizes the importance of integrating the values of religious character, integrity, independence, mutual cooperation, and nationalism in the entire learning process. However, at the practical level, there is still a gap between the ideal goal of the policy and the reality of implementation in schools. Many educational units have not been able to integrate character values consistently into learning planning, learning implementation, and assessment systems. Obstacles that often arise include the limitation of teachers' competence in character education, the unavailability of clear character assessment indicators, and weak systemic support from school management (Heni Kurniasih et al., 2016). This condition shows that there is an urgent need to examine in depth the model of implementation of character education based on Islamic manners which is not incidental, but integrated into the curriculum system and school culture.

In this framework, the application of *the School of Ethics* at SMP Mujahidin Surabaya becomes a relevant empirical context to be studied academically. The school developed the *School of Ethics program* as part of a systematic effort to build the character of students based on Islamic manners through classroom learning, daily habits, and social interaction between teachers and students. In line with the view (Sirait, 2023), strengthening character in Islamic schools will be effective if Islamic values are not only taught normatively, but also internalized through synergy between formal learning and school culture. Therefore, field research that focuses on the real implementation of school ethics programs is important to understand the dynamics of internalizing adab values in the context of junior secondary education.

A number of previous studies have emphasized the importance of habituating and internalizing the value of adab in the Islamic educational environment. Studies (Muslimati Alwi & Nurhakim, 2024) show that the formation of students' manners can develop optimally through the example of teachers, religious routines, and conducive school culture. Similar findings were also conveyed by (Fazry et al., 2025) who emphasized that the habituation of values will be more effective if supported by a curriculum that explicitly contains the values of adab to be achieved. However, most of the research still focuses on the level of basic education or the context of madrasas and pesantren. Empirical studies that specifically examine the integration of Islamic manners in the curriculum framework of *the School of Ethics* at the junior high school level are still relatively limited. This gap confirms the *research gap* of this research.

Based on this background, this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of *the School of Ethics Program* in forming a character based on Islamic manners at SMP Mujahidin Surabaya. In particular, this study formulates three main problem focuses, namely: (1) how the concept of the School of Ethics program at SMP Mujahidin Surabaya; (2) how to implement the School of Ethics program at Mujahidin Junior High School Surabaya; and (3) factors that support and hinder the

implementation of the program, including the role of teachers, schools, and student responses. In terms of contribution, this research is expected to enrich the study of Islamic character education at the junior high school level by presenting empirical evidence based on case studies. *The novelty* of this research lies in its focus on the integration of Islamic manners as part of the school ethics curriculum framework (*School of Ethics*), not just moral habituation, so as to provide a new perspective in the development of a systematic, contextual, and applicative Islamic character education model in junior secondary education.

2. METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with the type of *case study*, which was chosen to deeply understand the implementation process of the *School of Ethics Program* in forming characters based on Islamic manners and the dynamics of internalizing values in the natural context of the school environment. The qualitative approach allows researchers to comprehensively explore the meaning, perceptions, and experiences of the subject without separating the phenomenon from its social and cultural context (John W. Creswell, 2014; Santos et al., 2021). Case studies are used because they are able to capture the complexity of character education practices in a holistic and contextual way, as well as explore the participants' experiences and environmental layers that influence the educational process (Shrestha & Bhattacharai, 2022).

The research was carried out at SMP Mujahidin Surabaya which was chosen purposively because it has integrated Islamic manners values in the curriculum, habituation, and school culture. The research subjects were determined through *purposive sampling* techniques with criteria of direct involvement and the ability to provide in-depth information, including school principals, vice principals for curriculum, *School of Ethics implementing teachers*, and students in grades VII-IX. This technique is in line with the view that *purposive sampling* is effective in producing rich and meaningful data in qualitative research (Etikan et al., 2016; Palinkas et al., 2016).

The data source consists of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through semi-structured in-depth interviews, non-participatory observations, and documentation to explore experiences, perceptions, and practices of internalizing Islamic manners in school learning and culture. Documentation includes curriculum tools, *School of Ethics handbooks*, discipline, photos of activities, and program evaluation notes. The use of these various techniques is in accordance with the principles of qualitative research that emphasizes the diversity of data sources (Alfansyur & Mariyani, 2020; Bowen, 2017; John W. Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Secondary data in the form of books, scientific journals, previous research, and official school documents were used to enrich the analysis and triangulation of the context (Dalglish et al., 2020).

