

Strengthening character education through Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah based on merdeka curriculum

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to explore approaches to strengthening character education, describe Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah learning models, and analyze supporting and inhibiting factors for strengthening character education through Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah based on the Independent Curriculum. This research is field research with a qualitative approach at SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang. The technique for taking subjects in this research used purposive sampling, data was obtained by interviews, observation and documentation. The results of this research explain that strengthening character education is carried out through several activities such as the habit of tadarus, midday prayers in congregation, midday prayers, Friday routine studies, and Sunday morning studies. These activities are integrated with ISMUBA subjects which include aqidah, morals, worship, al-Qur'an, dates, muhammadiyah and Arabic. The ISMUBA learning model uses the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model by presenting factual cases related to the material to be studied. Supporting factors for strengthening character education are the professionalism of human resources (teachers and staff), massive training and workshops in the Independent Curriculum. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors are the absence of guidebooks for students and teachers, low student interest and awareness of ISMUBA material, and family background.

Keywords: *Character Education, Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah, Merdeka Curriculum.*

INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the phenomenon of white collar crimes (white collar crimes or crimes committed by people with ties, such as executives, bureaucrats, teachers, politicians or those at their level) and the issue of KKN (Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism) committed by the elite, are concrete indications that the Indonesian nation is experiencing a multidimensional crisis. The decline in quality that is happening in Indonesia today is not only happening in the economic aspect, but also in other aspects such as politics, social, culture and so on (Nugroho, 2021).

Likewise, the world of education has not escaped the decline in the quality of human resources. According to Bakar in (Nur et al., 2022) whether we realise it or not, the character of the nation's children will also be influenced by the success or failure of education. Because on the other hand, education also has a function as a means of growth and the formation of life discipline in humans.

Referring to the National Policy in 2010, one of the steps taken by the government is by implementing character education in the school environment. To educate the nation is one of the missions of the establishment of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution (Mahfud, 2010). The implementation of character-based education should be a shared responsibility between the government (formal education), family (informal education), and community (non-formal education), better known as the education trident. If the three institutions can support each other, the result will not only have intellectual intelligence, but also skills and good morals (intellectuality, humanity, and religiosity).

Strengthening character education is a movement under the control of the education unit to strengthen the character of its students through a harmonious process of heart, taste, mind and body that involves related education units, families and communities. Strengthening character education is carried out by applying the values of Pancasila, including religious values, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creativity, independence, democracy, curiosity, national spirit, love for the country, respect for achievement, communicative, peace-loving, fond of reading, environmental care, social care, and responsibility.

These character values are in accordance with the Merdeka curriculum, which is part of the new policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. This

Merdeka curriculum is related to how an educator is able to convey subject matter by linking to the character building of students. According to Nadiem in (Marisa, 2021), the Merdeka learning curriculum policy must first make an initial breakthrough to educators, before it is conveyed or applied to students. In addition, the emphasis of the learning process is more emphasised on student character building so that the profile of Pancasila students is realised.

Muhammadiyah universities in organising education always follow the policy of Dikdasmen PP Muhammadiyah and Government policy in implementing an Merdeka curriculum (Firdaus Firdaus, 2023). So Muhammadiyah universities implement a holistic-integrative ISMUBA curriculum so that the formation of the Pancasila student profile is relevant to the formation of the Muhammadiyah student profile. Muhammadiyah has a religious curriculum with special characteristics with Al-Islam, Kemuhammadiyah and Arabic (ISMUBA) materials. The subjects consist of aqidah, akhlaq, ibadah, al-qur'an, tarikh, kemuhammadiyah, and Arabic which are always intended as character builders (Akhmad, 2020).

SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang Cilacap is one of the AUMs known as a centre of excellence, and is even one of the first schools to implement the Merdeka curriculum in Cilacap. The Merdeka curriculum has been implemented since the last two years, so that practically classes X and XI have been running the curriculum. However, the impacts of the era of disruption and moral degradation also occur in schools, such as there are still students who speak dirty, lack discipline, cannot read the Qur'an, and even do not routinely perform the five daily prayers.

Thus, this study aims to explore approaches in strengthening character education, describe learning models for AIK based on the Merdeka Curriculum, and analyse the supporting and inhibiting factors in strengthening character education through Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah based on the Merdeka curriculum at SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang Cilacap.

METHODS

This research is a field research with a qualitative research approach. According to (Moleong, 2017), qualitative research is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and behaviour that can be observed.

The technique of taking subjects in this study is using purposive sampling, which is a sampling technique from data sources by taking into account certain considerations, for example, the person who is considered to know, or maybe he is the ruler so that it will make it easier for researchers to explore objects, and sampling is taken based on research needs (Arikunto, 2014). Data validity techniques using data triangulation, theory, and methods. While in data analysis techniques using the Miles and Hubberman model, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing.

