# **Cultivating Religious Character through School Culture**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The foundation of manners and the factors determining character development are crucial for education. School culture is one way to cultivate moral qualities that assist the progress of character education. This study aims to describe and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors for implementing religious character education through school culture. This type of research is descriptive research using a qualitative approach. The object of this research is the whole process of implementing religious character planting through school culture. This research was conducted at SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The results of this study show that instilling religious character through school culture is carried out in three stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. The supporting factors of religious character include religious programs, facilities, and infrastructure that have been fulfilled. The inhibiting factors for the implementation of religious character cultivation include environmental conditions. The contribution of this study provides information about supporting and inhibiting factors for the implementation of religious character education through school culture.

**Keywords:** Character, Religious, School Culture, Education, Elementary School, Students



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# 1. INTRODUCTION

The basis of manners and the determinants of character building is an essential part of education (Lavy, 2020) to form graduates who are not just scientific experts (Rusilowati & Wahyudi, 2020). The development of elementary school-age students is in the concrete operational stage (Putri et al., 2020). Students begin to view the world objectively so that views shift from one aspect to another reflexively and simultaneously. Students' character-building activities in elementary schools will experience various challenges; namely, the character of one student from another is different (Amin et al., 2021). Therefore it is necessary to apply good training to students to become a religious generation (Taufik, 2020). Changes occur not only in speech but also seen from students' behavior. Following this opinion, Singh (2019) argues that character education is an effort that is deliberately designed to improve the character of students. In Indonesia, character education needs to be instilled by the 2013 curriculum, which shapes students' character following educational goals by developing cultural values and national character.

In fact, not all characters follow religious teachings that are practiced by society/humans. The need for a broader public understanding of religious teachings causes this. Following Reimers (2020) states that if someone has a religion, it is only limited to confession. However, everyday life does not behave, view, and behave by religious teachings. Therefore, humans do not have a religious character in themselves. This should be of great concern in conveying this to students so that it is not just an introduction but must instill

a religious character (Dwi Astuti et al., 2020) in them that can lead them to become human beings who behave following religious teachings..

One implementation of cultivating religious characters that support the advancement of character education is school culture (Tabroni et al., 2021). School culture is the behind-the-scenes context of a school that shows the values, norms, and traditions built for a long time by the school (Twebaze et al., 2023). This school culture is the spirit of creating a conducive school climate (Syafaruddin et al., 2020). Therefore schools must have distinctive characteristics that can be identified through the values they hold, the attitudes they have, the habits they display, and the actions shown by all school personnel who form a particular unit of the school system.

Some previous research regarding the inculcation of religious character through school culture includes: 1) Research Nunzairina (2018) on the implementation of religious character in school culture through instilling character values in school culture, namely through the provision of facilities and in school programs that are habituated in daily life. The school days and programs are designed to shape student character through activities in the school environment. 2) Research Anggraini and Zulfiati (2017); Mulyanto et al. (2021) on cultivating religious character by applying school culture is realized through extra-curricular and intra-curricular activities, including 5S activities (Smile, Say Hello, Greeting, Politeness, and Courtesy), breakfast, Tadarus (read Al-Qur'an), and stimulus. The character will be formed if the teacher becomes a figure who can be used as a model for habituation so that students will imitate what the teacher does. 3) research conducted by Rahmadani and Hamdany (2023) regarding religious inculcation with school culture, which is carried out through character values instilled in students, including disciplinary values with arriving early and instilling a sense of nationalism and love for the homeland such as students carrying out flag ceremonies, singing Indonesia Raya songs and carrying out worship activities such as prayer and recitation.

Previous research on instilling religious character through school culture still discussed it in general and had yet to focus on more complex matters; not much had been discussed on what layers could be observed to determine how schools inculcated character education through school culture. The things discussed were only about school habits, routine activities such as 5S activities (Smile, Say Hello, Greeting, Politeness, and Courtesy), arriving on time, and breakfast. Even though many layers can be observed in that context apart from these activities, which only observe school habits.

The novelty of this research will focus on exploring and describing the implementation of instilling religious character through school culture, in which several things can be observed, such as layers of physical and non-physical artifacts, values, beliefs, and assumptions. This study aims to describe and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors for implementing religious character education through school culture.

