Strengthening Students' Islamic Character Education at SMK Jamiyyatul Aulad Palabuhanratu by Cultivating Morals, Ethics and Culture

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of Islamic moral, ethical, and cultural values to strengthen character education at SMK Jamiyyatul Aulad. Using a qualitative descriptive-analytic approach with data collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, the research finds that integrating Islamic values into classroom learning and extracurricular activities enhances students' awareness of good character, discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect. Daily practices such as congregational prayer, sunnah prayer, pray together, and social engagement also reinforce character education. The study concludes that the integration of Islamic values, teacher role modeling, religious routines, and community involvement effectively support the internalization of Islamic character in students, contributing to their personal development and well-being.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji penerapan nilai-nilai moral, etika, dan budaya Islam dalam memperkuat pendidikan karakter di SMK Jamiyyatul Aulad. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif-analitik dan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, serta dokumentasi, hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa integrasi nilai-nilai Islam dalam pembelajaran di kelas dan kegiatan ekstrakurikuler meningkatkan kesadaran siswa akan pentingnya akhlak yang baik, disiplin, tanggung jawab, dan saling menghormati. Praktik harian seperti salat berjamaah, salat sunnah, doa bersama, dan kegiatan sosial juga memperkuat pendidikan karakter. Penelitian menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi nilai Islam, keteladanan guru, pembiasaan kegiatan keagamaan, dan keterlibatan masyarakat secara efektif mendukung internalisasi karakter Islami siswa serta berkontribusi pada perkembangan pribadi dan kesejahteraan mereka.

Introduction

Character education is one of the important aspects in the formation of a complete and qualified person, especially at the secondary education level such as Vocational High School (SMK) and Senior High School (SMA). Character education focuses not only on cognitive aspects, but also on the formation of students' morals and behavior in accordance with religious, social, and cultural values. In the context of education in

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Indonesia, strengthening Islamic character is very relevant, given that the majority of Indonesia's population is Muslim.

Education in Indonesia is faced with the problem of low moral such as brawls between students, promiscuity, drugs, and lack of respect for teachers. In the field of education, the cultivation of character towards students needs great attention. In August 2023, an incident occurred where six students from a junior high school (SMP) and a vocational high school (SMK) in Sukabumi Regency were apprehended by the precision patrol unit of the Sukabumi City Police. They were arrested at two different locations. Three sharp weapons—including a sickle (celurit), a gobang, and a golf club—were confiscated. The apprehension took place on Monday night (August 7) around 11:00 PM local time (Fatimah, 2023). Another case of juvenile delinquency involved the fatal stabbing of a sixth-grade student from SDN Sirnagalih, Palabuhanratu District, by an MTs student in 2023 (Den, 2023). In yet another case, two vocational school (SMK) students in Surade District, Sukabumi Regency, West Java, died after a drinking party involving illicitly mixed alcohol with several of their peers (Rohman, 2022), along with several other deeply concerning incidents.

Behavioral deviations in almost all sectors of life have raised awareness that character education is very important, and evidence that our education system has not been able to achieve its goals (Supa'at, 2014). The occurrence of extortion/violence (bullying), the tendency of senior dominance over juniors, drug use, and others, this is due to the globalization that has led Indonesian people to forget about national character education (Zulhijrah, 2015). In fact, character education is a very important foundation of the nation and needs to be instilled early on to children. Character education can maintain and strengthen the character and identity of the nation wrapped in noble cultural values from the wisdom of local cultures that live and develop in Indonesia (Mu'min, 2023; Saridudin, Ta'rif, 2021, Firmansyah, dkk, 2023). Along with the times and technological advances, it cannot be denied that the nation's character is currently deteriorating rapidly. Many phenomena appear in the media such as television, newspapers, and the internet that make us sad to hear. Examples of these phenomena include fights between students, promiscuity, drug cases, and immoral acts.

The impact of globalization on the younger generation prioritizes mastery of scientific aspects, intelligence and pays less attention to or ignores a very significant education, namely character education, so that many young people now have very sad morals and morals, and the younger generation now forgets the culture and customs of the Indonesian nation, especially its local wisdom (Zulkarnaen, 2022). The importance of character education with a hope of maintaining the nation's next generation who have a religious personality, have good character, think critically, innovatively, master science and technology (IPTEK) and are based on high faith and piety (IMTAK) (Yunita & Mujib, 2021; Hidayati, 2016).