Researchers identified the problem that occurred, namely strengthening character education, then collected data and information relevant to the title which came from books, journals, and articles. Researchers used data analysis techniques with the Miles and Hubberman model in (Suprayogo & Tobrani, 2013) which consists of data collection, data reduction, data presentation and conclusion.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Character Education in The Merdeka Curriculum

Education according to (Hamdani, 2013) and (Penyusun, 2020) is a change that is desired and sought by the educational process, both at the level of individual behaviour and at the level of social life and at the level of relations with the surrounding nature or teaching as a basic activity and as a process of proportion among professions in society. Meanwhile (Salahudin, 2013) argues that character is a way of thinking and behaving that characterises individuals to live and work together, both in the family, community, nation and state. Individuals with good character are individuals who can make decisions and are ready to take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions. Meanwhile, character according to (Muchlas, 2016) is an attribute or characteristic that forms and distinguishes the personal, ethical and mental complexity of a person, group or nation.

Character education is education to shape a person's personality through character education, the results of which are seen in a person's real actions, namely good behaviour, honesty, responsibility, respect for the rights of others, hard work and so on (Lickona, 2014). Meanwhile (Zubaedi, 2011) argues that character education is all efforts made by teachers who are able to influence the character of students, teachers help shape the character of students. This includes exemplifying how the teacher behaves, how the teacher speaks or conveys material, how the teacher tolerates and various other related things.

Thus, it can be interpreted that character education is the process of providing guidance to students to become whole human beings with character in the dimensions of heart, mind, body and taste and spirit (F Firdaus & Hermawan, 2021). Character education can be interpreted as value education, character education, moral education, character education that aims to develop the ability of students to make good and bad decisions, maintain what is good and realise that goodness in everyday life (Firdaus Firdaus, 2022).

The values that develop in the application of character should refer to religious values, culture, ethics, manners, Pancasila and the importance of national education goals. This is because Indonesian students are lifelong learners who have global competence and behave in accordance with the values of Pancasila. Some of the character values contained in the Pancasila learner profile are a unity that is mutually supportive and sustainable with each other. The elements of the Pancasila Learner Profile include: noble character, global diversity, independence, mutual cooperation, critical thinking, and creativity (Kemendikbud, 2021a).

The six characteristics above can be realised through the development of Indonesian cultural values and Pancasila. In addition, there are 18 character education values proposed by the Ministry of Education in (Harini, 2018) including religious, honest, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creative, Merdeka, democratic, curiosity, national spirit, love for the country, respect for achievement, friendly or communicative, peace-loving, fond of reading, environmental care, social care, responsibility.

Thus, from the womb of Muhammadiyah education, it is hoped that a generation of educated Muslims will be born who are strong in faith and personality, as well as able to face and answer the challenges of the times. This is because Muhammadiyah education is a modern Islamic education that integrates religion with life, and between faith and holistic progress (Al-Islam, 2013).

Muhammadiyah, which has thousands of educational institutions ranging from Kindergarten/RA, SD/MI, SMP/MTs, SMA/SMK/MA and Universities, has made many positive contributions to the progress of the nation without exception in the issue of character education. It is known that Muhammadiyah schools and universities have special characteristics from the aspect of the curriculum, namely Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah (Zulfarno, Mursal, & Saputra, 2019).

Islamic education at the Muhammadiyah Higher Education level is known as the AIK (Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah) course, while at the primary and secondary education levels it is known as ISMUBA (Al-Islam, Kemuhammadiyah, and Arabic) which covers five aspects, namely al-Qur'an-Hadith, Aqidah, Akhlak, Fiqh, Kemuhammadiyah and Arabic.

Majelis Dikdasmen PP Muhammadiyah has formulated a Holistic-Integrative Al-Islam, Kemuhammadiyah and Arabic Language (ISMUBA) education curriculum patterned after the Merdeka Curriculum at the primary and secondary education levels. The curriculum structure at the primary and secondary education levels consists of two main activities, namely: intracurricular learning and the project of strengthening the Muhammadiyah Pancasila student profile. Intracurricular learning activities for each subject refer to the Learning Outcomes (CP). Project activities aim to strengthen efforts to achieve the Muhammadiyah Pancasila student profile which refers to the Graduate Competency Standards (SKL). Majelis Dikdasmen PP Muhammadiyah develops the content of special characteristics and excellence of Muhammadiyah schools and madrasahs in accordance with the flexibility of the Merdeka curriculum (Dikdasmen, 2022).

The Merdeka Curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning where content will be optimised so that learners have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies (Kemdikbud, 2022). Educators have the flexibility to choose from a variety of teaching tools, so that learning can be tailored to learners' learning needs and interests. Projects to strengthen the achievement of the Pancasila learner profile are developed based on specific themes set by the government. The project is not directed to achieve specific learning outcome targets, so it is not tied to subject content.

