

## RELIGIOUS CULTURE BASED CHARACTER LEARNING MANAGEMENT IN MIN 1 MALANG AND MIN 2 MALANG

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**Abstract:** *Character education is one of the main focuses of national education that requires systematic management so that character values can be internalized in students' behavior. In the context of madrasas, religious culture is a strategic instrument to support character formation through various learning and habituation activities. However, the success of character education is largely determined by the effectiveness of the learning management applied. This study aims to analyze the management of religious culture-based character learning in MIN 1 Malang and MIN 2 Malang which includes aspects of planning, implementation, and evaluation. The research uses a qualitative approach with a multisite study design. Data were obtained through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies involving madrasah heads, deputy heads of curriculum, teachers, and students. Data analysis is carried out through data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion drawing with cross-site analysis techniques. The results of the study show that character learning planning is carried out in an integrated manner with the vision and mission of the madrasah, curriculum, religious culture programs, and the organization of supporting resources. The implementation of character learning is realized through the integration of character values in learning, habituation of religious culture, teacher example, and continuous coordination. MIN 1 Malang implements a coordination pattern based on the leadership of madrasah heads, while MIN 2 Malang develops systemic patterns through special teams and strengthening institutional religious culture. Evaluation is carried out on an ongoing basis through supervision, program monitoring, and assessment of student character development. The findings of the study confirm that the integration of management functions and religious culture is the main factor in the success of the formation of students' character in madrasah.*

**Keywords:** *Learning management, character education, religious culture*

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### Introduction

Character education is one of the strategic issues in the development of education in the 21st century. The development of digital technology, cultural globalization, and changes in social interaction patterns have brought various challenges to the character formation of the younger generation in various countries. International organizations such as UNESCO affirm that strengthening character, human values, and social competence is an important part of the sustainable development of human resources. In this context, educational institutions not only function as a means of developing academic abilities, but also as institutions that are responsible for shaping the character of students so that they have integrity, social responsibility, the ability to collaborate, and tolerate attitudes in social life.

In Indonesia, the urgency of character education is getting stronger along with the increase in various social problems involving students, such as bullying, intolerance, low learning discipline, abuse of digital media, and declining ethics in society. This phenomenon shows that the success of education cannot be measured solely through academic achievement, but also through the success of schools in shaping the character of students. Therefore, character education is an urgent need to build a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also has strong moral and social qualities.

The importance of character education has been affirmed in various national policies. Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System states that national education functions to develop abilities and form a dignified character and civilization of the nation. This commitment is strengthened through Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education (PPK) which places character as an integral part of the educational process. In the madrasah environment, character strengthening has a more strategic

position because it is integrated with Islamic values as the philosophical foundation of education. The implementation of the madrasah curriculum also places the formation of religious character as one of the main orientations in the learning process.

Theoretically, character education is not only related to the mastery of moral knowledge (moral knowing), but also includes the appreciation of moral values (moral feeling) and moral behavior (moral action) as stated by Lickona. These three aspects need to be developed in an integrated manner so that character values can be internalized in the lives of students. From the perspective of education management, the process of internalizing character requires systematic management through planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling learning. Thus, character education does not stop at the conceptual level, but is manifested in various learning activities and school culture that are planned and sustainable.

Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 1 Malang and MIN 2 Malang are two Islamic basic education institutions that have a strong commitment to strengthening the character of students through religious culture. MIN 1 Malang develops the 5S Love and culture Curriculum (smile, greeting, greeting, politeness, manners) as a medium for character habituation, while MIN 2 Malang implements the Mindatama Five Characters program which is oriented towards discipline, leadership, creativity, social concern, and strengthening Islamic values. The existence of these programs shows the existence of distinctive and interesting character education management practices to be studied in depth, especially in the aspect of learning management that supports its success.

Various previous studies have examined character education in madrasahs from various perspectives. Ghofur et al. (2024) highlight the implementation of the madrasah curriculum based on KMA Number 450 of 2024 which places character education as the core of student development. Sari and Sumedi (2024) emphasized the importance of madrasah culture in the formation of religious character through habituation and example. Meanwhile, Mubarok et al. (2025) found that religious habituation programs are effective in improving students' discipline and moral awareness, while Mufroh et al. (2025) showed that tahfidz learning management contributes to the formation of disciplinary character. Kurnia (2024) also revealed the positive influence of character education management on the development of students' attitudes. However, most of the research still focuses on the implementation of religious programs or cultures, has not comprehensively examined the functions of character learning management, and is generally carried out at one research location. As a result, there is no conceptual model that comprehensively explains the relationship between religious culture and character learning management in the context of madrasah ibtidaiyah.