However, the dynamics of life in society today increasingly show a shift in national character. The once populist-socialist Indonesian society has turned into a materialist-individualist, even anarchist one. There is no more mutual cooperation, only a life that is measured in material terms and a widening social gap. Peace and harmony are replaced by conflicts that lead brawls and clashes between groups.

Some of the results of research on character include research by Muhammad Ali Bashir Sambo, et al, the results of his research say that the application of character education is implemented through activities that involve students such as discipline. Time, speak kindly and politely, wear neat and clean clothes, guide students in dhuha prayer activities, provide direction and religious lectures after zuhur prayer, pray before learning begins, instill an attitude of hard work and independence, actively involve students in every lesson (Sambo, Daulay, & Lubis, 2024). Then the results of research by

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Junil Adri, et al. stated that the program for implementing congregational Zuhur prayers was welcomed positively by students; students have obeyed the rules at school; students are more concerned with parents' orders even though they are busy playing with their friends (Adri, Ambiyar, Refdinal, Giatman, & Azman, 2020).

Changes in the nation's character can lead to moral decline. If preventive measures are not taken immediately, future generations risk growing up without a strong moral foundation. One of the most important concepts for developing the moral fiber of a civilized and democratic society is education. Undoubtedly, achieving developed nation status is a goal shared by all countries around the world. Education is one of the things that keeps countries moving forward (Djollong et. all, 2024).

Strengthening Islamic character education at the senior high school level can be done by integrating the concept of moral, ethical, and cultural cultivation in the learning process and students' daily lives. The concept of morals leads to an understanding of universally accepted good and bad values in Islamic teachings, such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility. Thomas Lickona (1991) explains that character education focuses on developing moral habits through the internalization of positive values that lead to the development of good behavior, relating to moral knowing, moral attitudes moral feeling, and moral behavior.

Meanwhile, ethics includes guidelines on how students interact with others in various life situations, such as mutual respect, manners in speaking, and how to manage conflict wisely. Cultural aspects also play a very important role in Islamic character education. Islamic culture teaches the importance of values such as simplicity, compassion, and mutual help, which can be realized in daily life in the school environment. Strengthening Islamic character education at the senior high school level not only aims to form individuals who are intelligent in academic aspects, but also become human beings who are noble, have good personalities, and are ready to face global challenges without losing their identity and religious values.

Character education is a systematic effort in shaping students' personalities who are not only academically intelligent, but also have noble morals, good morals, and commendable ethics. In the context of Islamic education, Islamic character is the main foundation for forming a pious, virtuous, and responsible generation. SMK Jamiyyatul Aulad Palabuhanratu as an Islamic educational institution has a great responsibility in developing and strengthening the Islamic character of students through various educational approaches.

As one of the vocational high schools under the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, SMK Jamiyatul Aulad focuses on one mission of creating graduates who have character. This is also in accordance with Minister of Education and Culture Regulation Number 20 of 2018 concerning Strengthening Character Education in Formal Education Units, which aims to create a nation with character and culture.

Meanwhile, in its implementation, SMK Jamiyatul Aulad uses three approaches, namely ethics, morals, culture. The three are related to each other and cannot be separated. Ethics, morals and culture need to be carried out simultaneously in shaping the character of students at school and maintaining the nation's cultural identity amidst constantly changing global conditions.

Through ethics, students are taught about the principles of noble and good values in social life. Through morals, students are given guidance in behaving and behaving in everyday life. Through culture, students are taught how to respect, appreciate and preserve local wisdom and positive culture amidst rapid technological advances.

SMK Jamiyyatul Aulad Palabuhanratu, as an Islamic-based educational institution, has a strategic role in strengthening students' Islamic character. Therefore, this research focuses on efforts to strengthen Islamic character education through the approach of

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instilling morals, ethics, and culture applied at the school. This study aims to determine how the application and influence of this approach on the development of students' Islamic character at SMK Jamiyyatul Aulad Palabuhanratu.

This study proposes a novel integrative model of Islamic character education by combining moral, ethical, and cultural approaches within a pesantren-based vocational school setting. While previous studies have explored these components separately, limited research has holistically implemented them in an educational environment where students are preparing for both professional competence and religious identity. What makes this study unique is its contextual grounding in a vocational school that simultaneously cultivates religious rituals, social ethics, and local cultural values—an integration that is often overlooked in mainstream Islamic education literature.