Thus it can be understood that the Merdeka curriculum emphasises character building, so the form of assessment is not only limited to determining rankings, but places more emphasis on the talents and intelligence of each student (Junaidi, 2021). This is because students have different abilities in their respective fields. The Merdeka curriculum includes three types of learning activities, namely:

Firstly, Intracurricular learning which is carried out in a differentiated manner so that students have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. This also provides flexibility for teachers to choose teaching tools that suit the needs and characteristics of their students.

Secondly, Co-curricular learning in the form of a project to strengthen the Pancasila Learner Profile, based on the principle of interdisciplinary learning oriented towards character development and general competence.

Thirdly, Extracurricular learning is carried out in accordance with student interests and teaching unit resources (Kemendikbud, 2021b).

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the Merdeka curriculum aims to create a more enjoyable education for students and teachers. The Merdeka learning curriculum is more focused on various things, one of which is character education in accordance with Pancasila. This Merdeka curriculum is flexible and focuses on essential material, student character development and learner competencies.

Therefore, educational institutions in building character must use a comprehensive value education approach including: Acting as caregivers, role models and mentors, who treat students with love, set good examples, support prosocial behaviour and correct deviant behaviour; Creating a moral community in the classroom, helping students in the classroom to get to know each other, care for and respect each other; Practising moral discipline, enforcing rules and making these rules a self-control; Creating a democratic classroom environment involving students in discussions and participating in decision making, taking responsibility that the school is a place to learn; Teaching values through the curriculum, using subjects as a means to examine ethical issues; Using cooperative learning, to teach attitudes and skills of helping and working with friends, responsibility for themselves and the group (Hidayat & Purwanto, 2022).

Strengthening character education through Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah based on Merdeka curriculum can be interpreted as how to implement and strengthen Islamic character, as has been conceptualised through ISMUBA subjects, and integrated with Merdeka curriculum that emphasises the interests and talents of students and their relevance to the character profile of Pancasila students.

Strengthening Character Education Through Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah at SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang

SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang is a religious-based school that emphasises aspects of science and charity, pays attention to the development of the character of its students through various activities, and of course ISMUBA subjects as the main spirit in strengthening the character of students.

ISMUBA subjects based on the Merdeka curriculum at SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang Cilacap include aqidah education, akhlaq, worship, al-qur'an, tarikh, kemuhammadiyah and Arabic. Students get an allotment of 8 hours of ISMUBA lessons in one week. This is in accordance with the guidelines (Dikdasmen, 2022) which require that Muhammadiyah schools allocate more lesson hours for religious learning or better known as special character subjects (ISMUBA).

Strengthening good character education must pay attention to three aspects that cannot be separated. According to Thomas Lickona in (Komara, 2018), an effective way to build character is through knowing the good, loving or desiring the good, and acting the good. Strengthening character education at SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang is widely integrated by conducting daily, weekly, monthly or annual activities.

Some activities at school in order to strengthen character such as habituation of tadarus before entering the lesson with a duration of 10 minutes, dhuhur prayer in congregation, dhuha prayer, routine Friday studies to strengthen the faith of school employees, Sunday morning studies filled by PDM Muhammadiyah, and holding qurban patungan to train students in setting aside money for qurban. In addition, there are also flag ceremony activities, holding LDDK (Latsar Basic Leadership Discipline) with the TNI in order to foster a social spirit and nationalism towards the State. These activities are very relevant to Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the purpose of education is to develop students' potential to become human beings who are faithful and devoted to God, capable, creative, Merdeka, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Vhalery, Setyastanto, & Leksono, 2022).

Thus, it can be understood that the materials in ISMUBA are relevant to the Merdeka curriculum in terms of strengthening character education. This can be seen from the existence of several indicators of the Pancasila student profile which are also in accordance with the Muhammadiyah student profile, such as inviting students to have faith and devotion, have good akhlaq, as well as having a spirit of nationalism towards the nation and state. The Muhammadiyah Student Profile Strengthening Project is implemented across subjects with certain themes determined by the school, as according to SMP Muga at 2023 that the Muhammadiyah Student Profile is adapted from the Pancasila Student Profile, as follows:

Table 1. Comparison of Pancasila Student Profile with Muhammadiyah Student Profile

No.	Profile of Pancasila Students	Profile of Muhammadiyah Students
1	Have faith, devotion to God and noble character	Religious observance and noble character
2	Globally diverse	Doing good to parents, teachers and others
3	Mutual cooperation	Love the nation and universal humanity
4	Merdeka	Highly motivated and willing to excel
5	Critical reasoning	Disciplined, hardworking and Merdeka
6	Creative	Cooperate and socialize in the community
7		Knowledgeable and highly skilled
8		Love to read, write and create

ISMUBA learning at SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang uses the Problem Based Learning (PBL) model. The PBL learning model can provide students with active learning conditions where students are involved in solving a problem through the stages of the scientific method (Subadi, 2011). Thus, students will be able to learn knowledge related to the problem and at the same time have the skills to solve the problem.

