

The Role of Character Education on the Discipline and Learning Outcomes of Madrasah Tsanawiyah Students

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Abstract

Now education has been recognized as having a major role as social and moral capital and ensuring the improvement of the quality of life of future generations. Therefore, it is important to encourage positive experiences in educational classrooms. The educational environment is one of the contexts that most affect the culture and character of students. For this reason, this study intends to analyze and understand the role of character education in shaping the discipline and learning outcomes of MTs students. There were 123 respondents who came from MTs students and were selected using the purposive sampling technique. Data collection is carried out through the distribution of questionnaires and documentation of student learning outcomes. The data analysis in this study uses multiple linear regression analysis techniques. The results of the study show that character education associated with discipline has a positive and significant influence. Character education is also related to learning outcomes having a positive and significant influence. Students who have the character of discipline, responsibility, honesty, and care for the learning environment tend to show better learning behavior so that it has an impact on improving learning outcomes. Overall, character education has a positive influence on MTs students in forming discipline attitudes, increasing learning motivation, and supporting students' academic achievements. Thus, the implementation of character education needs to continue to be strengthened through learning, teacher examples, and a conducive school culture to create a generation with character and achievement.

Keywords: Character education, Discipline, Learning outcomes.

Introduction

Education plays an important role in shaping quality human resources for their progress and survival. In Indonesia, the purpose of education as stated in Law Number 20 of 2003 is to develop the potential of students to fear and believe in God Almighty, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent and become democratic and responsible human beings and citizens. Referring to the educational goals, students not only have good hard skills but also good soft skills (Morgan & Adams, 2009).

Student life is characterized by a set of values that are typical of life at school. In the hope that their moral values will be able to withstand the changing times, they must have provisions that in this case are character education so that they have the ability to adapt in society and behave and maintain morality (Karina & Davitri, 2016). Character education is referred to as a way to instill character in students, and the characters taught in literature are honesty, integrity, respect, and self-discipline (Was et al., 2006). Toughness and goodness of character need to be formed and developed continuously while involved in the learning process and this is done together with character education (Pala, 2011; Masnawati et al., 2023).

Character education is an effort to instill values to control student behavior so that it is in line with morals, norms, and rules that apply in society, and is beneficial to themselves and their environment (Darmawan, 2023; Lickona, 2004). These values can include service and sacrifice, empathy and communication, care and respect, honesty and humility, responsibility and calling, collaboration and generosity, creativity and positivity, patience and leadership.

One of the expectations of character education that needs to be developed is discipline. This is very important for students to have so that they have control over other character values (Darmawan, 2017). The importance of strengthening disciplinary behavior is based on the reason that currently there are many deviant behaviors that are contrary to the norms of discipline in students (Baehaqi & Murdiono, 2020). Such as being late when coming to school, being late to collect assignments, not wearing uniforms according to school rules and others. This triggers problems in the character education taught. The emergence of undisciplined behavior shows that knowledge of character education is only limited to knowledge that does not have a positive impact on students' self-change (Ampomah, 2021). Therefore, it is important to apply the discipline that has been explained by teachers to character education (Sinambela, 2014). This will trigger aspects of student behavior regarding the norms they have will have an impact on the school environment, community environment, and family environment (Syahrin et al., 2021). A disciplined attitude that is practiced in adolescence will be attached to someone who has become accustomed to applying it. Therefore, it is very important for character education to form student discipline attitudes.

Learning activities refer to activities that are carried out continuously, in a process and in a position as the main element in the educational program. The learning process will determine the achievement of learning goals and must be monitored and implemented not only in the classroom but also outside the classroom as preparation before becoming adults and responsible in society (Alonso et al., 2005). This will face challenges because there is always diversity from each student in terms of personality, motivation and orientation (Yanti & Darmawan, 2016). One of the factors that affect learning outcomes is character education taught in schools. While in the school environment, students can be affected by various stimuli

regarding learning outcomes. The delivery of character education to students can play a role in developing learning outcomes better. This allows to play a further role so that students are more developed in terms of character and student learning outcomes are also obtained better (Martrianingtyas, 2014). To face the future, students must obtain quality character education so that they are ready to live in society with moral attitudes and behaviors. Character education is connected to students' daily behavior and can be continuously applied by them. By helping to create a safe, caring, and organized school environment, character education creates conditions conducive to teaching and learning and indirectly fosters academic achievement (Schwartz et al., 2006).