Method

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach, which aims to provide a rich and comprehensive description of the phenomenon under investigation without being bound by rigid theoretical frameworks (Sandelowski, 2000). The context of the study was a vocational Islamic school, SMK Jamiyyatul Aulad, which is considered a unique case in the implementation of Islamic character education.

Participants in this study were taken using purposive sampling. This technique is a non-probabilistic sampling in which the researcher selects participants based on certain characteristics or qualities that match the research objectives (Andrade, 2021; Campbell et al., 2020). The inclusive criteria of participants are educators in the school with a minimum teaching duration of 6 months and occupying structural positions, consisting of Participant A as Principal, Participant H as Vice Principal for Curriculum, Participant N as Vice Principal for Student Affairs, Participant S as Head of the Light Vehicle Engineering Expertise Program and Participant HM as School Counselor.

Data collection techniques are semi-structured interviews and participatory observation. Interviews were conducted with various parties, such as the school principal, and teachers to get their views on how Islamic character education is implemented and to what extent it affects students behavior. The researcher was also involved in daily activities (Creswell, 2016) at school, such as the learning process, extracurricular activities, and interacting with students and teachers to see firsthand how Islamic character education is implemented in practice.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), following an iterative process: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Open, axial, and selective coding processes were used to identify patterns and meanings across the dataset.

The validation of research data used data triangulation which using multiple data sources (multi-participants), diverse data collection methods (interviews, observations, and documentation), and involving multiple researchers to cross-verify information. This technique not only enriches the understanding of the research problem but also strengthens the reliability of the findings (Kisely & Kendall, 2011).

Results and Discussion
Result

SMK Jam'iyyatul Aulad Palabuhanratu, Sukabumi carries the motto "An Outstanding School with a Pesantren-Based Approach." The school's vision is represented by TAQMANDITRA, which stands for *Taqwa* (God-consciousness), *Faith*, *Good Character*, and *Skills*. Its missions include: realizing an intelligent, skilled, faithful, and God-

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conscious education with competitive excellence by 2025; developing a comprehensive, up-to-date, and forward-looking curriculum; and creating an educational environment that balances religious knowledge and general sciences according to societal needs.

The school's vision and mission serve as the foundation for developing school programs in the teaching and learning process as well as in students' daily education. Based on interviews and observations, the school's character education program is focused on the habituation of religious rituals, particularly Islamic practices. These programs can be categorized into those integrated into the classroom curriculum and those conducted outside the classroom.

Understanding of the concept of Islamic character education is an important basis for designing various educational programs that are able to form a young generation that is not only intelligent, but also has noble morals, so that it can face the challenges of the times wisely and in accordance with the principles of Islamic teachings.

Islamic character education is a planned effort to shape the morals of students based on Islamic values. Participant A said that this concept not only emphasizes the teaching of religious knowledge such as Quran, Sunnah, and othe sources of Islamic law, but also instills moral, ethical, and spiritual values as life guidelines. This education aims to produce students who have faith, piety, and noble character, by integrating spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects in their daily lives.

> *"Since the beginning, the school has implemented a pesantren-based school system that aspires to apply Islamic values in daily activities, including in teaching and learning activities, based on the Quran, Sunnah and other sources of Islamic law." (Participant A)*

The school also considers Islamic character education as a conscious and long-term planned effort that is very important to shape the personality of students in order to form a person who has a positive character both religiously and socially norms, as said by Participant HM.

> *"We view that Islamic character education is a long-term conscious and planned effort that is very important to shape students' personalities. So that students have noble morals based on the values of Islamic teachings as well as instilling moral, ethical, and spiritual values that can guide their lives." (Participant HM)*

According to Participant N, forming good habits requires a system that can help instill Islamic religious values, morals and culture to students, so SMK Jami'iyyatul Aulad implement Islamic character education as a systematic effort to achieve the formation of a generation of noble character.

> *"In my opinion, Islamic character education is a systematic effort to instill Islamic religious, moral, and cultural values to students, so that a noble generation is formed." (Participant N).*

The programs mentioned above are implemented and supervised by teachers and school staff, where teachers are involved in all programs to set an example to students, so that teachers can be the driving force, mentors and program participants. In the process of implementing the entire Islamic character education program, there are several challenges, both coming from internal and external schools. These challenges include the influence of media, technology, individualism, as well as differences in student background and parental understanding. The proposed solutions include the integration of technology in Islamic learning, digital literacy for the wise use of gadgets, the habituation of Islamic values through all subjects, as well as the involvement of parents in supporting Islamic values at home.