Based on these conditions, this research offers theoretical, methodological, and empirical novelty. Theoretically, this study develops a character learning management model based on religious culture through the integration of Lickona's character education theory with the POAC (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, Controlling) management function. Methodologically, this study uses a multisite study approach in MIN 1 Malang and MIN 2 Malang so that it allows for a more comprehensive understanding than a single case study. Empirically, this study examines and compares the management of character learning through the 5S Love and Culture Curriculum at MIN 1 Malang and the Mindatama Five Characters program at MIN 2 Malang. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the planning, implementation, and evaluation of character learning in both madrasahs in order to produce a character learning management model based on religious culture at the madrasah ibtidaiyah level.

## **Method**

This study uses a qualitative approach with a multisite case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to understand in depth the phenomenon of character learning management based on religious culture in the natural context of madrasahs. The multisite case study design was used to gain a comprehensive understanding of the similarities, differences, and synthesis of character learning management practices in two research locations, namely MIN 1 Malang and MIN 2 Malang. The selection of the two madrasahs was carried out purposively with the consideration that both are superior state madrasahs that have different religious culture-based character strengthening programs and have been systematically implemented.

The research focuses include: (1) religious culture-based character learning planning; (2) the implementation of character learning based on religious culture; and (3) evaluation of character learning based on religious culture. The three focuses were analyzed to produce a synthesis of character learning management models in madrasah ibtidaiyah. The research informants were determined using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The main informants consist of the head of the madrasah, the deputy head of the curriculum, the classroom teacher, the Islamic religious education teacher, the coordinator of the character program, and the students. The selection of informants is based on their involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of character learning programs. The process of determining informants is carried out in stages until data saturation or data saturation is

achieved.

Data collection was carried out through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation studies. Observation is used to observe the implementation of religious culture and character learning activities in the madrasah environment. In-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to obtain information about the informants' policies, strategies, and experiences in managing character learning. The documentation study was carried out on curriculum documents, learning modules, character strengthening programs, madrasah rules, activity reports, character assessment instruments, and other supporting documents relevant to the focus of the research.

The validity of the data is guaranteed through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability tests. The credibility test was carried out through source triangulation, technical triangulation, member checking, and extension of researcher participation in the field. Transferability is achieved through the presentation of a thick description of the research context. Dependability is carried out through an audit of the research process, while confirmability is carried out by tracing the suitability between data, interpretation, and research findings.

Data analysis uses the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña which includes data condensation, data presentation, and conclusion withdrawal and verification. The analysis was carried out in two stages. The first stage is an individual case analysis (within-case analysis) at each research site to obtain specific findings in MIN 1 Malang and MIN 2 Malang. The second stage is cross-case analysis by comparing, connecting, and synthesizing findings from the two sites to produce propositions and conceptual models of character learning management based on religious culture at the madrasah ibtidaiyah level.

## **Findings and Discussion**

### **Religious Culture-Based Character Learning Management Planning**

The results of the study show that the concept of character learning management planning based on religious culture in MIN 1 Malang and MIN 2 Malang is carried out systematically through the stages of policy formulation, program preparation, resource organization, and determination of control mechanisms. These findings confirm that character learning is not an incidental activity, but is designed in a planned manner as an integral part of the madrasah education system.

In the perspective of George R. Terry's management theory, planning is the initial function that determines the success of all organizational activities. Planning includes setting goals, developing strategies, determining work programs, and identifying the resources needed to achieve the goals that have been set. The findings of the study show that the two madrasahs have implemented the planning function optimally through the preparation of visions, missions, work programs, and learning tools that are oriented towards strengthening the religious character of students.

At MIN 1 Malang, the planning process begins with the elaboration of the vision and mission of the madrasah which emphasizes the formation of religious, disciplined, and moral students. The vision is then translated into strategic documents such as the Strategic Plan (Renstra) and the Annual Work Plan (RKT). The existence of the document shows that madrasahs have a clear development direction and short-term and long-term targets in the implementation of character education.

