Research Article

The Character Education Management in Realizing Graduate Quality

Muhammad Makky ¹*, Aan Hasanah ², Mahrus As'ad ³, Ara Hidayat ⁴, Faiq Aliyev ⁵

1. Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia; m.makky.ok@gmail.com
2. Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia; aanhasanah@uinsgd.ac.id
3. Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia; mahrusasad@uinsgd.ac.id
4. Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia; ara.hidayat@yahoo.co.id
5. Azerbaijan State Oil and Industry University (ASOIU), Azerbaijan; faigaliyev@mail.ru

* Corresponding Author: m.makky.ok@gmail.com

Abstract: One persistent challenge in Indonesian education is the insufficient internalization of character values among students, which can affect the overall quality of graduates. This study aims to explore the management of character education in enhancing graduate quality at Al-Ittihad Senior High School Cianjur and Ciranjang 1 Public Senior High School. The research adopts a qualitative approach using a multi-case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis to obtain a comprehensive understanding of character education practices in both institutions. The findings indicate that both schools emphasize the development of strong academic character and religious or moral awareness, although through different approaches. Al-Ittihad Senior High School integrates the national curriculum with Islamic boarding school values through boarding programs, structured worship routines, and daily religious habits. In contrast, Ciranjang 1 Public Senior High School implements character education based on its BIJAK'S vision, which is embedded in intracurricular and extracurricular activities as well as positive daily habits. Organizationally, Al-Ittihad involves close collaboration between the principal, teachers, and boarding school supervisors, while Ciranjang 1 relies more on a formal public school structure, with the vice principal for student affairs and supervising teachers playing key roles. Implementation at Al-Ittihad is centered on boarding school life, whereas Ciranjang 1 focuses on the BIJAK'S program emphasizing discipline, achievement, creativity, and entrepreneurship. Supervision and evaluation at Al-Ittihad are conducted intensively by teachers, dormitory supervisors, and parents, while Ciranjang 1 applies regular teacher meetings, program evaluations, and parental involvement to monitor character development.

Keywords: Character Education; Education Management; Graduate Quality; High School; Student Character.

1. Introduction

One of the problems in education in Indonesia is the low level of internalization of character values among students. Character education is the main foundation in shaping a generation that is faithful, has noble character, is accomplished, and is able to adapt to the changing times. Therefore, a systematic and comprehensive character education management model is needed to produce high-quality graduates. The lack of attention to character education in schools has led to the development of various social ills in society, such as the deterioration and decline of morals, character, and ethics (Bambang & Rusdiana, 2019). The alarming state of the nation's character has prompted the government to make national character building a mainstream part of the National Development Policy. Udin S. Winataputra (2010) states that character education is one of the first eight missions to realize the national development vision.

The government is currently aggressively implementing character education in various educational institutions, ranging from early childhood education (PAUD), elementary school (SD/MI), secondary school (MA/SMA), and higher education (Wibowo, 2013). In the old paradigm, character education was a deliberate effort to develop good character, based on core virtues that were objectively good for both individuals and society (Saptono, 2011). In line with the opinion of James Madison, the founder of the United States Constitution, who stated that "the character of a nation is determined by the character of its people." The main component of character is the values that are built and developed by its citizens (Wibowo, 2013). According to Dharma Kesuma, et al (2011), there are at least seven important values that must be developed to form good character, namely: discipline, responsibility, respect and politeness, hard work, empathy, confidence, and communication skills. Furthermore, there are three fundamental foundations in quality character building, as stated by Thomas Lickona (1991), who said that to educate students on good character and values, an integrated approach between the three components is needed, namely: (1) moral knowing, which includes: moral awareness, knowing moral values, perspective-talking, moral reasoning, decision making and self-knowledge, (2) moral feeling, which includes conscience, self-esteem, empathy, loving the good, self-control, humility, and (3) moral action, which includes competence, will, and habit. Thus, students will have the competence, strong will, and habit of practicing good moral values. These three integrated components are expected to increase national independence, enhance national competitiveness, and contribute to the development of world civilization (Samani, Muchlas & Haryanto, 2011).