Cultivating Islamic Character Education Through Moral Values Approach

Islamic character education not only includes ethical aspects, but is also very closely related to moral education. Morals become an important basis in a person's life because through morals, a person is taught to distinguish what is right and what is wrong in behavior. Good morals will shape individuals who are responsible, trustworthy, and able to make positive contributions in their social lives.

In the context of Islamic education, morals are not just theoretical teachings, but rather how to apply these values in everyday life. Moral education plays an important role in helping students understand and internalize the fundamental teachings of Islam, which can create individuals who not only have knowledge, but also have good character, responsibility, and care for others.

In SMK Jamiyatul Aulad, moral approach in education is very concerned through various activities that aim to shape the character of students. One example is the application of the 3S principle, they are *Senyum* (smile), *Salam* (greeting), and *Sopan Santun* (good manner) that done as part of daily habits in the school environment. By applying this principle, students are taught to always be friendly, respectful, and respectful of each other, both to classmates and to teachers. This creates a more positive and harmonious atmosphere in the school.

> *"Our school also applied Islamic culture such as smile, greeting, good manner...."*
> *(Participant A)*

In addition, 'Jumsih' (clean Friday) activities are also an important part in creating a safe, comfortable, and clean environment. The entire academic community participates in maintaining school cleanliness as a form of shared responsibility. This activity not only creates a healthy environment, but also teaches students to have a concern for cleanliness and neatness, which is part of the morality taught in Islam.

Moral education is also applied in the exams held in this school, with the approach of projects or essays derived from the student's personal opinion. This approach teaches students to think independently, honestly, and creatively in solving tasks. Through this method, students are taught to take responsibility for the results of their work and avoid the practice of cheating or plagiarism, which is part of the cultivation of honesty and integrity.

Moral education at SMK Jamiyatul Aulad also includes teaching about empathy and solidarity. Students are taught to always be sensitive to the condition of their friends and fellow community members, one of them by visiting friends or teachers who are sick. Activities like this not only teach sympathy, but also strengthen the emotional bond between students, teachers, and the entire academic community.

> *"If one of our students or teachers got sick, we usually visit their home while bring fruits or money that collected from other students and teachers to be given to them to help them recovered from their sicks." (Participant H)*

In addition, condolence activities when there is a family of friends or teachers who died are also taught as a form of empathy and attention to others. This creates a sense of community and solidarity in the school environment, which is very important in building the moral character of students. Eating together (*botram*) is also a means to foster a sense of togetherness, sharing, and strengthening relationships between students. By sitting down with each other and eating together, students are taught to value togetherness and establish closer relationships with their peers, regardless of differences in social, economic, or cultural backgrounds.

Cultivating Islamic Character Education Through Ethical Value Approach

Education not only focuses on the transfer of knowledge, but also on the formation of character that reflects good moral and ethical values. Strong character and good ethics

are important cornerstones in creating individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also mature in attitude and behavior in everyday life.

The cultivation of Islamic values through an ethical approach in education has a very vital role. Students who are educated with an emphasis on ethics will grow into individuals who understand and internalize the values of kindness, such as honesty, responsibility, justice, and empathy. These values are indispensable in their social lives, both in the family, society, and in the world of work later.

An educational approach that emphasizes the formation of character and the practice of ethics will produce graduates who not only have academic knowledge, but also have attitudes and behaviors that are socially acceptable. In this increasingly complex world, good ethics is very much needed, especially in shaping individuals who are not only able to achieve personal success, but also can provide benefits to the surrounding community.

As a pesantren-based school, SMKS Jamiyatul Aulad places more emphasis on manners and ethics, including in the way of seeking knowledge. Through the book of *Ta'lim Muta'allim* recitation activities held every Friday, students are taught how a student should behave when studying, both in terms of manners and ethics. This kind of teaching shows that in Islam, *adab* in seeking knowledge takes precedence over simply acquiring knowledge.