Meanwhile, MIN 2 Malang shows a more integrative planning pattern by making religious culture the main framework for the development of character learning programs. Planning is not only oriented to the achievement of academic competence, but also to the formation of an institutional culture that supports the internalization of character values. These findings show that religious culture is not positioned as an additional program, but rather as a foundation that frames all educational activities in madrasahs.

The results of this study are in line with Mulyasa's view that effective character education must be designed through comprehensive planning and integrated with all educational programs. Character education cannot run optimally if it is only carried out through learning activities in the classroom without the support of a strong institutional system. Therefore, the success of character education is highly determined by the quality of planning that is able to integrate character values into all aspects of school life.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the planning carried out by the two madrasahs also reflects the principles of at-governance or planned management as taught in the Qur'an. Allah SWT emphasizes the importance of planning through His words in QS. Al-Hashr verse 18 which commands man to pay attention to what has been prepared for the future. This verse provides a philosophical foundation that every educational activity must be carefully designed so that the expected goals can be achieved effectively.

The findings of the study also show the involvement of various elements in the planning process, ranging from the head of the madrasah, the deputy head of the curriculum, teachers, to the religious culture team. The

involvement of these various parties shows that planning is carried out in a participatory manner. The participatory planning model has advantages because it is able to increase the sense of ownership of the program that has been prepared. When teachers are involved from the planning stage, they will be more responsible in implementing the mutually agreed program.

In addition, the planning carried out by the two madrasas has included the determination of success indicators and evaluation mechanisms. This shows that planning is not only oriented to the activities to be carried out, but also to the standard of success to be achieved. Thus, the planning process has met the principles of SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) which are characteristic of modern education planning, especially in strengthening the quality of performance management-based education (Rahayu et al., 2024; Siregar & Hasanah, 2023).

These findings reinforce the results of previous research that stated that the success of character education is strongly influenced by the quality of systematic, participatory, and sustainable planning. The better the quality of planning carried out by educational institutions, the greater the chance of achieving the goal of building students' character through the integration of school policies, curriculum, and culture (Firmansyah & Kurniawati, 2025; Wulandari et al., 2023).

The findings of the study show that both madrasas integrate character values into academic documents, especially learning tools compiled by teachers. Each Learning Implementation Plan (RPP), teaching modules, and evaluation tools contain character indicators that must be achieved by students. This integration reflects the implementation of integrated character education which emphasizes that character values must be part of the entire learning process, not as a separate subject (Pratama et al., 2024).

The integration shows that character education is not separated from the academic learning process. Instead, character becomes an inherent part of every learning activity. At MIN 1 Malang, teachers are required to include character indicators in the learning tools, which shows that each subject has the potential to develop character values such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance. Meanwhile, in MIN 2 Malang, integration is not only carried out through learning tools, but also through religious culture which is the school's value system. This strengthens the finding that school culture has a significant role in internalizing students' character values (Nugroho & Setiawan, 2023).

This approach is in line with Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism which asserts that learning takes place through social interactions, real experiences, and the cultural environment (Vygotsky, 1978; Hidayat et al., 2024). In this context, character is not sufficiently understood cognitively, but must be experienced through social practices in the madrasah environment. Therefore, the integration of character in the curriculum and school culture is an effective strategy in shaping student behavior in a sustainable manner.

Furthermore, the integration of character in the curriculum is also in line with the national education policy through the Independent Curriculum which emphasizes strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile. The profile includes the dimensions of faith and fear of God Almighty, independence, mutual cooperation, critical reasoning, creativity, and global diversity. Recent studies show that the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile is very effective in strengthening character education if it is systematically integrated into learning tools and school culture (Yuliana & Fitria, 2024; Santoso et al., 2025).

Thus, the findings of the study show that the integration of character values into the curriculum is an effective strategy in ensuring the sustainability of character education. Character is no longer seen as an additional program, but rather as an integral part of the learning process supported by curriculum policies, school culture, and contextual learning practices.

### **Implementation of Character Learning Management Based on Religious Culture**

The results of the study show that the implementation of religious culture-based character learning in MIN 1 Malang and MIN 2 Malang is carried out through a structured and sustainable management system. The system includes elements of coordination, leadership, communication, and coaching that are carried out consistently in all educational activities. This pattern shows that the implementation of character education does not run sporadically, but is designed as part of an integrated madrasah managerial mechanism. These findings also indicate that the actuating function in George R. Terry's theory has been implemented in real life in the practice of education management in both institutions.