In relation to the above issues, based on preliminary observations in the field, researchers found that there is a process of character value development for students at senior high schools in Cianjur. For example, at Al Ittihad High School in Cianjur, the character education values that are applied and developed include: exemplary behavior, discipline, responsibility, honesty, creativity, love of cleanliness, and social values such as greeting others, smiling and greeting others, shaking hands when meeting teachers, daily tadarus (reading the Qur'an), disposing of trash in its place, and practicing discipline in carrying out the dhuha and dzuhur prayer programs in congregation at the mosque. In addition, social awareness is instilled in students in terms of mutual assistance and helping one another in good deeds, such as lending stationery to friends who have forgotten to bring theirs, and regular donations made by all students every Friday at school. Similarly, SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur strives to prioritize IMTAQ and IPTEK. Various efforts have been made to produce graduates with character who are able to respond to global challenges, one of which is instilling educational values such as sincerity, humility, respect, honesty, discipline, consistency, responsibility, the habit of praying in congregation, performing the dhuha prayer during the first break, and weekly infaq carried out every Friday, which is expected to have an impact on the behavior of students with character (insān kāmil).

The success and excellence of Al-Ittihad High School and Ciranjang 1 public high school in producing high-quality graduates cannot be separated from management, including planning, implementation, and supervision by the school. Based on this phenomenon, the researcher was interested in conducting research focused on character education management in producing high-quality graduates at Al-Ittihad High School in Cianjur and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur.

2. Preliminaries or Related Work or Literature Review

According to Kesuma, Triatna, & Permana (2013: 7), character education is the development of learners' abilities to behave well, which is characterized by the improvement of various abilities that will make humans beings who are God-fearing in the sense of being obedient to God and carrying out their mandate as leaders in the world. Lickona (1991) states that character education is a deliberate effort to help someone understand, pay attention to, and practice core ethical values. Furthermore, Sudrajat (2011) mentions that character education can be defined as all efforts that can be made to influence the character of students. The basis of the goal of character education is to make someone smart and also good, as taught in Islam by the Prophet Muhammad SAW. The most important thing in education is to shape attitudes and characteristics that are praiseworthy or good (Abdul Majid & Dian Andayani, 2010). Kilpatrick (1957) also states that there are three pillars of character education values for an individual, namely (a) belonging to a good moral group, (b) having good morals and personal potential, and (c) practicing and understanding morals correctly and well.

The implementation of character education is the realization of a plan to achieve the objectives of activities effectively and efficiently, which will form an assessment (Novan Ardi Wiyani, 2013). Character education content in the school curriculum can be included in learning related to self-development or included in extracurricular activities. The objectives of character education in schools are as follows: a) To strengthen the development of values and norms in life, thereby shaping attitudes and personalities with distinctive characteristics, as well as developing good values within oneself. b) To assess students and also provide reinforcement for whatever the students do so that it is in accordance with what has been taught. c) To create an appropriate and warm network within the family and community in the role of being responsible for instilling good character (Dharma Kesuma, et al 2011).

Wibowo (2013) states that character education is closely related to management. Management in character education refers to planning, actuating, and evaluating school activities. Good school management can determine educational goals, one of which is the quality of graduates. The quality of graduates must be given attention and improvement so that they are of good quality and have more qualities. Charles Hoy (2000) states that the quality of education in schools is the occurrence of activities that include educational supervision, which are carried out to meet the standards that have been set for the creation of quality graduates.