The teaching-learning process carried out by teachers in schools is very important for students to develop discipline. This will allow students to experience more motivation associated with positive aspects such as improved learning and disciplined behavior as well as the quality of the learning outcomes produced. This is the reason for the researcher to find out the role of character education in discipline and the role of character education in shaping the learning outcomes of MTs students.

Method

This study uses quantitative research. In this study, the data collection technique used questionnaires. Observations were made at one of the MTs in Surabaya. The population of this study is aimed at MTs students in grade VIII. Furthermore, this research involves all students in Class VIII which totals four classes with a total of 123 students so that the sampling technique is by means of total sampling. This study involves discipline variables (X.1) and learning outcome variables (X.2) as well as character education variables (Y).

According to Cubukcu (2012), character education is a systematically planned strategy that aims to educate students to become good citizens who have self-respect, responsibility, and honesty. According to Agboola and Tsai (2012), character education is defined as a discipline that develops with deliberate efforts to optimize the moral behavior of students. Furthermore, according to Rohman et al. (2012), character education is a method of instilling character values that refers to the components of knowledge, awareness or willingness and actions to implement these values. Character education is a learning process to promote personal development in youth, through the development of virtues, moral values, and moral agency (Pattaro, 2016). Meanwhile, according to Sayekti et al. (2020), character education is an effort made by teachers to shape students' personalities in a better direction and provide experiences that can be used in the community. Indicators of character education according to Palembang and Arifin (2016) include: (a) order; (b) Honesty; (c) liability; (d) cooperation; (e) tolerance; (f) social care; (g) environmental concerns.

According to Akmaluddin and Haqqi (2019) and Sulaksono and Mardikaningsih (2021), discipline is defined as actions that show regular behavior and compliance with various provisions and regulations. Furthermore, according to Tarigan (2018), discipline is obedience and self-awareness that arises from the deepest mind to follow the rules, values, and laws that apply in a certain environment. Discipline is a behavior whose operational form refers to an orderly, normative, civilized attitude that is positively indicated (Lesmana & Deliati, 2022). Indicators of discipline according to Widodo (2013) include (a) self-control; (b) self-disclosure.

According to McGaghie et al. (2006), learning outcomes are a measure of real and objective success that leads to student progress. Furthermore, learning outcomes are defined as the performance of subject- or profession-specific assessments that focus on core competencies, including knowledge, skills, and problem-solving (Caspersen et al., 2017). Meanwhile, Nemeth and Long (2012) learning outcomes are educational contexts that are oriented towards accreditation mandates for professional degrees that reflect academic programs to measure, analyze, and improve the quality of education. Indicators of learning outcomes according to Sundari and Riyadi (2019) include (a) knowledge; (b) understanding; (c) application; (d) analysis; (e) synthesis; and (f) evaluation.

In this study, the researcher has explained each indicator of each variable. So the next step is to analyze the data using a questionnaire that will be disseminated to the respondents. Respondents' answers will be measured at one likert one to five. For the next time, the answers from the data respondents' statements will be analyzed using simple regression analysis for each variable relationship

Results And Discussion

Before moving on to the inferential analysis stage, it is important to first understand the overview of the characteristics of the data through descriptive analysis. The descriptive analysis aims to describe the profile and tendency of the main variables studied, namely character education, discipline, and learning outcomes of grade VIII students at one of the MTs in Surabaya. This analysis process is carried out by utilizing data on the distribution of minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation scores for each variable, so as to provide an initial picture of the empirical conditions of the research participants. The results of the descriptive analysis are not only the basis for further interpretation, but also a reference in assessing the effectiveness of the instrument and suspecting the potential interconnectedness between the variables to be further tested.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis Results

<i>Yes</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Item</i>	<i>Theoretical Min. Score</i>	<i>Max Score. Theory</i>	<i>Minimum Score</i>	<i>Maximum Score</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
1	Character Education	14	14	70	35	68	57,8	6,2
2	Discipline	8	8	40	19	39	32,6	4,9
3	Learning Outcomes	12	12	60	28	59	49,1	6,8

Source: Primary data processed (2023)

From table 1, on the character education variable with 14 items on the Likert scale, the theoretical score range is 14 (lowest) to 70 (highest). The average student score of 57.8 and the empirical maximum score of 68 indicate that most students internalize character values highly, such as order, honesty, responsibility, and cooperation. An empirical minimum score of 35 remains well above the theoretical minimum, signifying that no student is truly weak in character aspects. The standard deviation of 6.2 is relatively small for the score range, showing that the distribution of scores tends to be homogeneous, namely the majority of students are in the high

and flat range. In addition, the high and narrow variation in this score can be due to the success of school programs in implementing collective character value instilling, through habituation, strengthening moral values, and integration into various activities.

