The contribution of character education management to enhancing students' discipline

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the contribution of character education management to enhancing students' discipline in educational institutions. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed using library research supported by relevant books, journal articles, and educational policy documents. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to identify key themes related to character education management. The findings indicate that effective character education management is reflected in systematic planning, implementation, supervision, and evaluation integrated into both curricular and extracurricular activities. These management practices contribute to strengthening students' disciplinary attitudes by fostering responsibility, self-control, and positive behavioral habits. However, the implementation has not yet achieved optimal outcomes due to various internal and external challenges, including limited stakeholder involvement and inconsistencies in program execution. The study emphasizes that sustainable collaboration among school leaders, teachers, parents, and the community is essential for developing a strong culture of discipline. Strengthening management practices and continuously evaluating character education programs are expected to improve the effectiveness of discipline development and support the achievement of broader educational goals.

Keyword: character education management; student discipline; educational management; qualitative study

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education is highly important in the current era of modern disruption. To develop individual potential, expand knowledge, strengthen competencies, and shape character, education has become a fundamental necessity for every individual. It promotes personal development and facilitates the acquisition and retention of knowledge and information. In particular, education plays a crucial role in shaping students' character and developing a generation of high-quality individuals.

In the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, education has become increasingly important. Every individual requires quality education to develop personality, enhance intellectual capacity, acquire skills, and realize their full potential. Education enables individuals to acquire essential knowledge and information while simultaneously shaping their character. It plays a significant role in producing high-quality learners, particularly in terms of character development (Pasaribu, 2017).

According to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, education is a deliberate and systematic effort to create a learning environment and learning process that enable learners to actively develop their potential. The ultimate objective is to foster spiritual strength, self-control, intelligence, noble character, and the skills required for the benefit of individuals, society, and the nation (Noor, 2018).

The goal of national education is to maximize the potential of every learner so that they become successful, independent, law-abiding citizens who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, creative, responsible, and democratic (Indonesia, 2003; Sujana, 2019).

Therefore, achieving these objectives requires educational practices that are aligned with the principles and goals of national education.

The implementation of extracurricular activities in public schools refers to Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System and Government Regulation No. 19 of 2005 on National Education Standards. These regulations require educational institutions to organize educational programs in accordance with the national curriculum and the standards established by the Badan Standar Nasional Pendidikan (BSNP).

Intracurricular activities are expected to improve students' academic achievement, as noted by Hidayah (2019) and Negara (2016), while co-curricular activities help students deepen their understanding of subject matter beyond classroom instruction. Extracurricular activities, on the other hand, provide opportunities for students to develop their interests, talents, and character. These three forms of educational activities are consistently experienced by students throughout the learning process. Intracurricular activities, which primarily take place in the classroom, focus on enhancing students' academic engagement and learning experiences. From this perspective, learning constitutes the core of formal education, while extracurricular activities serve as an integral component of the overall educational process. Therefore, learning can be understood as a process of personal change that is reflected in new patterns of behavior resulting from participation and continuous practice.

In accordance with the Minister of Education and Culture Regulation No. 62 of 2014 concerning extracurricular activities in primary and secondary education, student activities conducted outside the classroom are considered integral components of co-curricular and extracurricular programs that must be properly managed and supervised by educational institutions. To support the achievement of national education objectives, extracurricular activities are designed to develop students' potential, talents, interests, competencies, character, cooperation, and independence. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (Susanti, 2021), schools provide a variety of extracurricular activities, including Scouting, Flag Raising Troops (*Paskibra*), Youth Red Cross (PMR), School Security Patrol (PKS), nature lover clubs, philately, student cooperatives, School Health Units (UKS), Youth Scientific Groups (KIR), sports, and arts activities. However, each activity must be implemented with clear and meaningful objectives, as activities conducted without well-defined goals are unlikely to achieve the expected outcomes. This principle also applies to both extracurricular and intracurricular programs, all of which should be implemented with clear and purposeful objectives.

In addition to producing academically competent students, these programs are expected to develop students with strong character. However, despite the implementation of both intracurricular and extracurricular activities, these programs have not yet been fully effective in fostering students' personal development, particularly in terms of discipline. This issue arises partly because the planning of extracurricular programs tends to emphasize instructional and activity-based components while providing limited opportunities for students to internalize meaningful character-building experiences.

As a result, character development is often not prioritized in the implementation of extracurricular activities, which instead tend to focus more on training and achievement-oriented outcomes, particularly in sports.