> *"... recitation of the Kitab Kulis like Ta'limul Muta'allim, Rotibul Haddad, and Keputrian. These programs shape students to be religious, disciplined, and have Islamic character." (Participant A)*

The application of ethics in everyday life in SMKs Jamiyatul Aulad is also seen in the rules applied in various aspects of school life. Educators and education personnel are committed to providing the best service for all students, regardless of their background. It reflects the egalitarian and inclusive attitude valued in Islamic ethics, which teaches not to discriminate against people based on social status, ethnicity, or religion.

The dress code in this school also reflects the values of ethics and decency that are taught to students. Female students are required to wear clothing that covers the genitals politely, and do not use excessive makeup or lipstick. This not only keeps their appearance neat and polite, but also teaches the value of modesty and modesty, which are an important part of Islamic character.

In addition, social interaction between students and teachers is also regulated with good ethics, such as greeting, shaking hands when meeting, and respecting each other. It reflects the attitude of mutual respect taught in Islam and is expected to be part of the daily behavior of the students.

Cultivating Islamic Character Education Through Cultural Values Approach

Education that connects with student culture has the power to make subject matter more relevant and meaningful. When students can see the connection between the lessons they receive and their daily lives, they become more motivated to learn and more actively involved in the educational process. This not only prepares them to live in an increasingly diverse global society, but also shapes them into individuals who understand and appreciate cultural values, especially those based on Islamic teachings.

Through the cultural approach in Islamic character education, students are not only introduced to academic knowledge, but also to the noble values contained in the traditions and cultures they inherit. This is an important step to form a person who is not only intelligent, but also civilized and can preserve the nation's culture.

At SMK Jamiyatul Aulad, a cultural approach is applied through a variety of activities that connect students with local traditions and the wider culture, while reinforcing Islamic values in their lives. One example of cultural activities held is mieling poe basa

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indung, an activity that involves traditional regional games such as *galah, boy-boyan*, and *ucing babet* between classes. This game is not only fun, but also a way to introduce and reintroduce traditional culture to the younger generation.

After the game activities, students and teachers together do *ngaliwet*, a joint meal activity that is part of the Sundanese cultural tradition. This activity brings students closer to the habits they often encounter in everyday life, while fostering a sense of community and family between them. Here, a positive culture combined with Islamic values can strengthen the social bond between students and teachers.

In addition to local cultural activities, SMK Jamiyatul Aulad also integrates habits related to Islamic teachings in everyday culture. Every student and teacher is required to pray before and after learning, as well as to read by reading one maqra of the Qur'an. The recitation of Asmaul Husna performed before starting the lesson becomes a way to instill spiritual awareness in students, where they are taught to always remember Allah in their every step, including in the learning process.

Another religious activity is the Duha prayer before the break, which is followed by the recitation of Surat Al-Waqiah and Prayer. This activity not only brings students closer to worship, but also teaches the value of discipline, togetherness, and responsibility in maintaining daily worship routines. The seven-minutes lecture also provides an opportunity to provide a moral message and inspiration that can motivate students in living a life with Islamic principles.

SMK Jamiyatul Aulad also maintains and preserves cultural heritage through local content taught in the curriculum, such as Sundanese. This regional language learning is not only to remind students of the importance of maintaining and preserving the mother tongue, but also to introduce them to the values of Sundanese culture which is full of moral and spiritual teachings. This is in line with efforts to maintain cultural diversity within the framework of Islam.

In extracurricular activities, there are arts and martial arts which are also a means to preserve Sundanese culture. Art and silat, as part of the cultural heritage, are taught with an approach that promotes Islamic values. Through these extracurricular activities, students not only develop physical and artistic skills, but also learn to appreciate and maintain their culture in a context that is in accordance with Islamic teachings.

> *"We also deliver art subjects as an extracurricular that still related to Islam, they are marawis and hadroh. (Participant S).*

Approach	Key Themes	Findings Description	Examples of Implementation at School
1. Moral Values Approach	Internalization of Islamic Moral Values	Instilling values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline consistently through learning activities and religious routines.	- Collective prayer before class - Daily congregational prayers - Essay-based project evaluations reflecting personal values
	Empathy and Social Solidarity	Strengthening students' care and concern for others through real-life social practices.	- Paying respects when a teacher/student's family member passes away - Visiting sick peers or teachers - Shared meals (*botram*) to build social bonds