In the discipline variable with 8 items (theoretical score 8–40), an average score of 32.6 and a maximum of 39 were obtained. This indicates that disciplined behavior, obedience to rules, and having good self-control have become the majority culture in grade VIII. An empirical minimum score of 19 belongs to the medium category, showing that no student is completely undisciplined. The standard deviation of 4.9 to the score range also reinforces the homogeneous picture, meaning that the discipline habituation program in schools is effective in almost all students. This high discipline is important as the foundation of successful learning, creating an environment conducive to the growth of positive behavior.

For learning outcomes with 12 items (theoretical score 12–60), an average of 49.1 and a maximum of 59 were obtained. This average shows that students' academic ability, mastery of knowledge, understanding, and application are relatively high. A minimum score of 28 is still in the medium–high category, and the standard deviation of 6.8 indicates moderate variation but with a heavy tendency to score high. This shows that the learning process is going well, and most students can achieve the expected competencies.

These results show that all the main variables of the study, namely character education, discipline, and learning outcomes, have been at a good level with a tendency of distribution that is not widened, aka homogeneous. This shows that the school program implemented so far is effective and has succeeded in shaping the expected behavior profile and competencies of students. These results can be the basis for strengthening sustainable programs and stimulating new approaches to raise students whose grades are not optimal, both in terms of character, discipline, and academic achievement.

The validity test was carried out on the items stated in the questionnaire using the corrected item-total correlation approach, with a reference value of > 0.3 as an indicator of the validity of each item. In the character education variable consisting of 14 statement items, two invalid statements were found and have been eliminated from the subsequent analysis. For the discipline variable consisting of 8 items, all items are declared valid. Likewise, in the learning outcome variable consisting of 12 items, all items were proven valid.

After confirming that only valid items are used, reliability tests are performed using Cronbach's Alpha. The results of the reliability test showed an Alpha value of 0.795 for character education, 0.688 for discipline, and 0.717 for learning outcomes. All of these values are above the threshold of 0.60 which indicates that the instrument is reliable and suitable for use in the collection of data for this study.

Table 2. Instrument Validity and Reliability Test Results

<i>Yes</i>	<i>Variable</i>	<i>Number of Items (Initial)</i>	<i>Invalid Item</i>	<i>Valid Items</i>	<i>Cronbach's Alpha</i>	<i>Reliability Status</i>
1	Character Education	14	2	12	0,795	Reliable
2	Discipline	8	0	8	0,688	Reliable
3	Learning Outcomes	12	0	12	0,717	Reliable

Source: Primary data processed (2023)

Table 2 shows that all variables in this study have been measured using valid and reliable instruments. Two items on the character education variable that did not meet the validity criteria were discarded, so that only the item was actually able to measure the construct of the further analyzed variable. The reliability test yielded Cronbach's Alpha values which were all over 0.6, indicating the internal consistency and stability of the instrument was excellent. Thus, the data generated through the questionnaire can be trusted and worthy of analysis using subsequent statistical models, such as simple regression.

Table 3. Coefficient

	<i>Models</i>	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	<i>Sig.</i>
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	35.754	2.862		12.492	.000
	pddkcharacter	4.298	.455	.652	9.457	.000

a. Dependent Variable: discipline

Source: Primary data processed (2023)

The role of character education on discipline has a t count of 9.457 and a significant value of 0.000. This means less than 0.05 so it is stated that it is proven that there is a role in character education to shape student discipline. The regression model formed from this relationship is $Y = 35.754 + 4.298X$.

Table 4. Coefficient

	<i>Models</i>	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	<i>Sig.</i>
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	38.452	2.600		14.790	.000
	pddkcharacter	3.810	.406	.649	9.386	.000

a. Dependent Variable: learning outcomes

Source: Primary data processed (2023)

The role of character education on learning outcomes has a t count of 9.386 and a significant value of 0.000. Thus, it is proven true that character education has a role in shaping student learning outcomes. The regression model formed was $Y = 38.452X$.

The results of the data analysis prove that there is a real role of character education in shaping student discipline. Overall, the results of the research are in line with the previous research stated by Jaynes (2019); Sayekti et al. (2020); Zulkifli (2022) who stated that character education plays a role in shaping student discipline. High discipline skills are required to help students become more focused on their achievements as well as be able to take responsibility for their actions and decisions.