In the theoretical perspective of George R. Terry (2019), actuating is the process of mobilizing all organizational resources so that the planned goals can be achieved effectively and efficiently. This function is not only related to administrative instruction, but also includes the ability of leaders to motivate, direct, and build the commitment of all members of the organization. In the context of madrasah education, actuating is realized through

the leadership of the madrasah head, providing motivation to teachers, strengthening coordination between units, and implementing learning programs that are in line with the goals of character formation of students. Thus, the success of the implementation of character education is highly determined by the effectiveness of the driving function in the madrasah management system.

In MIN 1 Malang, the implementation of character learning management tends to center on direct coordination between the head of the madrasah and the teacher. The head of the madrasah plays the role of a central figure who ensures that each teacher integrates character values in the learning process in the classroom. The supervision and direction function is carried out through various formal mechanisms such as regular meetings, academic supervision, and academic discussions that discuss the implementation of character education. This pattern shows the existence of a direct leadership model, where the head of the madrasah has a dominant role in driving the implementation of the program.

In contrast, MIN 2 Malang implements a more systemic and structured approach through the formation of a special team of character program developers. This team has a strategic role in designing programs, providing assistance to teachers, and monitoring the implementation of character education activities in the field. The formation of such teams allows for a clearer, more specific, and measurable division of labor so that coordination becomes more effective and does not depend only on one central figure. This model reflects a participatory management approach that emphasizes the distribution of responsibilities and collaboration in the implementation of educational programs (Bush, 2020; Spillane, 2006). This kind of approach is also in line with the concept of distributed leadership which emphasizes that leadership is not only centralized on one individual, but spread across various organizational actors to increase the effectiveness of the implementation of educational programs (Harris, 2013).

The difference in implementation patterns between the two madrasahs shows that managerial strategies in the implementation of character education can vary according to the organizational context, human resource capacity, and institutional culture of each one. This variation is a common phenomenon in education management because each institution has different internal characteristics in managing change and innovation (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). However, the two madrasahs have fundamental similarities, namely placing the head of the madrasah as the main leader who plays a role in moving all elements of the educational organization. This similarity shows that leadership remains a key factor in the successful implementation of religious culture-based character education programs.

These findings strengthen the theory of educational leadership which states that the effectiveness of educational programs is largely determined by the leadership quality of school principals or madrasah heads. Education leaders who have the ability to provide clear direction, build motivation, and create a conducive work climate will be better able to ensure the successful implementation of character education programs (Leithwood et al., 2020). In this context, the head of the madrasah not only functions as an administrator, but also as an instructional leader who is responsible for the quality of the learning process and the formation of students' character (Hallinger, 2011).

In addition to leadership and coordination aspects, the implementation of character education in the two madrasahs is also supported by pedagogical strategies in the form of exemplary (*uswah hasanah*), habituation, and strengthening the religious environment. This strategy shows that the internalization of character values is not only carried out through verbal instruction, but also through repeated real practice in daily life in the madrasah environment. This is in line with Albert Bandura's social learning theory which emphasizes that individuals learn through the process of observation, imitation, and imitation of the behavior of the surrounding model (Bandura, 1977). In the context of character education, teachers play the role of the main model whose behavior becomes a reference for students in shaping attitudes and moral values.

Thus, the existence of religious culture such as congregational prayers, reading the Qur'an, joint prayers, as well as the habit of greetings and manners are very effective means in shaping the character of students in a sustainable manner. The religious environment functions as a social context that strengthens the process of internalizing moral and spiritual values in students. When teachers consistently display religious, disciplined, honest, and responsible behavior, students will more easily absorb and actualize these values in their daily lives. This is in line with the research findings that school culture has a significant influence on the formation of students' character through the process of habituation and internalization of values (Deal & Peterson, 2009; Schein, 2010).

### **Evaluation of Character Learning Management Based on Religious Culture**

The findings of the study show that the evaluation of character learning in MIN 1 Malang and MIN 2 Malang is carried out through a systematic mechanism, including academic supervision, program monitoring, and

teacher evaluation forums. These three mechanisms function as instruments for quality control of character education which is not only results-oriented, but also on the process of implementing the program as a whole. This pattern shows that the controlling function in education management has been implemented as part of the internal quality assurance system of madrasas.