ISMUBA teachers at SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang in delivering the material always present factual cases related to the theme to be studied. To strengthen students' understanding, teachers deliver material using question and answer methods, discussion, observation and observation. In addition, there are several strategies of teachers and employees in instilling the character of students, both through learning and activities at SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang, including providing role models, good habituation, giving advice, and applying rewards and punishments in a fair and transparent manner.

However, in the implementation of strengthening character education, there are several things that become supporting factors, including: Firstly, the existence of human resources (teachers and employees), which in quality and quantity is sufficient. Islamic educational institutions are a totality consisting of several components, namely input,

process, output, educators and education personnel, curriculum, cost facilities and others (instrumental input), and environmental components (Jamin, 2015). These components work together and influence each other directed towards achieving the goals of Islamic education, namely realising human resources with Islamic character. SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang tries to fulfil the components mentioned above, especially in the matter of human resources (teachers and employees). So that the school encourages teachers to become professional and certified teachers.

Secondly, the school provides opportunities for educators to actively participate in workshops, seminars, and trainings related to the Merdeka curriculum. SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang is a school directly appointed as a pilot project by the Education Office in implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, it can be concluded that this school has received special trust and attention from the relevant agencies.

Thirdly, spirit of ta'awun from PCM Sampang and local residents. The motivation and spirit of kinship and a sense of belonging by PCM Sampang towards its AUM, including SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang. This is because SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang is a productive AUM under PCM Sampang and the guidance of the Education and Culture Council. In addition, many local residents place high trust in the school because SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang not only provides several majors that are in great demand by the community, but the school also excels in its religious activities.

Meanwhile, things that become inhibiting factors in strengthening character education include: Firstly, ISMUBA materials based on the Merdeka curriculum do not yet have guidebooks for students and teachers. The Muhammadiyah Central Education Council has not issued student and teacher handbooks that are in accordance with the Merdeka curriculum. Although from PP Muhammadiyah there are already circulars and guidelines for holistic integrative ISMUBA based on the Merdeka curriculum, they can be used as guidelines and references in making teaching modules. The solution to this problem is that teachers use books from the Ministry of Religion and combine them with the K13 edition of the ISMUBA curriculum.

Secondly, students' interest and awareness of ISMUBA material is still low. The majority of students at SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang are prospective workers, so they are more interested in material that is in accordance with their majors and talent interests. As a

solution, ISMUBA teachers in teaching material must provide many applicable examples in the world of work. Because if the teacher teaches only limited to delivering material, students are usually bored, but if while practicing or mentioning the interests of students' talents, then they will be interested.

Thirdly, different habits at home often clash with habits at school. Where habits at school are habits that rely on or are in accordance with existing rules or regulations, while habits at home are habits that are modelled by parents and parents' habits are not necessarily good habits.

Fourthly, different family backgrounds and religious practices. The input of students of SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang does not all come from families that uphold religious values, so that when they enter school, they participate in activities and learning in the classroom (following religious education lessons in class) where the content of religious subjects is more than in public schools. In addition, self-awareness and parents who are less supportive. The habits and self-awareness of students who are less aware of the importance of self-discipline and bad habits at home are carried over to school.

From the description above, it can be explained that the main factor that plays an important role in strengthening character education through ISMUBA based on the Merdeka curriculum is the professionalism of human resources (teachers and employees) in providing good role models and examples at school. This is because even though the physical school and its infrastructure are complete, if there is no commitment and common vision and mission, it will not run and function properly. On the other hand, if the relationship between school stakeholders is harmonious and committed to strengthening character, SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang Cilacap can succeed in forming and fostering students who have Islamic character and reflect the profile of Pancasila students.

CONCLUSION

Strengthening character education through Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah based on the Merdeka curriculum at SMK Muhammadiyah Sampang is carried out by integrating the Pancasila student profile with the Muhammadiyah student profile. The character values taught in ISMUBA aim to form students who have the qualities of believing and fearing God Almighty and having noble character, showing global tolerance, prioritizing cooperation,

fostering independence, critical thinking, and creative. Although this study succeeded in identifying character values in Al-Islam and Muhammadiyah, there are shortcomings in contextualizing them and need to be studied from various perspectives such as psychological. Therefore, it is suggested that further research can deepen the understanding of contextual factors and various disciplines. Future research should include broader environmental dimensions, peer influence, local economic conditions, or situational factors. Thus, this research can provide more comprehensive and applicable insights for practitioners and policy makers.

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