According to Charles Hoy and Mickel (2008), a quality school is an effective school that is the result of a series of inputs, processes, outputs, and outcomes. The contribution of quality education is the existence of established standards that have been measured and adjusted to the abilities of students and the needs of the future workforce. When students leave their educational zone, they will be ready to face the real world that requires the skills they have learned in school. The results are considered to be of good quality if the graduates are quickly absorbed into the workforce and institutions that need them, and stakeholders are satisfied with the graduates from these educational institutions. Furthermore, Oyibade (1981) states that quality is intellectual and manual skills, rational and analytical skills, values, attitudes and enthusiasm, the existence of ideas, understanding of what is happening, and sensitivity. Quality focuses on aspects that examine quality data that has been tested and is believed to be useful in the long term and is not easily damaged because it has been tested before being introduced to the marketing world or the general public.

3. Materials and Method

The research method used was a qualitative approach with a multi-case study design. Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies. The multi-case study on character education management in achieving graduate quality was examined using a phenomenological approach, because this study or research required an understanding and interpretation of character education management in achieving graduate quality at Al Ittihad High School and SMAN 1 Ciranjang Cianjur. This study used various case studies to explain the management of character education in achieving graduate quality, using locations at Al Ittihad High School and SMAN 1 Ciranjang Cianjur. These subjects had their own characteristics, ranging from the school section, views, objectives, location, after-school activities, total number of students and educators, and classroom development strategies. To select and determine the informants in this study, the researcher used purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques. The steps of information analysis in this study were carried out from the information collection process, information presentation, information reduction, and conclusion drawing (M. B. Miles & Huberman A.M., 1994).

4. Results and Discussion

     a. Planning. Character education planning at Al-Ittihad High School is carried out by integrating the national curriculum and Islamic boarding school through boarding programs and worship habits, while at SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur, planning is carried out through the BIJAK'S vision, which is realized in intracurricular, extracurricular, and positive habit programs. The concept of character education quality developed at Al-Ittihad High School in Cianjur and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur is academic excellence and religious awareness. In terms of character education planning to produce high-quality graduates at Al-Ittihad Cianjur High School and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur, both schools refer to their vision and mission, and then this plan is implemented by incorporating character education

into all subjects. Character education is then integrated into extracurricular and non-curricular activities. This is the basis of the planning, which is a systemic integrative model in both schools.

b. Organization. In the organizational mechanism, both schools place the principal as the central figure in character education organization. Then, the organization is carried out systematically through the formal structure of the school and periodic coordination mechanisms involving teachers, students, and parents in the organization so that character values are implemented continuously. In addition to the synergistic involvement of the principal, teachers, and dormitory supervisors in the organization at Al-Ittihad High School, this is also done at SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur, but at this school, the organization emphasizes the formal structure of public schools with the roles of the vice principal for student affairs and supervising teachers.

c. Implementation. Character education at Al-Ittihad High School is implemented through boarding school activities, while at SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur, it is implemented through the BIJAK'S program, which focuses on discipline, achievement, creativity, and entrepreneurship. In terms of implementation, there are similarities in character education activities, such as making character education a habit, incorporating character education into students' daily behavior, character education as a role model, incorporating character education into school activities, and integrating the implementation of character education with parents.

d. Supervision. Supervision and evaluation at Al-Ittihad High School are carried out intensively through teachers, dormitory supervisors, and parents, while at SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur, they are carried out through teacher meetings, school program evaluations, and parental involvement. Similarities in supervision can be seen in the timing of periodic supervision, the role of guidance counselors in supervising students, and the existence of cooperation between parents and the school in supervising students.

New findings from this study show that character education management can be implemented effectively using different approaches according to the school context. At Al-Ittihad Cianjur High School, pesantren-based character building with a boarding school system and integration of the national curriculum and pesantren curriculum has become an innovative model that emphasizes religiosity, exemplary behavior, and intensive habituation. Meanwhile, at SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur character education is developed through a culture of achievement implemented in the school's vision, BIJAK'S, with the support of intracurricular, extracurricular, and entrepreneurial activities that strengthen students' independence, creativity, and competitiveness. This combination of findings confirms that graduate quality can be improved through a contextual character education management model: based on religiosity in Islamic boarding schools and based on academic achievement in leading public schools, thereby producing a new conceptual model that can be used as a reference for character education development in other schools.