Approach	Key Themes	Findings Description	Examples of Implementation at School
2. Ethical Values Approach	Teacher Role Modeling	Teachers serve as role models in demonstrating respectful communication and Islamic manners in daily life.	- Greeting students warmly with Islamic salutations - Demonstrating proper behavior in seeking knowledge - Treating all students equally regardless of background
	Daily Ethical Regulation	The school builds an ethical system based on Islamic values for student conduct and appearance.	- Dress code emphasizing modesty and religious compliance - Use of polite language in conversations - No excessive makeup or accessories for female students
3. Cultural Values Approach	Strengthening Islamic Cultural Habits	Habitual practices that promote Islamic culture through meaningful daily school activities.	- Qur'an recitation and Asmaul Husna chanting - Morning sermons (kultum) - Routine Dhuha prayers
	Islamization of Local Traditions and Arts	Integrating Islamic values with local traditions and cultural expressions to reinforce identity and moral education.	- *Ngaliwet* (communal Sundanese-style meal) - *Mieling poe basa indung* (Mother Language Day) - Traditional games in class competitions - Hadroh and marawis performances as spiritual-creative expression

Tabel 1. Research Findings

Discussion

Islamic character education is one of the important aspects in forming a generation that is not only superior in the academic field, but also has noble morals and behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings. At SMK Jamiyyatul Aulad Palabuhanratu, strengthening Islamic character education is carried out through an approach of instilling moral, ethical and cultural values derived from Islamic teachings. This approach aims to develop students' attitudes and behaviors that reflect Islamic values in everyday life, both in the school environment and in society.

The findings of this study reaffirm its novelty in presenting an integrative approach to Islamic character education. By combining moral, ethical, and cultural components within daily practices and local traditions, the research supports the call for contextual and community-based character education models. One innovative aspect of this findings is its capacity for contextualization. In vocational schools, where the focus has traditionally been on technical competencies, integrating moral and ethical values grounded in cultural traditions provides a unique framework that directly addresses the social and emotional needs of students by embedding Islamic education with integrative character values, students develop harmonious interactions and a strong sense of empathy, honesty, and responsibility, which are essential for their overall wellbeing (Yasin et al., 2024). Besides, when character education is interwoven with everyday

school activities, it not only mitigates negative outcomes such as juvenile delinquency but also promotes self-control and heightened ethical awareness among students (Rafsanjani et al., 2025).

Cultivating Moral Values in Islamic Character Education

According to Santrock, moral development is concerned with the rules and conventions of what humans should do in their interactions with others. Moral development is a change in behavior in children's lives related to procedures, habits, customs, or value standards that apply in social groups (Santrock, 2012).

The school as one of the school groups becomes an important setting in the process of instilling moral values, and it becomes one of the main focuses Islamic character education at SMK Jam'iyyatul Aulad. These moral values include honesty, responsibility, discipline, empathy, and mutual respect. The theory of character education proposed by Thomas Lickona (1991) explains that character education focuses on developing moral habits through the internalization of positive values that lead to the development of good behavior. Lickona suggests that effective character education should focus on teaching values that can be internalized and applied in everyday life.

According to Lickona, character is related to moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior (Nainggolan & Naibaho, 2022). Based on these three components, it can be stated that good character is supported by knowledge about goodness, the desire to do good, and doing good deeds (Ilmi, 2015). The first component, moral knowing, refers to an individual's understanding of what is right and wrong, as well as the values that underlie moral decisions. In this context, Lickona emphasizes the importance of moral education that helps individuals recognize and understand the ethical values that apply in society. Moral knowledge includes the ability to identify good and bad actions and understand the consequences of those actions. This moral understanding consists of six elements, namely moral awareness, knowing moral values, taking the perspective of others, moral reasoning, decision making and self-knowledge (Izzati et al., 2019).

Based on this explanation, the participants' understanding of the concept of Islamic character education reflects moral knowledge, where they as teachers understand the importance of integrating Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility and devotion in students' daily lives. Through daily, weekly and annual diversity programs and programs in the curriculum and extra-curricular, all of these programs function as a cognitive process for students to understand religious values and social norms so that they can become a foundation when they make life decisions.

The second component, moral feeling, relates to the emotions and attitudes that underlie moral action. It includes feelings of empathy, a sense of responsibility, and awareness of the impact of actions on others. Lickona argues that positive moral attitudes are essential to encourage individuals to act in accordance with their moral knowledge. In this case, moral feeling involves six aspects, including conscience, self-esteem, empathy, self-control and humility (Izzati et al., 2019). This is reflected in the awareness and commitment of the teachers to instill these values through various programs and activities, such as tadarus, congregational prayers, and yellow book studies. This commitment shows a strong moral feeling to shape students' character. who are noble, do not feel more right than others, and are able to control and respect themselves according to the guidance of the Quran that humans are created full of potential and formed as the best of creation.