Data analysis was carried out simultaneously using an interactive analysis model which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion/verification (Miles & Huberman, 2014). The data were analyzed through the presentation of thematic narratives and matrix to identify patterns and relationships between categories, and reinforced by thematic analysis in the interpretation of the main theme (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources, techniques, and theories to increase *credibility* and minimize interpretation bias (Carter et al., 2014; Nowell et al., 2017).

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. School of Ethics Program Concept of SMP Mujahidin Surabaya

The results of the study show that the *School of Ethics Program* at Mujahidin Junior High School Surabaya is designed as a supplementary curriculum that is systematically oriented towards strengthening the character of students based on Islamic manners. The program is not placed as an incidental activity, but rather is positioned as an integral part of a structured, sustainable, and planned school education system. The *School of Ethics curriculum* is set as a local content with a special time allocation, which is one hour of lessons per week, so as to allow the process of internalizing the values of manners to take place consistently and continuously in the school environment.

Conceptually, the design of the *School of Ethics* program is built on the foundation of Islamic values sourced from the Qur'an and As-Sunnah and strengthened by the theoretical framework of Islamic character education. This program integrates cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in a single character education process. This approach emphasizes that character education is not enough to be conveyed through normative teaching alone, but must be realized through habituation, example, and direct experience in students' daily lives. This view is in line with the thinking that places the internalization of values as the core of Islamic character education (Edison, 2021; Ma'arif, 2018).

The *design of the School of Ethics* program is composed of components of curriculum objectives, material structure, learning approaches, implementation strategies, and character evaluation systems. The purpose of the program is directed at the formation of students who have strong Islamic character, noble character, and are able to implement ethical values in daily life. This orientation is in line with the view that Islamic education aims to form faithful, civilized, and morally responsible human beings, both in the personal and social dimensions (Edison, 2021; Ma'arif, 2018). These goals are outlined in the goals of developing awareness of behaving in accordance with Islamic teachings, the ability to face moral challenges in the digital era, strengthening anti-bullying and anti-violence attitudes, and the formation of responsible Islamic leadership, as emphasized in the framework of Islamic character education which places adab as the main foundation for fostering students' personalities (Eryandi, 2023; Latifah & Irawan, 2024).

The structure of the material in *the School of Ethics* is arranged thematically and progressively in accordance with the psychological development of junior high school students. The learning materials include the manners of speaking and socializing, the ethics of dressing and maintaining the aurat, the prevention of bullying from an Islamic perspective, the manners of social media, the values of honesty and trust, and strengthening leadership and social concern. The preparation of the material shows that the program design is not only oriented towards the formation of individual morals, but also on strengthening social ethics and moral responsibility of students as part of the school community, as affirmed in the study of Islamic character education which places collective social and moral manners as the foundation for fostering students' personalities (Edison, 2021; Ma'arif, 2018; Muslimati Alwi & Nurhakim, 2024).

The learning approach used in the program design is student-centered learning by combining *experiential learning*, *project-based learning*, *collaborative learning*, *reflective learning*,

character modeling, and case studies. This approach allows students not only to understand the concept of adab cognitively, but also to experience and practice it directly through social projects, self-reflection, and social interaction in the school environment. This reinforces the view that habituation is a key element in the formation of a sustainable Islamic character (Fazry et al., 2025).

In practice, the implementation of the School of Ethics program design is carried out through classroom learning, habituation or formation of school culture, and social interaction between students and teachers. In the realm of learning, Islamic manners values are integrated into teaching and learning activities through thematic discussions, case studies, reflections, and project-based assignments. Teachers play the role of facilitators as well as role models who represent the practice of Islamic manners through attitudes, language, and patterns of daily interaction, as emphasized in Islamic character education which places example and habituation as the main strategy for internalizing students' moral values (Edison, 2021; Ma'arif, 2018; Sirait, 2023).

In the realm of habituation, program design is realized through the formation of a school culture that supports the internalization of adab values, such as the habituation of greetings, manners in communication, time discipline, and the implementation of regularly scheduled social and religious activities. The habituation is carried out consistently and involves all school residents, so that the value of manners is not only understood as a formal rule, but is internalized as the identity and culture of the school. These findings are in line with research that confirms that the internalization of character values will be more effective if supported by a strong and consistent school culture (Muslimati Alwi & Nurhakim, 2024; Sirait, 2023).