Our findings also reveal similarities between Al Ittihad Cianjur High School and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur. This is evident in their management and the implications for character values implemented in schools. In terms of management, the development of plans is based on the school's vision and mission, which are discussed in regularly scheduled meetings, such as annual meetings or small meetings to reach a consensus. Similarities are also seen in terms of implementation and monitoring. Al Ittihad Cianjur High School and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur develop character education values through a conducive environment, improved resources, and effective communication with the entire school community and parents.

Excellent academic character and non-secular awareness can be seen not only from character scores but also from semester scores, report card scores, and even national exam scores, as seen at Al Ittihad High School in Cianjur and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur. The concept of quality education through the development of values contained in character at Al Ittihad High School in Cianjur and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur is implemented through the internalization of quality character values: religious, sincere, honest, exemplary discipline, communicative responsibility, love, and self-control. In realizing graduates with noble character and non-secular insights at Al Ittihad High School in Cianjur and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur in Cianjur, the excellent academic values developed are: honesty, discipline, responsibility, communication, self-control, and values. The spiritual awareness values developed include religion, sincerity, exemplary behavior, and compassion, which produce

high-quality graduates who are faithful and pious, love knowledge, do good deeds, are confident, have noble character, and contribute to society. There is a difference in emphasis on the standard character values developed in both institutions. Al Ittihad Cianjur High School and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur place more emphasis on religious awareness values, but do not neglect academic excellence. Conversely, SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur prioritizes academic excellence, but does not neglect religious awareness values.

The results of the study found evidence of such use. Both institutions use the principles of integrity, moral feelings, and moral actions, developing the ideas of Thomas Lickona and William Kilpatrick, albeit with different terms. Supporting the findings at Al Ittihad High School in Cianjur and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur, mixed data, appreciation, and practice were used, while at SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur in Cianjur, mixed data, awareness, and action were used. This clearly strengthens the two schools, with Lickona's (2012) thinking stating that there are also components related to the measurement of character, namely: moral knowledge, moral feelings, and immorality, so that character values are comprehensive as stated by Thomas Lickona (1991).

Based on Thomas Lickona's theory (1991), holistic virtue character values are internalized; these values do not stand alone but are interconnected. The character values developed at Al Ittihad Cianjur High School and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur are: Islamic private school values, which include sincerity, trustworthiness, humility, obedience, trustworthiness, friendliness, exemplary behavior, environmental protection, love of cleanliness, honesty, discipline, communication, and responsibility. Meanwhile, the character values developed at SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur are: modeling, honesty, tolerance, sincerity, self-esteem, empathy, love, self-control, humility, and responsibility.

The values contained in the character of higher education institutions are internalized consistently so that they do not stand alone but are incorporated into categories that are beneficial. Supporting the findings, these values are: religion, sincerity, honesty, discipline, exemplary behavior, communicativeness, responsibility, compassion, and self-control. This means that the educational environment can support the realization of successful character education. This is in line with Ramdhani's (2014) research, which reports that the educational environment has a major influence on character education. To support these character values, the concept of quality character education was developed at Al Ittihad Cianjur High School and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur through the uswatun hasanah approach and the system approach at Al Ittihad Cianjur High School and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur through the modeling approach and the system approach at SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur.