Schools play a crucial role in developing students' character. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education has identified 18 core character values. According to the Ministry of Education (2013:97), these values include honesty, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, nationalism, patriotism, appreciation of achievement, friendliness, communicativeness, a love of reading, environmental awareness, social responsibility, resilience, law-abiding behavior, and justice.

Students are expected to integrate the knowledge acquired through formal classroom learning with extracurricular activities as part of a comprehensive educational experience. Extracurricular activities vary in form because they are not limited to core academic subjects but also accommodate students' interests and talents, allowing them to choose activities that align with their individual abilities and potential. According to Requene (2005:122), discipline is a mental attitude or pattern of behavior characterized by orderliness and consistency in adhering to established rules and standards. The term *discipline* is derived from the Latin word *discere*, meaning "to learn," and is closely associated with the concepts of guidance and training, as well as the term *disciple*, which refers to a learner or follower. In this context, Prijadaminto (2004:5–6) defines discipline as a condition formed through the development of behaviors that reflect dedication, efficiency, and consistency in acquiring knowledge, while Kadir (1994:80) defines it as obedience to rules or submission to authority. Collectively, these perspectives suggest that discipline contributes to shaping individuals' ability to act in an orderly, controlled, and effective manner.

Discipline plays a vital role in achieving educational objectives. It is an essential component of the learning process, and ecological factors—including the family, school, and the wider community—significantly influence students' academic development. Because discipline encompasses cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions, cultivating disciplined behavior often presents considerable challenges throughout the educational process.

One of the disciplinary issues examined in this study is students' lack of discipline, which may be attributed to the limited effectiveness of extracurricular activities as complementary components of character education. Character education plays a crucial role in shaping individual and societal values by emphasizing moral and ethical principles that help students navigate various life situations. Thomas Lickona, in his book *Teaching Character* (Irawan, 2010:59), defines character education as a deliberate effort to help individuals understand, appreciate, and practice core ethical values. He emphasizes that young people should be able to recognize what is right, value those principles, and act upon them, even when faced with pressure or temptation. In this context, students are expected to connect their participation in school activities with the character values promoted through those programs.

Therefore, the implementation of character education within educational institutions involves providing meaningful learning experiences that emphasize noble values derived from Indonesia's socio-cultural heritage, with the aim of shaping the personality of the younger generation. The teaching and learning process should model positive behavior through an integrated educational environment involving families, schools or *madrasahs*, and the broader community. Such an approach is expected to support the development of students' character and behavioral habits in harmony with their cognitive development, which represents one of the fundamental objectives of education at every level.

The diverse potentials possessed by individuals—including cognitive, emotional, conative, and psychomotor aspects—play an important role in character development. According to Kurt Lewin, as cited in Andersen (1980:89), personality influences behavior and consists of mental, emotional, and psychomotor dimensions that are shaped by environmental factors. These dimensions interact with one another in determining individual behavior. This suggests that students cannot be regarded as a homogeneous group. Some students may demonstrate high cognitive ability while exhibiting limitations in other aspects, whereas others may possess strong perseverance, excellent social skills, and moderate cognitive ability. Therefore, every student has unique characteristics, and educational efforts should focus on developing each student's potential according to his or her individual abilities.

Character education should be implemented across multiple contexts, including the family, the community, and the school environment. Therefore, parents and the wider community should actively support the character education programs implemented in schools to ensure that students receive consistent character development across these three environments. As formal educational institutions, schools have the responsibility to assist students in developing their affective competencies. Accordingly, character education in schools should not be limited to shaping observable behavior alone, as character is more closely associated with the affective domain than with the acquisition of knowledge alone. However, in practice, character education in many schools has not yet placed sufficient emphasis on the affective dimension.

Discipline constitutes one of the central values of character education examined in this study. Jahiri (2004:79) defines discipline as a value that reflects goodness, truth, and justice. Furthermore, Endang Sumantri suggests that an individual's attitudes and self-regulation—including subtle aspects such as tone of voice, emotional control, and personal discipline—can influence the level of discipline demonstrated by that individual. In this sense, discipline is regarded as a value-based construct that is meaningful, beneficial, and capable of contributing to individual and social well-being. Therefore, discipline encompasses values that are considered noble and essential for personal development.

Given the importance of discipline in the educational process, further investigation is required to obtain comprehensive information and identify appropriate strategies for its improvement. One approach to addressing this issue is through effective character education management, which systematically integrates character values into school programs and educational activities.