### 2. METHOD

The type of research used descriptive qualitative research. This research was conducted at SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The object of this research is the school's efforts in instilling religious in the integration of school culture. Besides that, how is the evaluation carried out at SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta? Data collection techniques in research are through observation, interviews, and documentation. Qualitative data sources are displayed in the form of spoken or written words examined by researchers and objects observed in detail so that the implied meaning can be captured in documents or objects.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the research objectives carried out along with the results and discussion regarding the implementation of religious character cultivation through school culture at SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta seen from the planning, implementation and evaluation aspects in which there are several things that can be observed such as layers of physical and non-physical artifacts, values and beliefs and assumptions.

### 3.1. Implementation Planning for Planting Religious Character Through School Culture

Planning for the implementation of instilling religious character through school culture, according to the school culture layer. Planning to inculcate religious character through school culture at SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta is as follows.

# 3.1.1. Artifact Layer

Physical Artifacts

The implementation of character education can be seen from several environmental aspects in planning. According to Tsiakkiros and Pashiardis (2002); Tanjung (2020), planning is one of the essential things that must be made for every business to achieve a goal. Likewise, planning for inculcating religious IJE-QQR, Vol. 2, No. 1, 2023

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character is carried out through physical artifacts, including mosques and prayer rooms, programs carried out regularly, planning of supporting facilities for inculcating religious character, and availability of Islamic religious education teachers. Another definition states that planning is the relationship between what is now and how it should be related to needs, setting goals, priorities, programs, and resource allocation (Fathih, 2022).

The school plans to provide facilities to support religious character at SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta. Planning is made to increase effectiveness at the time of its implementation. These facilities include the Al-Qur'an's availability, programs supporting religious character, and the existence of *Mukenah* (women's prayer clothes). According to Huriyah and Hidayat (2022), learning facilities are significant in the learning process to support teaching. They can also generate interest and attention from students to facilitate the delivery of learning material. Likewise, the facilities supporting the school's religious character benefit the school in carrying out the program. Rasmitadila et al. (2020) state that facilities and infrastructure significantly affect teaching and learning activities. Then it was also supported by previous research by Wiyani (2020), which said that facilities and infrastructure support the implementation of religious character education. Inhibiting factors in its implementation, namely, factors from students, infrastructure, and the environment, it can be concluded that physical activity is significant to fulfill so that it does not become an obstacle to implementing character education.

#### Non Physical Artifacts

Prayer is something that every human being must do (Kistoro et al., 2021). Every human being must have desires, hopes, or ideals (Legault, 2020). Realizing it or not, this encourages people to pray in any way, either with hope or through a particular ritual. The implementation of character education in planning physical and non-physical artifacts includes school instructions to its citizens to always pray before and after carrying out activities. The school directs its citizens to always pray before and after activities (Sidiq & 'Uyun, 2019). The school's way of giving directions through habituation is carried out from the first grade so that children are accustomed to praying.

The school of SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta always provides opportunities for students to pray. The school does this by making a particular prayer schedule for sixth graders to perform midday prayers with residents, for fifth and fourth graders to pray after sixth grade, and for lower grades only to perform midday prayers. However, because of the pandemic and ongoing face-to-face learning (PTM), all students pray at home with the teacher's supervision through the group.

Then how do schools direct students always to uphold the value of student tolerance? The school directs the value of tolerance to students by inserting the value of tolerance into learning, which means tolerance. According to Alabdulhadi (2019), tolerance is one of the core teachings of Islam. Tolerance parallels other fundamental teachings, such as compassion (*rahmah*), wisdom, and universal benefit (*almaslahah al-ammah*); then how do schools emphasize honesty? Not only focused on exam results but on getting these grades. It is also following the opinion of Brown et al. (2019) honesty is the secret to success.

# 3.1.2. Layers of Values and Beliefs

The implementation of character planting in planning values and beliefs includes schools planning routine activities with Islamic nuances, schools planning Islamic slogans, formulating visions and missions based on religion, schools familiarizing manners, and schools having regulations governing students' behavior. According to Llorica & Sosas (2022), politeness is respectful and respectful in behavior. Polite in speech and good behavior, following local customs and culture that we must do.