The implications of character education management in realizing the quality of graduates at Al Ittihad High School in Cianjur and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur in Cianjur are activities that take the form of realizing plans to obtain quality graduates. The quality of school graduates must be given attention and improved to be better and of higher quality. Based on field data, there are implications for the character education management model for creating quality graduates at Al Ittihad High School in Cianjur and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur in Cianjur by doing three things, namely (1) the school has a policy that is incorporated into a character-based curriculum, (2) the character education management system leads to a system of integrity, (3) producing graduates with character. Thus, it can be said that the essence of character education is the process of guiding students to change their behavior, attitudes, and culture, which will ultimately create a civilized community (Aushop, 2014). Charles Hoy's (2000) theory states that the quality of school education is the monitoring of the educational process that increases the need to obtain and develop the talents of students. Hoy and Miskel (2008) state that the quality of a school is the existence of an effective school system consisting of inputs, outputs, and outcomes.

Output is said to be of high quality if the results of student learning are good in both academic and non-academic terms. Results are said to be of high quality if graduates or alumni of the school can be quickly absorbed into the world of work, without needing a long time after graduation to find employment. Sonhaji (2014) states that (a) the output of the Islamic education system has distinctive characteristics, namely obedience to Allah SWT, (b) graduates who are the output of education must have high morals, (c) the results are a manifestation of a high civilization and the existence of forgiveness. Based on this theory, the form of character education at Al Ittihad Cianjur High School and SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang Cianjur in providing an alternative path for alumni to become qualified graduates is as follows: incorporating character education into all subjects taught at school, incorporating character education into daily activities, incorporating character education into planned or created activities, and establishing good communication between the school and the students'

guardians or parents. This means that through character education, learners are expected to be able to independently improve and use their knowledge, review, internalize, and personalize character values and noble morals so that they are manifested in their daily behavior (Mulyasa, 2013).

The implementation of a character education management model that is realized to produce quality graduates by creating programs that are also of high quality is based on the school's vision and mission. This is due to the existence of a character-based curriculum, the establishment of rules, habit-forming measures, and target achievement, a systemic interactive management system, and the behavior of graduates that reflects the quality of graduates with strong character. Edward Sallis (2002) states that the quality provided to customers can be categorized as follows: (a) customers feel satisfied, (b) customer expectations are met, and (c) customers are enlightened.

5. Comparison

Character education at Al Ittihad High School in Cianjur and Ciranjang 1 Public High School in Cianjur is an integral part of the principals' efforts to improve the quality of graduates with good character. We found differences between these two educational institutions in terms of their vision and mission and how they interpret them. This can be seen in their planning models and implementation. Nevertheless, the two institutions share several similarities in terms of the steps taken by the principals to develop their vision and mission of character building by involving the school community and the foundations of Al Ittihad High School in Cianjur and Ciranjang 1 Public High School in Cianjur. This is because the schools are managed by Islamic boarding school foundations.

6. Conclusion

Based on the results of the above research, the conclusions of this study are as follows:

The concept of character-based education developed at Al-Ittihad High School in Cianjur and SMAN 1 Ciranjang High School in Cianjur is academic excellence and religious awareness. The academic excellence values developed are: honesty, discipline, responsibility, communication skills, and self-control. The religious awareness values developed are: religiosity, sincerity, exemplary behavior, and love of goodness. The development of excellent academic values and religious awareness is based on the principle of integrating moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action through an exemplary approach and a systematic approach.

Character education planning at Al-Ittihad Cianjur High School is carried out by integrating Islamic boarding school values (sincerity, trustworthiness, humility, obedience, trust, and steadfastness) into the school and boarding school curriculum. The planning is comprehensive because it involves all stakeholders, from the principal, teachers, dormitory supervisors, to parents. At SMA Negeri 1 Ciranjang, character education planning is carried out through the school's BIJAK'S vision, which is reflected in school programs, lesson plans, intracurricular and extracurricular activities, and a positive habit-forming agenda that supports the achievement of academic and non-academic achievements.

The organization of character education at Al-Ittihad High School in Cianjur places the principal, teachers, and dormitory supervisors as the main drivers, with a clear division of tasks between teachers, supervisors, and boarding school staff. Each element plays a role in assisting students both in the classroom and in the dormitory. Meanwhile, at Ciranjang 1 Public High School, the organization emphasizes the formal structure of public schools, where the principal, vice principal for student affairs, and extracurricular advisors are responsible for character development programs.