The third component, moral behavior, is realized through real implementation in daily activities at school, such as the application of Islamic culture, the role of teachers as role models, and the involvement of parents and the community in supporting Islamic character education. This third component is the result of the previous two character

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components, so this shows that the three components of character according to Lickona interact with each other and are applied in an effort to shape the character of noble students. The elements in this moral behavior component include competence, desire or willingness, and habits (Izzati et al., 2019; Nainggolan & Naibaho, 2022).

This is in line with the efforts made by teachers at SMK Jam'iyyatul Aulad, where they try to form habits in the form of religious rituals to instill moral values, ethics, and Islamic culture through various programs and activities at school, so that students have the competence to understand and memorize the Quran, participate in marawis competitions, and others. Thus, the implementation of Islamic character education at SMK Jamiyyatul Aulad reflects Thomas Lickona's theory of character education, where moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions are integrated harmoniously to form students with Islamic character.

In the context of Islamic education, this moral value refers to the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith which emphasize the importance of noble traits such as honesty (surah Al- Ahzab 33:70), justice (surah An-Nisa 4:58), and empathy (surah Al-Baqarah 2:177). The cultivation of moral values is done through learning that prioritizes good values and routine activities at school such as congregational prayers, reading the Quran, social activities and so on as mentioned above.

Implementation of Islamic Ethics in School Activities

The implementation of Islamic ethics at SMK Jamiyyatul Aulad plays a role in shaping the behavior of students who are polite, ethical, and respectful of others. Islamic ethics are not only related to manners in worship, but also include how to speak, interact with teachers, friends, and the community, and maintain good relations with others. Islamic Ethical Theory teaches that good morals and polite behavior are part of the teachings that must be applied in everyday life.

In this case, Islamic ethics refers to the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW who taught about the importance of guarding the tongue, respecting parents and teachers, and treating others with compassion and respect. One of the traditions on which this is based is "Whoever believes in Allah and the Last Day, let him speak well or keep silent." (HR. Bukhari and Muslim). The application of this ethic is seen in school activities that involve respectful interactions, as well as the Islamic ethics habituation program in daily life at school. Islamic ethics applied through activities such as manners of speaking, respecting teachers, and avoiding negative actions such as gossiping and speaking harshly have proven to be influential in improving discipline and maintaining harmony between students and teachers.

Cultivating Islamic Culture in School Life

The cultivation of Islamic culture in schools is not only limited to religious teaching, but also includes the application of an Islamic lifestyle which includes cleanliness, neatness, and a sense of caring for others. According to the social cognitive theory by Albert Bandura (2001), individuals learn from observation and interaction with their environment. In this context, the Islamic culture implemented in schools provides concrete examples for students in practicing Islamic teachings through concrete actions and providing examples so that students can model behavior so that it can become a culture that is done in their daily lives, such as maintaining environmental cleanliness, behaving well towards others, and promoting the principle of helping, practice Islamic arts such as *hadroh* and *marawis*.

In Islamic culture, cleanliness is highly emphasized as part of faith (surah Al- Baqarah 2:222). Activities such as cleaning the environment, maintaining order, and carrying out social activities, such as social services or routine prayers, shape students into

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individuals who care about the environment and others. This strengthening of Islamic culture forms students who have social care and maintain a clean and orderly life.

Education with Islamic Values

Character education in Islam means character education based on Islamic teachings as the substance of the material whose product is Islamic character, namely character in accordance with Islamic teachings (Faizah, 2022). Islamic character is the most important and urgent thing to be applied at various levels of education, both in primary, secondary and tertiary education (Haidir et al., 2023).

In the learning process, teachers indirectly teach students about Islamic character and with the help of teachers in learning activities have applied Islamic character traits in this case it can be seen from the attitudes shown by students (Iswan, Rahmi, & Kusmawati, 2019). Islamic character can be considered a strong foundation for forming individuals who not only have knowledge of goodness, but also the desire and ability to apply it in everyday life (Prayoga & Sahri, 2024).