Social interaction between students and teachers is also a strategic medium in the implementation of program design. Dialogical, mutually respectful, and Islamic manners relationships create a learning climate conducive to character formation. Teachers not only function as teachers, but also as moral companions who provide reinforcement of values through advice, example, and continuous evaluation in students' daily lives, as emphasized in the study of Islamic character education which places the educational relationship and teacher example as key factors in internalizing students' adab values (Edison, 2021; Ma'arif, 2018; Muslimati Alwi & Nurhakim, 2024).

Evaluation in the design of *the School of Ethics program* is carried out through qualitative assessments based on character portfolios, behavioral observations, and reflections of students and teachers. The evaluation instrument is designed to measure character development such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, empathy, communication ethics, and digital ethics. This evaluation model shows that the success of the program is not measured through academic achievement alone, but through continuous changes in students' attitudes and behaviors, in line with the Islamic character education evaluation approach that emphasizes authentic assessment and is oriented towards the attitude formation process (Edison, 2021; Latifah & Irawan, 2024; Ma'arif, 2018).

Overall, the results of the research and discussion show that the design of the *School of Ethics* program has a strong relevance to the theoretical framework of Islamic character education as well as the findings of previous research. The integration between formal curriculum, value habituation, teacher example, and school

environment support forms an educational ecosystem oriented towards ethics and spirituality. Thus, the design of *the School of Ethics* program can be understood as a comprehensive, contextual, and sustainable model of character education based on Islamic manners, and has the potential to be used as a conceptual and practical reference in the development of character education at the junior high school level (Eryandi, 2023; Latifah & Irawan, 2024).

b. Implementation of the School of Ethics Program in Forming Character Based on Islamic Manners

Based on the results of interviews with various informants, the implementation of *the School of Ethics* Program at SMP Mujahidin Surabaya is understood as a core program as well as a flagship program of the school that functions as the main framework for the formation of student character based on Islamic manners. This program is not only part of the curricular policy, but also serves as the school's identity and tagline that is reflected in all educational activities. *The School of Ethics* is not positioned as a stand-alone subject, but is thoroughly integrated into the learning, habituation, and daily interaction of school residents.

From the perspective of school leaders (AF), *the School of Ethics Program* is designed as a strategic response to the challenges of the development of the times which are considered to increasingly distance students from the values of Islamic manners. AF emphasized that this program functions as a systematic effort of the school in maintaining and shaping the ethics and morals of students through habituation and sustainable school activities. Through the implementation of the School of Ethics, the school targets the formation of graduates who are not only academically superior, but also have a civilized character, morals, and are able to practice Islamic ethical values in community life. These findings are in line with the view of Islamic character education which places adab as the main goal of fostering students' personalities (Edison, 2021; Ma'arif, 2018).

A similar view was conveyed by the Deputy Principal for Curriculum (AA), who interpreted the implementation of *the School of Ethics* as a concrete form of the school's commitment to responding to the phenomenon of moral degradation of students in the digital era. AA explained that this program is designed as a supplementary curriculum based on the values of the Qur'an and As-Sunnah, by placing manners and morals as the main foundation for the formation of students' character. In practice, *the School of Ethics* is integrated into the curriculum through syllabus planning, determination of ethics themes per level, and the allocation of a special time of one hour of lessons each week. The learning approach used is applicable and student-centered, such as discussions, case studies, reflection, and social projects, so that the value of adab does not stop at conceptual understanding, but is habituated in daily behavior. AA also emphasized that the success of the implementation of this program is supported by a clear division of roles between teachers as role models and facilitators, students as active subjects of character formation, and the school as the person in charge of policy, monitoring, and evaluation. Through daily observation, character assessment, and periodic evaluation, *the School of Ethics* is directed to develop into a sustainable school culture that is harmonized between the school environment and the home, as affirmed in the study on the importance of environmental integration in Islamic character education (Latifah & Irawan, 2024).

At the level of implementation in the school environment, the internalization of Islamic manners values seems to take place

comprehensively, both in classrooms, offices, canteens, and mosques. Based on interviews with teachers as supervisors of adab values (FA) and (HA), the implementation of *the School of Ethics* is carried out through learning manners that are given to all students as a provision for long-term character formation. Teachers view adab as the most basic aspect in the formation of personality, so that the habituation of Islamic manners is made the main value that continues to be instilled. Understanding of adab is conveyed through the introduction of relevant pieces of Qur'anic verses and hadiths, especially to foster students' awareness in maintaining ethics in the midst of digitalization. The implementation is strengthened through routine habituation such as *one-day one-verse activities* in between learning, the application of 5S culture, and the consistent implementation of morning dhikr and dhuha prayers. This pattern shows that the internalization of adab values is carried out through a combination of cognitive learning and behavioral habituation, as emphasized in the Islamic character-based education approach (Muslimati Alwi & Nurhakim, 2024; Sirait, 2023).