Character education management is expected to strengthen students' disciplinary behavior through well-planned educational programs, effective implementation, continuous supervision, and comprehensive evaluation. The success of these efforts depends not only on school management but also on the active involvement of teachers, parents, and the wider community in creating an educational environment that consistently promotes positive character values.

Based on the issues described above, this study is conducted under the title "Character Education Management" to examine how character education management contributes to improving students' discipline and to identify strategies that can strengthen the implementation of character education within educational institutions.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, as suggested by Familiyana et al. (2022). Qualitative research aims to obtain an in-depth understanding of phenomena through the application of relevant theoretical perspectives. It is characterized by a text-based and interpretative approach, as explained by Zaluchu

(2020), involving continuous and dynamic interaction between the researcher and the research subject. The method employed in this study is descriptive analysis, which, according to Masrifah et al. (2018), involves describing data in the form of words followed by analytical interpretation to generate meaning from textual or visual information.

In terms of data collection, this study adopts a library research approach by relying on various secondary sources, including books, journal articles, and other relevant documents. The literature review serves as the primary and fundamental stage of the data collection process.

The purpose of this approach is to examine various types of documents, including written texts, images, and electronic records. According to Sugiyono (2013), documents refer to records of events that have already occurred. These documents may take the form of written works, artistic works, graphics, or other creative outputs produced by individuals or groups. This perspective is consistent with Creswell (2017), who states that qualitative research may utilize both public documents, such as reports, publications, and official records, and private documents, including personal journals, periodic records (daily, weekly, or monthly), and electronic correspondence.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the implementation of character education management to improve students' discipline has not yet achieved its full potential. Nevertheless, its implementation remains essential and should be aligned with the needs and capacities of educational management practices. The findings further indicate that schools have not yet been able to optimize character education management, particularly in experiential learning processes involving the planning, implementation, and evaluation of character development programs.

The management of experiential learning activities involves several key processes, including planning, implementation, and evaluation. In this regard, Ajidin (2022) emphasizes that school personnel should uphold the principles of learning, development, collaboration, and discipline. Furthermore, school management can be understood as a continuous process of organizational transformation. This process generally consists of four main stages: planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling. These stages demonstrate that school management functions as a systematic cycle involving coordination, organization, and direction. In addition, effective administration requires the optimal utilization of available resources to achieve educational objectives in accordance with the school's vision and mission.

The resources utilized in educational administration include human resources, materials, methods and procedures, systems, and information management. These resources vary in quality; therefore, school principals must be capable of managing them effectively and efficiently to achieve both program objectives and broader institutional goals. To strengthen students' discipline through character education, schools have implemented work-based learning programs integrated into the School Work Plan (RKS), as well as specifically designed instructional programs aimed at reinforcing discipline. These programs are systematically planned and implemented at the beginning of each academic year, involving relevant stakeholders and aligning with the school's vision, mission, and objectives.

The fundamental components of the School Work Plan include the school's vision, mission, objectives, and strategic approaches to addressing educational challenges. Furthermore, the development of extracurricular activity programs is based on standardized curriculum guidelines that regulate both extracurricular implementation and students' daily activities. According to Douglas McGregor, as cited in Nurdin (2009:233) and further discussed by Siahaan et al. (2023), effective educational management is guided by several key principles: focusing on organizational goals while considering both individual and organizational interests; ensuring clear authority and responsibility in planning; delegating responsibilities according to staff competence and capacity; understanding human psychological factors; and prioritizing essential organizational aspects.

To achieve the expected outcomes, school program planning should utilize these principles as a strategic roadmap for achieving educational objectives. This approach is grounded in the concept that educational management is a systematic process of utilizing both human and non-human resources effectively and efficiently through the functions of planning, organizing, implementation, and supervision to achieve educational goals. According to Roesminingsih (2014), educational management encompasses several domains, including student management, curriculum management, human resource management, facilities and infrastructure management, financial management, school–community relations, and special program management. Similar classifications are also identified in earlier studies (2009:21), highlighting curriculum management, student affairs, personnel management, infrastructure management, school–community relations,

and special program management. Furthermore, improving students' discipline can be effectively supported through the implementation of character education management.