The cultivation of Islamic character carried out by the ranks of SMK Jamiyyatul Aulad in shaping the character of its students:

a. Religious: Relates to faith or spirituality, encompassing a person's belief, piety, and obedience in worshiping Allah SWT. This is in accordance with the following verse, which contains these dimensions: Surah An-Nahl, verse 97.

b. Honest: The word "honest" is closely related to the word "truthful," as found in the words of Allah SWT in Surah At-Tawbah, verse 119.

c. Tolerance: An attitude or behavior demonstrated when having a friend or relative who believes in a different path to paradise.

d. Discipline: Related to self-control, which enables a person to distinguish between what is right and what is wrong. In the long term, this is expected to foster responsible behavior (Ilmi, 2015).

These values can be the foundation of a nation to create a strong and advanced civilization (Purwastuti, 2014). The quality of student graduation is not only determined by the high intellectuality of knowledge and skills, but also requires a good moral attitude or character, so that later it can be accepted , both in the environment, work environment, and community environment (Adri et al., 2020).

The essential character in Islam refers to the nature of the Prophet Muhammad SAW, namely sidiq, amanah, fathanah, and tabligh. In Islam, the act of educating is called Tahdzib. The act of educating. Islamic character education is carried out by providing examples, guidance, and direction to students. In addition, it can also be categorized that Islamic character education contains these three elements, namely obedience to Allah and the Messenger of Allah, individual noble character (*akhlaqul karimah*) and also social welfare.

Islamic Character Education Helps Enhance Student's Well-being

When students are applied with good moral and ethical values, they tend to develop positive attitudes and good social skills, which directly contribute to students ' well-being both emotionally and socially. According to Irfan and Sain (2024), Islamic religious education focused on teaching morals and ethics contributes to shaping the character of adolescents by increasing empathy, moral understanding, and social responsibility, discipline, and leadership through structured programs and extracurricular activities (Munadi, 2023; Huda *et al.,* 2024; Purwanto *et al.,* 2021; Irfan & Sain, 2024).

Understanding well-being is very important as it relates to the quality of life and mental health of the individual. Research shows that people who have high levels of well-being tend to have better physical health, are more resistant to stress, and are better

able to build productive social relationships (Viejo et al., 2018; Gao & McLellan, 2018). In addition, the promotion of well-being during the adolescent period can help prevent psychological disorders and create a good foundation for the transition to a more successful adult life (Hardjo et al., 2020; Viejo et al., 2018).

This can be one of the school policies for all teachers to collaborate, especially for religious teachers and school counselors at SMK Jam'iyyatul Aulad and other schools to work together to implement and supervise the process of student character education through religious rituals and spirituality. A balanced approach that includes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains ensures the holistic development of students, preparing them for the challenges of the modern world (Mahfuzah, 2022).

The all findings of this study align with Huda et al. (2024), who emphasize that character education in Islamic boarding schools is most effective when integrated into extracurricular and daily routines. Similarly, Munadi (2023) highlights the role of religious-based school cultures in shaping student character through collective practices, rituals, and teacher modeling. However, this study also contrasts with secular models of character education that often focus more on cognitive-behavioral strategies and individual development rather than communal religious identity. For instance, Viejo et al. (2018) argue that well-being-focused secular education prioritizes emotional regulation and social skills over spiritual or moral internalization.

While this study presents a valuable insight into Islamic character education within vocational contexts, it is limited by its single-site focus—SMK Jamiyyatul Aulad—and its reliance on a small sample of structural educators. These factors constrain the generalizability of the findings. Future research should consider involving diverse school settings, including both Islamic and non-Islamic institutions, and include students, parents, and community members as participants to obtain a more holistic perspective.

Conclusion

Strengthening Islamic character education at SMK Jamiyyatul Aulad through the instillation of Islamic morals, ethics, and values aims to develop students who are not only academically proficient but also possess noble morals and behavior aligned with Islamic teachings. By integrating Islamic values into the curriculum, leveraging the role of teacher role models, habituating religious activities, and involving parents and the community, students are expected to internalize and practice Islamic moral, ethical, and cultural values in their daily lives.

This process of Islamic character education also contributes to the well-being of students, better preparing them to face future life challenges. Periodic evaluation and reflection are essential to ensure the success of this educational approach. With this holistic strategy, it is anticipated that the younger generation will achieve high academic competence, exhibit virtuous personalities, and be ready to confront global challenges while maintaining strong religious values.

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