In addition to formal learning, the internalization of adab is also applied contextually in accordance with the student learning environment. Teachers instill manners in dressing and behaving in the mosque, the habit of performing ablution before entering the mosque, saying greetings, and the ethics of carrying the Qur'an. In the context of classroom learning, teachers emphasize the importance of maintaining calm, respecting each other, and creating a conducive learning atmosphere. According to FA and HA, changes in student behavior are seen quite significantly, especially in new students who are gradually adjusting to the culture of manners that have taken root. Habituation that is carried out continuously makes student behavior more controlled and facilitates the disciplinary process, although teachers still play an active role in providing reinforcement and reminders when negligence occurs. These findings strengthen the view that school culture has a strategic role in the process of internalizing character values (Sirait, 2023).

From the perspective of students, the implementation of *the School of Ethics* Program is more felt through the habits and rules that apply in schools. Students do not always understand this program conceptually, but feel its impact in the form of habituating politeness, discipline, and respect for teachers and friends. *The School of Ethics* is perceived as a part of school life that slowly shapes the way students behave and interact in their daily lives. The impact of internalizing the value of adab is not only felt in the school environment, but also carried over into the lives of students at home and in the community. Some students said that they became more concerned about the surrounding environment, more respectful and obedient to their parents, and better able to manage their time and be polite in social interactions. This change can be seen from the behavior of students who previously tended to be indifferent, developing to be more responsive and civilized through the application of 5S culture. These findings show that the implementation of the School of Ethics has a real and sustainable impact on shaping students' character manners, both in the context of school, family, and society, in line with the goals of Islamic character education that is oriented towards behavioral transformation (Eryandi, 2023; Latifah & Irawan, 2024).

c. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for the Implementation of the School of Ethics Program

The results of the study show that the implementation of the *School of Ethics Program* at SMP Mujahidin Surabaya is supported by a number of internal and external factors that are interrelated and affect the effectiveness of internalizing Islamic adab values. From the perspective of school leaders, the principal (AF) emphasized that the main supporting factor of this program lies in the school environment which has been strongly formed culturally and religiously. The location of the school, which is in the area of one of the oldest mosques in Surabaya, is seen as a strategic force in fostering a religious and civilized atmosphere. The environment becomes a real learning space for students to get used to attitudes, behaviors, and ethics that are in harmony with Islamic values, so that the process of internalizing adab takes place more naturally and contextually. The existence of various religious programs that are integrated into school activities also strengthens the sustainability of *the implementation of the School of Ethics*. These findings are in line with the view that the school environment and culture have a significant role in the success of character education (Edison, 2021; Ma'arif, 2018).

However, AF also revealed that there are inhibiting factors that affect the effectiveness of program implementation. One of the main obstacles is the lack of optimal cooperation with some students' guardians, especially those from the home environment which is considered less conducive to the formation of student ethics and manners. The social environment outside the school that is not always in line with the values that are habitual at school causes the process of internalizing manners not to continue consistently at home. In addition, the difference in the level of understanding among teachers of the meaning and purpose of *the School of Ethics Program* is also a challenge, although it is not dominant. Another factor identified as an obstacle is the rapid development of the digital world, especially the exposure to content that is not in accordance with ethical values and manners for junior high school age students, which often affects student behavior outside the school's control. These findings corroborate a study that highlights the challenges of Islamic character education in the digital era (Latifah & Irawan, 2024).

In line with this view, the Deputy Principal for Curriculum (AA) emphasized that the supporting factor for the implementation of *the School of Ethics* lies in the role of teachers who are positioned as a substitute for parents in schools. Teachers view the development of manners as a moral and spiritual responsibility, so that the approach used is parenting, full of example, and habituation-oriented. However, AA also noted that there were obstacles in the form of differences in understanding of manners influenced by students' family backgrounds. This difference causes a small number of students to only apply the values of manners in the school environment, but have not fully brought these values into their daily lives outside of school. To respond to these conditions, schools make strategic efforts through parenting activities that are held periodically as a means of socialization and alignment of manners coaching between school and home. This effort reflects the importance of synergy between educational institutions and families in Islamic character education (Muslimati Alwi & Nurhakim, 2024).