Conceptually, these findings are in line with George R. Terry's theory which explains that controlling is the process of measuring performance, comparing results with standards, and taking corrective actions against deviations (Terry, 2019). In the context of education, this function is not only administrative, but also as a mechanism of continuous improvement that ensures the alignment between educational planning, implementation, and outcomes. This is strengthened by research in the field of Islamic education management which emphasizes that evaluation is a major component in the Total Quality Management (TQM) cycle to maintain the quality of education services in a sustainable manner (Zulfa & Halimatuzzahrah, 2024; Najiah & Baharun, 2025).

In its implementation, MIN 1 Malang carries out evaluation through three main stages, namely learning supervision, character program monitoring, and teacher evaluation meetings. Learning supervision is focused on the integration of character values in the learning process in the classroom, while program monitoring is used to assess the effectiveness of religious culture in the madrasah environment. The teacher evaluation meeting functions as a reflective forum to discuss the findings of supervision and monitoring and formulate improvement steps. This model shows that evaluation does not only target students, but also teacher performance and program effectiveness systemically. This is in line with the findings that academic supervision is an important instrument in improving teacher quality through a cycle of continuous feedback and improvement (Daulay et al., 2020).

Meanwhile, MIN 2 Malang developed a more comprehensive evaluation model by making religious culture an integral part of the institutional evaluation system. The evaluation is not only focused on character learning, but also covers the entire educational ecosystem that supports the internalization of religious values. This approach is in line with the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) in education which emphasizes that institutional quality must be viewed holistically through the integration of inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes, as well as the involvement of all stakeholders in the evaluation process (Eliyanto & Maarif, 2020; Sa'adillah et al., 2020).

The results of the study also show that the evaluation is carried out continuously (continuous evaluation) and based on data. Each supervision and monitoring result is used as a basis for decision-making for program improvement. This pattern is in line with the principle of continuous improvement in TQM which emphasizes the PDCA (Plan-Do-Check-Act) cycle, where evaluation is an important stage in improving the effectiveness of education management (Najiah & Baharun, 2025; Nur Malik, 2024). Thus, evaluation not only functions as a control tool, but also as an organizational learning mechanism.

In the perspective of modern educational supervision, the evaluations conducted by the two madrasahs also reflect a reflective and collaborative supervision model. Supervision is no longer understood as hierarchical control, but as a process of teacher professional development based on dialogue, reflection, and continuous improvement. Research shows that TQM-based supervision is able to improve teacher competence while strengthening the quality culture in educational institutions (Syarifuddin et al., 2020; Samsudin, 2026).

In addition, the practice of evaluation in the two madrasahs also reflects the principle of muhasabah in Islamic education, which is a process of introspection and continuous reflection to improve the quality of charity and the performance of educational institutions. This principle emphasizes that evaluation not only has a technical-managerial dimension, but also a spiritual dimension that is oriented towards the formation of students' character holistically. Thus, evaluation in religious culture-based character education functions as an instrument of quality control as well as a means of forming moral, spiritual, and professional awareness in the education system.

## **Conclusion**

This study concludes that the management of religious culture-based character learning in MIN 1 Malang and MIN 2 Malang is carried out through systematic and integrated planning. Planning is carried out by making the vision and mission of the madrasah as the basis for program preparation, resource organization, integration of character values into learning tools, and determination of success indicators and control mechanisms. These findings show that character education is not positioned as an additional program, but rather as an integrated part of the madrasah education system through policies, curriculum, and religious culture that are developed in a planned manner.

The implementation of character learning is carried out through the integration of character values in learning activities, habituation of religious culture, teacher example, and continuous coordination between madrasah heads and teachers. MIN 1 Malang implements a coordinating pattern that emphasizes the leadership

role of madrasah heads in directing the implementation of programs, while MIN 2 Malang develops a more systemic pattern through the support of special teams and the strengthening of religious culture as an institutional system. The process of internalizing character takes place through learning, habituation, example, and social interaction that consistently shapes students' attitudes and behaviors.

Character learning evaluation is carried out on an ongoing basis through academic supervision, program monitoring, evaluation of student character development, and teacher reflection and coordination forums. Evaluation not only assesses the learning outcomes of students, but also the effectiveness of the implementation of the program and the religious culture of the madrasah as a whole. Thus, this study emphasizes that the success of student character formation is determined by the integration of management functions which include continuous planning, implementation, and evaluation. Character is not just the material taught, but the value that is instilled and habituated through a learning management system that is integrated with the religious culture of the madrasah.

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