At the school management level, particularly in senior high schools (SMA), careful attention should be given to all organizational components and stakeholders. E. Mulyasa (2002:22) emphasizes that efforts to improve school quality should begin with strengthening institutional performance, enhancing student achievement standards, and improving teacher quality. Furthermore, E. Mulyasa (2014:14) highlights that recognizing the importance of character education is a fundamental prerequisite for its successful implementation in schools. Therefore, effective character education programs can only be achieved when supported by strong organizational practices. In this context, the principal plays a crucial leadership role in determining the direction of school development, both in achieving specific institutional objectives and broader educational goals. This responsibility also includes supervising extracurricular activities that contribute to the development of disciplined and responsible student behavior.

To achieve the objectives of character education programs, it is essential to strengthen educational management aimed at improving students' discipline. In this context, well-managed schools require effective leadership focused on enhancing institutional quality. This quality refers to the school's capacity as an educational institution to provide excellent services and produce graduates who meet established educational standards. This perspective is consistent with the views of Kuntoro (2019) and Ristianah and Ma'sum (2022), who argue that quality management encompasses all managerial functions, including planning, organizing, controlling, and leading. These functions establish quality policies, objectives, and responsibilities, which are implemented through quality planning, quality control, quality assurance, and continuous quality improvement. Therefore, school quality management involves the comprehensive implementation of management standards across all school activities, from planning and organizing to implementation and evaluation, in order to achieve the institution's vision and objectives.

According to Ali (2007:619), every individual and institution aspires to obtain quality education. Meanwhile, Farhani (2019) and Harun (2013) identify several perspectives that can serve as guiding principles, including:

a) **Input indicators:** Factors that include the quality of teachers, facilities, equipment, learning materials, and managerial capacity.
b) **Process indicators:** Aspects such as leadership practices, teachers' time allocation, and students' learning time.
c) **Output indicators:** Outcomes including students' academic achievement, institutional performance, changes in attitudes, equity, and security.
d) **Outcome indicators:** Factors such as the number of graduates continuing to higher levels of education, improved academic performance, employment opportunities, and income levels.

In implementing character education, E. Mulyasa (2004) proposes eleven standards within the framework of character education quality guidelines to ensure the effectiveness of character-based schools, namely:

a) Promoting core ethical values as the foundation of character.
b) Defining character comprehensively by including cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions.
c) Applying intentional, proactive, and effective approaches to character development.
d) Creating a caring and supportive school community.
e) Providing opportunities for students to demonstrate positive behavior.
f) Developing a meaningful and rigorous curriculum that respects individual differences, fosters character, and supports student success.
g) Encouraging students' intrinsic motivation.
h) Engaging all school staff as members of a moral community who share responsibility for character education and adhere to common principles.
i) Providing moral leadership while encouraging broader community involvement in character education.
j) Involving families and the wider community as partners in character development.
k) Evaluating school culture, the leadership role of school principals as character educators, and the promotion of positive behavior in students' daily lives.

Furthermore, parents and the wider community expect schools to provide quality education that enables students to access future opportunities, whether through employment, further education, or personal development.

The implementation of character education through after-school programs is supported by schools through various activities aligned with students' interests and abilities. However, schools continue to face both internal and external challenges, particularly in managing character education to improve students' discipline. These challenges should not merely be viewed as obstacles but also as opportunities for continuous improvement. This study seeks to identify these challenges and propose constructive strategies within extracurricular activities to strengthen students' discipline. Furthermore, a quality management approach should be adopted by emphasizing the school's responsibility as an educational institution to deliver high-quality educational services and continuously improve educational outcomes.

4. CONCLUSION

This study identifies the key issues related to the implementation of character education management and proposes constructive strategies to enhance students' discipline through extracurricular activities. The findings indicate that school management plays a significant role in shaping students' character, particularly in fostering discipline. However, the implementation of character education programs has not yet achieved optimal results due to various internal and external challenges that hinder their effectiveness. Therefore, educational institutions should continue to strengthen character education programs by improving management practices, integrating character values into school activities, and fostering collaboration among all stakeholders to establish a sustainable culture of discipline. A quality management approach should remain the foundation for delivering effective educational services and improving student learning outcomes.

Based on these findings, school principals are encouraged to strengthen their leadership role by motivating teachers and extracurricular activity coordinators to effectively manage character education programs. In addition, schools should ensure that adequate facilities and resources are available to support the successful implementation of extracurricular activities. Continuous evaluation and improvement of these programs are also essential to ensure that they effectively contribute to students' character development and disciplinary behavior. Through strong institutional commitment and active collaboration among schools, families, and the wider community, the implementation of character education is expected to become more effective in developing disciplined, responsible, and high-quality students.

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