From the perspective of the implementing teacher and the field supervisor (FA) and (HA), the main supporting factor for the implementation of *the School of Ethics* lies in the personal motivation and spiritual belief of the teacher. Teachers interpret the development of student manners as part of charity that has the

value of worship, so that it becomes a source of strength in carrying out this role consistently. However, teachers also acknowledge the existence of emotional challenges, especially when the advice and habituation carried out has not been fully responded to by students. This condition sometimes causes fatigue and low morale, but it is overcome through self-reflection, strengthening spiritual motivation, and a commitment to continue to provide guidance and supervision on an ongoing basis. These findings reinforce the view that the role of teachers as moral role models is a key element in the success of character education (Srirat, 2023).

Meanwhile, from the student's point of view, the main inhibiting factor in applying Islamic adab values comes from the home environment and peer influence. Students realize that the immediate environment often exerts an influence that is not always in harmony with the values that are habitual in school. The supporting factor that is most felt by students is the role of teachers who consistently remind, reprimand, and guide them in kindness. The presence of teachers as caring and firm figures is perceived as the main source of motivation for students to continue to strive to apply the values of manners, both in the school environment and in daily life. These findings show that the success of the implementation of *the School of Ethics* is highly determined by the synergy between the school environment, family, and the role of teachers in the process of internalizing Islamic adab values (Eryandi, 2023).

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that *the School of Ethics Program* at Mujahidin Junior High School Surabaya was designed and implemented as a structured, systematic, and sustainable model of character education based on Islamic manners. This program is positioned as a locally loaded supplement curriculum with a special time allocation, and serves as the main framework for student character development that is integrated into the entire school education system. Thus, *the School of Ethics* is not understood as an additional or incidental program, but rather as a school identity and culture inherent in the learning practices, habituation, and social interaction of school citizens.

Conceptually, the design of the School of Ethics Program is built on the foundation of the values of the Qur'an and As-Sunnah as well as the theoretical framework of Islamic character education which places adab as the foundation for the formation of students' personalities. The integration of cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions in program design shows that character education is understood as a process of internalizing values that demands integration between understanding, habituation, and example. The program structure that includes curriculum objectives, thematical-progressive materials, student-centered learning approaches, school culture-based implementation strategies, and authentic character evaluations form an educational ecosystem oriented towards ethics and spirituality.

The results of the study also show that the implementation of the School of Ethics Program takes place comprehensively through three main domains, namely classroom learning, school culture habituation, and social interaction between teachers and students. In the realm of learning, Islamic adab values are integrated through applicative approaches such as thematic discussions, case studies, reflection, and social projects. In the realm of habituation, the

internalization of manners is strengthened through a religious and consistent school culture, so that ethical values are not only understood as formal rules, but are internalized as habits and student identities. Meanwhile, educational relationships that are dialogical and based on example make teachers play a strategic role as moral companions in the process of forming students' characters.

From the perspective of the informants, the School of Ethics Program is understood as the school's strategic response to the challenge of moral degradation of students in the digital era. School leaders and vice principals for curriculum view this program as the main instrument in forming graduates who are not only academically superior, but also have civilized, moral, and morally responsible character. The implementing teacher interprets the development of adab as a moral and spiritual responsibility that is carried out through example and habituation, while students feel the impact of this program in the form of changes in attitude, discipline, and ethics in daily life, both in the school environment and outside the school.

The supporting factors for the implementation of the School of Ethics Program include the school's strong religious culture, a conducive physical and social environment, the integration of religious programs in school activities, and the spiritual motivation of teachers in fostering student manners. On the contrary, the main inhibiting factors come from the discontinuity of manners coaching between school and home environment, differences in students' family backgrounds, and the negative influence of the development of the digital world. The school's efforts in organizing parenting activities and building synergy with parents show institutional awareness of the importance of collaboration between schools and families in maintaining the sustainability of internalizing Islamic adab values.

Thus, it can be concluded that the School of Ethics Program is a character education model based on Islamic manners that is relevant, contextual, and adaptive to the challenges of the times. This program has proven to be able to build an educational ecosystem that supports the internalization of ethical values in a sustainable manner through curriculum integration, habituation, teacher examples, and support for the school environment. The findings of this study confirm that character strengthening based on Islamic manners has a significant contribution in shaping students' personalities in a complete and sustainable manner, and has the potential to be used as a conceptual and practical reference in the development of character education at the junior high school level.

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