The school of SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta planned students' prayer schedules when the situation before the pandemic and PTM was because the mosque was in a school owned by hamlet residents but because one roof, namely the Muhammadiyah, the mosque could be used together through an MOU that had been agreed so that all neighborhood residents and school residents always maintain cleanliness the mosque. Then the school plans routine activities that are carried out equally with Islamic nuances. Good morals cannot be formed only with lessons, instructions, and prohibitions because the soul's character to accept these virtues is not enough for a teacher to say do this and do not do that.

# 3.2. Implementation of Character Education through School Culture

### 3.2.1. Artifact layer

Physical Artifact

The manifestation of implementing character planting in the layer of physical artifacts includes the availability of adequate mosques, good places for ablution, the availability of slogans with Islamic nuances, what facilities are provided by schools related to strengthening character, religion, the competence of good PAI (Islamic Religious Education) teachers and how teachers set an example. Apart from the slogan, the

school also provides facilities for students related to the ease of worship, such as the provision of *Mukenah* (women's prayer clothes) provided at the mosque, Al- Quran and UMMI books which the school has also provided, and adequate places for ablution.

Accordance with the opinion expressed by Aningsih et al. (2022) explains that space conditioning and opportunities for school members to express good character behaviors are one of the strategies in character education. Similar to the opinion of Bali and Rozhana (2022), who states that a person can be said to have character if he succeeds in absorbing the values of beliefs that society wants and uses them as morals in his life. The availability of facilities that support the implementation of character education is also in line with the opinion that physical manifestation can be through neat school gardens and yards (Maurer, 2020), nice buildings (Cole, 2019), and clean and orderly facilities and infrastructure (Kristiawan et al., 2021).

### Non Physical Artifacts

Routine activities related to character building at SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta include the habit of praying. The teaching and learning process stops when the call to prayer resounds, giving pause time for prayer. Instill tolerance and always prioritize honesty. The habit of praying is made when they want to start the learning process and close learning with this activity. Hopefully, students will get used to starting something by praying first. According to Harahap et al. (2022); V. Kolganov et al. (2022) explain that religious harmony aims to increase each religion's faith and piety. Each religion, with the reality of other religions, will increasingly encourage them to live up to and, at the same time, deepen their religious teachings and strive to practice the teachings of their religion even more (Luodeslampi et al., 2019). SD Muhammadiyah Wirobraja II Yogyakarta stopped the teaching and learning process when the call to prayer aimed to teach students always to respect the call to prayer. The method used by the school is that when the call to prayer is heard, the learning process is stopped for a moment, and the students and the teacher pray after the call to prayer. SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta also teaches tolerance to students with the aim that students participate in maintaining Indonesia's diversity. The school does this by inserting it into ongoing learning, telling stories about the meaning and examples of tolerance. Usually, the teacher inserts it in Civics and Social Sciences. SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta also teaches honesty; for schools, honesty cannot be bargained for by anything because schools do not only carry out the task of educating the nation but also improving its morals. Schools do this by emphasizing to students that the assessment results are not only about results but how to get them. This value is a process that has been passed with honesty.

Another definition put forward by Atasoy (2020) is that school culture is a pattern of basic assumptions, values, beliefs, and habits that all school members share. These are believed and have been proven to be used to deal with various problems in adapting to a new environment and carrying out internal integration so that these value patterns and assumptions are taught to new members and generations so that they have the correct view of how they should understand, think, feel and act in various situations and existing environment. The school culture at SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta is embodied in layers of non-physical artifacts. Following Azainil et al. (2020), school culture is the thoughts, words, attitudes, actions, and hearts of every citizen, which is reflected in the spirit, behavior, and symbols, as well as the distinctive slogans of the school's identity.

The prayer schedule goes well, and the schedule distribution is well organized by involving mosque administrators. Sometimes teachers are also appointed as imams at the mosque, but because the current condition is a pandemic. PTM students still carry out prayers at their respective homes before going to school; they perform Dhuha prayers with the monitoring of the teacher through the group. Islam (2020) believes that every religion brings peace and harmony to life. However, religions that used to function as a unifier often become an element of conflict. It is due to truth claims or truth claims on each of its adherents. If we understand more deeply, pluralism was created to make them know, understand, and cooperate.

The research results regarding various routine activities. Ramdiah et al. (2019) explains that routine school activities are carried out regularly, consistently, and continuously. Implementing routine activities is a form of habituation of caring for the environment. Musya'adah (2021) reveals that schools need to apply the totality of education by relying on habituation through various tasks and activities. Each habituation activity supports the elements of education. Through this, everything seen, heard, felt, and done by students is filled with character education.