The organization of character education at Al-Ittihad High School in Cianjur places the principal, teachers, and dormitory supervisors as the main drivers, with a clear division of tasks between teachers, supervisors, and boarding school staff. Each element plays a role in assisting students both in the classroom and in the dormitory. Meanwhile, at Ciranjang 1 Public High School, the organization emphasizes the formal structure of public schools, where the principal, vice principal for student affairs, and extracurricular advisors are responsible for character development programs.

Character education at Al-Ittihad Cianjur High School is implemented through the full integration of learning activities with Islamic boarding school activities. The process of internalizing values is carried out continuously through the habit of worship, role modeling, the use of Arabic and English, and daily monitoring through attitude books. Meanwhile, at

Ciranjang 1 Public High School, character education is implemented through the BIJAK'S program, which focuses on discipline, independence, creativity, and student achievement in various academic and non-academic fields.

Character education monitoring and evaluation at Al-Ittihad High School in Cianjur is carried out intensively through a multi-layered monitoring system involving teachers, dormitory supervisors, and parents. Attitude books are the main instrument used to assess students' daily behavior. Meanwhile, at Ciranjang 1 Public High School, evaluation is carried out through teacher council meetings, school program evaluations, and communication with parents. The monitoring mechanism is more programmatic in nature, emphasizing the achievement of the school's vision and mission indicators.

References

Abdul Majid, & Andayani, D. (2010). *Pendidikan karakter dalam perspektif Islam*. Insan Citra Utama.

Aushop, A. Z. (2014). *Islamic character building: Membangun insan kamil, cendekia berakhlak Qurani*. Grafindo Media Pratama.

Hoy, C., & Miskel, C. G. (2008). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice*. McGraw-Hill.

Hoy, C., et al. (2010). *Improving quality in education*. Falmer Press.

Kesuma, D., et al. (2011). *Pendidikan karakter: Kajian teori dan praktik di sekolah*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.

Kilpatrick, W. H. (1957). *Philosophy of education*. McMillan.

Lickona, T. (1991). *Educating for character: Mendidik untuk membentuk karakter*. Bumi Aksara.

Lickona, T. (2012). *Educating for character: Mendidik untuk membentuk karakter, bagaimana sekolah dapat mengajarkan sikap hormat dan tanggung jawab*. Bumi Aksara.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Sage Publications.

Mulyasa. (2013). *Manajemen pendidikan karakter*. Bumi Aksara.

Oyibade. (1981). *Applying the general systems theory to students conflict management in Nigeria's tertiary institutions*. Bisi Book.

Ramdhani, M. A. (2014). Lingkungan pendidikan dalam implementasi pendidikan karakter. *Jurnal Pendidikan Universitas Garut*, 8(1).

Rusdiana, A., & S. A., B. (2019). *Manajemen pendidikan karakter*. CV Pustaka Setia.

Samani, M., & Haryanto. (2011). *Konsep dan model pendidikan karakter*. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.

Saptono. (2011). *Dimensi-dimensi pendidikan karakter: Wawasan, strategi, dan langkah praktis*. Erlangga.

Sonhaji, A. (2014). *Manusia, teknologi dan pendidikan menuju peradaban baru*. UM Press.

Sudrajat, A. (2011). Mengapa pendidikan karakter? *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 1(1). https://doi.org/10.21831/jpk.v1i1.1316

Wibowo, A. (2013). *Pendidikan karakter di perguruan tinggi: Membangun karakter ideal mahasiswa*. Pustaka Pelajar.

Winataputra, U. S. (2010). *Implementasi kebijakan nasional pembangunan karakter bangsa melalui pendidikan karakter*. Universitas Terbuka.

Wiyani, N. A. (2012). *Manajemen pendidikan karakter: Konsep dan implementasinya di sekolah*. PT Pustaka Insan Madani.