The results of the study prove the real positive role of character education on the learning outcomes of MT's students. Saragih et al. (2021); Hamzah et al. (2022). There is a positive effect shown on learning outcomes after obtaining character education. This provides positive results by optimally changing the character of the students. The better the character education method, the better the quality of the learning outcomes obtained (Purwanti et al.,

2014). When students are able to practice more instruction on the character education that has been taught, it seems to result in better quality learning outcomes for their academics and behavior (Karina et al., 2018). Learning outcomes are an indication of the success of students in undergoing the learning process (Mardikaningsih & Hariani, 2016). Thus, character education should continue to develop materials and delivery methods to students effectively so that students' understanding will provide benefits for them.

These findings carry strategic implications that confirm that character education must be a core part of the implementation of formal education in schools. When character education is proven to play a role in shaping discipline and improving student learning outcomes, this indicates that character strengthening cannot be separated from the academic learning process (Djazilan & Darmawan, 2022). Every school needs to ensure that its curriculum and educational policies explicitly integrate character values, both in classroom learning and in various extracurricular activities. Thus, character education will be the main foundation for forming a positive school atmosphere and culture and supporting the optimal development of all students' potential.

Furthermore, the role of teachers is very important in the implementation of effective character education. Teachers not only function as transmitters of knowledge, but also as role models and facilitators of student character development (Aprilianti et al., 2019; Putra et al., 2017; Sinambela et al., 2014). The results of this study confirm the need for periodic training or workshops for teachers on strategies for instilling character and strengthening moral values in schools. With increasing the capacity of teachers, it is hoped that the process of internalizing character values can occur more effectively and comprehensively, not only theoretical but really applied in the daily lives of students in the school environment and society.

In addition, the results of this study also demand a more systematic and structured character education assessment and evaluation system. Evaluation does not only focus on the cognitive aspects or academic achievements of students, but also on the affective aspect—namely the behaviors, attitudes, and moral values that students live. This assessment system can be developed through collaboration between teachers, homeroom teachers, and school counselors, supported by input from parents (Masnawati et al., 2022). Thus, the development of students' character can be monitored continuously and get appropriate interventions when needed.

The next implication is the importance of active involvement of parents and the family environment to build synergy of character education. Schools need to initiate parenting programs, workshops, or communication forums between teachers and parents to discuss the development of students' character. The values taught in school will be more effective if they are aligned and supported by the home environment (Djazilan & Darmawan, 2022). Parents play the role of the main role model, so that the success of character education is a shared responsibility between the school and the family.

From a policy perspective, the results of this study provide a solid basis for reviewing and updating the regulations of schools or educational institutions related to character education. Schools can develop reward and punishment policies that are not only based on academic achievement, but also on the achievement of character and discipline. In addition, the results of this study support the importance of using empirical data and character evaluation

results as the main consideration in the preparation of school development programs, both in the short and long term.

Finally, the relevance of the success of character education to shape discipline and student learning outcomes needs to be used as a model and inspiration for other educational institutions. Schools that successfully implement character education effectively can become best practices that are documented and disseminated in various educational forums. Thus, innovations and character education strategies that have proven to be empirically effective can be replicated and developed widely to achieve the goal of national education, which is to form a generation that is intelligent, characterful, and ready to face the challenges of life in the future.

Conclusion

Based on the purpose of this study, it is known that there is a real role of character education to shape student discipline. The relationship is positive. Furthermore, it was found that there is a real role of character education to shape student learning outcomes.

The character education program for MTs students requires the development and support of various related parties, including parents. Parents play the role of primary educators of morals and the most important elements shaping their children's mentality, but schools have a role to play in working with parents in this effort. The school must continuously develop character education programs and collaborate with parents to support this effort. When a comprehensive character education approach is used, a positive moral culture is created in the school environment. This can be achieved through character education taught by teachers to create student morale. Help students respect and care for each other and feel valued within the group, and the classroom environment. Teachers practice moral discipline, create and implement rules as opportunities to foster moral reasoning, self-control and respect for others, and teach values through the curriculum using academic subjects as a means to test ethical values in students. Teachers make it possible to apply cooperative learning methods to teach students to engage and work together, and seek to foster and shape students' sense of responsibility. The school recruits learning partners from parents and the community to foster concern not only in the classroom but also in application to real life in society. This will train students to understand and apply about caring and caring.

Social education is important because it connects new generations with traditions and cultures and with issues such as collective identity, civic behavior, values, and social development. Without a clear picture and understanding of the education system's approach to the social education process, it is not possible to develop appropriate educational goals, principles, and methods. Therefore a broader vision of character education is needed that not only focuses on ethics (moral character) but also develops personal excellence (character performance). This collaboration will truly shape empowered and qualified human beings in the future.

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