# 3.3. Evaluation of the Implementation of Character Education through School Culture

### 3.3.1. Artifact layer

Physical Artifacts

Evaluation of the implementation of character education in SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta on the layer of physical artifacts: Does the school prioritize religious character facilities and infrastructure, and what obstacles do schools encounter regarding the procurement of goods? Schools prioritize more than just facilities and infrastructure. All are seen as the same because schools want every

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progress to be felt; be it academic or religious, everything must be balanced. The availability of facilities that support the implementation of character education is also in line with the opinion that physical manifestation can be through neat school gardens and yards (Maurer, 2020), nice buildings (Cole, 2019), and clean and orderly facilities and infrastructure (Kristiawan et al., 2021).

#### Non Physical Artifacts

Evaluation of the implementation of character education at SD Muhammadiyah Wirobrajan II Yogyakarta on the layer of non-physical artifacts in the form of: how does the school reflect on the implementation of learning, what are the obstacles encountered by the school related to the program made. The school reflects once a week, but when there is a severe problem, the reflection is carried out as soon as possible; not a few teachers also reflect on each individual regarding ongoing learning. The evaluation meeting is conditional, meaning that when the problem is significant, an evaluation will be held immediately. The purpose of the evaluation is to find the best solution. The evaluation meeting is held conditionally; if the problem is urgent, the meeting will be held. School culture is manifested in layers of values and beliefs. According to Azainil et al. (2020), school culture is the thoughts, words, attitudes, actions, and hearts of every citizen, which is reflected in the spirit, behavior, symbols, and distinctive slogans of the school's identity.

#### 3.3.2. Layers of Values and Beliefs

The result of evaluating the implementation of religious character education, values, and beliefs. Whether schools find obstacles to instilling religious character in students, and whether schools carry out evaluations regarding inculcating religious character. School culture is manifested in layers of values and beliefs. Following Azainil et al. (2020), school culture is the thoughts, words, attitudes, actions, and hearts of every citizen, which is reflected in the spirit, behavior, and symbols, as well as the distinctive slogans of the school's identity

#### 3.4. Assumptions

Evaluating efforts to instill religious character in layers includes internal assumptions in the form of the teacher's impression of the value of the religious character at school. According to the father/mother, the first impression is the relationship between students always obeying the rules by instilling good religious character. Fort on himself to avoid making mistakes, so he thinks not to break the rules. The layer of assumptions forms the basis for the layers of values and beliefs as well as the school's artifacts. In addition, the focus is on how the values in the school's vision and mission statement greatly influence educational goals' direction. Thus, religious planting can be realized as seen in formulating the school's vision and mission (Suyatno et al., 2019).

### 3.5. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

Priyambodo and Hasanah (2021) state that the supporting factors for achieving the process are the existence of a teacher's planning in teaching, such as making students active and socializing the teacher's curriculum so that educational planning can be achieved. Supporting factors include the availability of facilities such as mosques that provide physical facilities to support religious character. The facility is in the form of a mosque, a program that is carried out jointly and strongly supports religious character. Besides that, the school also has competent and professional PAI (Islamic Religious Education) teachers so that it is fulfilled and supports cultivating religious character.

The inhibiting factor that was found from the results of school observations was that the school experienced obstacles related to the student environment, which was no longer friendly because the environment was no longer friendly so that it would significantly impact student behavior, besides that parental support was still significantly lacking in the learning development of students who only studied at school, and in the home never to be repeated.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion, efforts to instill religious character through school culture through the artifact layer are carried out in three stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation. Planning to cultivate religious character through school culture is the provision of physical facilities to support religious character. The provision of evaluation facilities in the implementation of character education can be seen in whether the school prioritizes available facilities and infrastructure with a religious character, whether the available facilities can maximize the cultivation of religious character, what are the conditions of the facilities and infrastructure that support religious character, and any obstacles related to the cultivation of this religious character.

Supporting factors include the availability of facilities to provide physical facilities and support religious character. The facility is in the form of a mosque that strongly supports religious character. Besides

that, the school also has competent and professional PAI (Islamic Religious Education) teachers so that it is fulfilled and supports cultivating religious character. The inhibiting factors found from the results of school observations are that the school experiences obstacles related to the student environment, which is no longer friendly.

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