

Madrasah Leadership in Strengthening Character Education: A Qualitative Study at MTs Habibi Nurul Ain Bangomolunow, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT. This study aims to analyze the leadership role of madrasah heads in strengthening character education (PPK) and identify supporting and inhibiting factors for its implementation at MTs Habibi Nurul Ain Bangomolunow. The research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type. The research informants include the head of the madrasah and three teachers. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions drawn. The validity of the data was examined through triangulation of sources and techniques. The results of the study showed that the head of the madrasah carried out the roles of educational, managerial, supervisory, motivational, and exemplary in an integrated manner. This role is realized through teacher coaching, integration of character values in learning, religious habits such as Duha prayers, congregational Zuhur prayers, and Asmaul Husna readings, as well as supervision of the learning process. Madrasah heads also strive to build cooperation with parents and the community. Supporting factors include the commitment and example of madrasah heads, support for teachers and education staff, a conducive madrasah culture, and coaching programs. Obstacles include limited competence of some teachers, limited facilities, lack of optimal parental involvement, the influence of the social and technological environment, and the character awareness of some students that is not consistent. These findings show that the sustainability of PPK requires leadership that is value-based, collaborative, and accompanied by periodic evaluations.

Keywords: *Leadership of madrasah heads, Character education, Madrasah tsanawiyah*

INTRODUCTION

Character education has become one of the focuses of education policy in Indonesia since the character education strengthening program (PPK) was officially rolled out by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2017. PPK emphasizes the importance of integrating moral, social, and cultural values into all aspects of school life and curriculum, school culture, and daily habituation practices so that The formation of students' character is not just the responsibility of one subject, but all stakeholders in the school (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2017).

Strengthening character education puts The Head of the Madrasah as a Central Actor in the Process of Transforming Moral and Spiritual Values in the Educational Environment (E. Mulyasa, 2021). The head of the madrasah not only plays the role of an administrative manager who ensures the implementation of teaching and learning activities, but also as a Moral Leader which is the main example for teachers, students, and all school residents. In this context, the head of the madrasah is tasked with instilling character values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and social concern through exemplary attitudes and policies that favor the formation of noble morals. Moral leadership requires the head of the madrasah to have high integrity, commitment to Islamic values, and the ability to inspire madrasah residents to make character education part of a lively and sustainable school culture (Suyatno, 2020).

In addition, the head of the madrasah also plays the role of an agent of change (*change of change*) which is able to move teachers and students to internalize character values in learning activities and daily life in the madrasah. (Aqib & Sujak, 2021). In his role as a facilitator, the head of the madrasah creates a learning environment that is conducive to the growth of character culture, including through religious activities, counseling services, and the integration of character values into the curriculum. (Marzuki, 2022). Madrasah heads are also expected to be able to develop an objective and sustainable character evaluation system, so that the implementation of PPK does not stop at ceremonial activities, but becomes part of a complete and measurable education system. Thus, the success of strengthening character education in madrasahs is highly determined by the effectiveness of the leadership of madrasah heads in building synergy between moral, managerial, and spiritual visions in the Islamic education environment (Wahjosumidjo, 2019b).

In the context of madrasahs (MTs), this role often faces additional challenges in the form of integrating religious values with the national curriculum and the involvement of religious leaders and the surrounding community (Sari & Rahman, 2020). Various case studies at the madrasah level show that even though PPK programs and modules are available, implementation in the field often encounters obstacles such as weak written planning (SOPs), limited teachers' understanding of character habituation strategies, inconsistencies in the habituation of grades outside the classroom, and the leadership of madrasah heads who are not always effective as role models and managers of the school ecosystem (Hidayat, 2021).

Based on the results of preliminary observations at MTs Habibi Nurul Ain Bangomolunow, a number of general problems were found that were relevant to the implementation of strengthening character education (PPK). In general, character habituation activities such as congregational prayers, reciting the Qur'an, and routine flag ceremonies have been running, but their implementation has not shown strong consistency across all madrasah residents. Some teachers still view these activities as limited to religious routines, not integral parts of the character education strategy. In addition, there is no written Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) that systematically regulates the implementation of the PPK program, both in terms of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Documentation of activities is also not well organized, making it difficult to trace the program's achievements and identify the obstacles faced.

In terms of leadership, the head of the madrasah shows a commitment to the formation of students' character through a religious and disciplinary approach, but coordination with teachers and education staff is still instructive, not participatory and collaborative. In some cases, student behavior is still found that shows a weak internalization of character values such as discipline, responsibility, and honesty. The madrasah environment has not fully supported character culture because there is no measurable and sustainable system of rewards and sanctions. In addition, the involvement of parents and the community in supporting character programs is also relatively low, due to the lack of communication and synergy between the madrasah and the surrounding environment. This situation illustrates that the leadership role of the madrasah head in directing, controlling, and evaluating the PPK program still needs to be strengthened so that its implementation can run more effectively, measurably, and sustainably.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type to understand the leadership practices of madrasah heads in a natural context at MTs Habibi Nurul Ain Bangomolunow, Bolaang Mongondow Regency. The research was carried out in April-May 2026. The informants mentioned in the thesis abstract consisted of the head of the madrasah and three teachers. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. Interviews were used to obtain information about the informant's policies, experiences, and views on the implementation of the PPK; observation was used to see practices and interactions in the madrasah environment; while documentation was used as supporting data.

Data analysis is carried out through three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. In the reduction stage, data is selected and focused according to the problem formulation. The data that has been organized is then presented descriptively to find leadership patterns, PPK practices, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors. Conclusions are drawn by considering the relationship between findings. The validity of the data is checked through triangulation of sources and techniques, namely comparing information between informants and matching interview data with observation and documentation results.

Editorial note: the description of this method is compiled from the information available in the thesis. Before submission to the journal, the author needs to re-confirm the details of the informant, interview procedures, forms of documentation, and examples of the application of triangulation so that the reporting method is fully in accordance with the field notes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Institutional Context and Character Orientation of Madrasah

MTs Habibi Nurul Ain is a private tsanawiyah madrasah located in Bangomolunow Village, Bolaang District, Bolaang Mongondow Regency. The foundation that oversees the madrasah was established in 2016 and student admissions began to be opened in 2018. The madrasah is located on Jalan Trans Sulawesi and has a vision of forming students who love the Qur'an, have noble character, and excel in the religious and academic fields. The institution's mission includes the formation of Muslim cadres who have faith and ethics, the development of knowledge and technology, discipline, creativity, independence, and the creation of a healthy and harmonious educational environment. The vision and mission provide a normative foundation for PPK because it connects academic achievements with the formation of morals and social habits.

Institutional profiles help explain why religious values occupy an important position in character building programs. Congregational prayer programs, Asmaul Husna readings, dhikr, and social activities such as Friday infak do not stand separate from the identity of the madrasah, but are understood as a form of translating vision and mission into routine. However, the existence of visions and activities does not automatically guarantee the internalization of character. The same activities can have different meanings for students, teachers, and leaders depending on the way they are implemented, the explanation of values, the example, and the follow-up that accompanies them. Therefore, leadership is needed to keep activities from stopping as a routine agenda, but becoming a meaningful educational experience.

The context of resources also needs to be considered. The thesis notes ten teachers and describes that educators are non-civil servants. This information does not automatically show the low quality of learning, but provides context about the importance of capacity management and professional support. In developing institutions, madrasah heads need to ensure that character policies can be implemented realistically, do not depend on one individual, and are accompanied by a clear division of tasks. Character development will be more sustainable if it becomes a shared

responsibility and is embedded in work procedures, not just depending on the personal spirit of the leader.

Head of Madrasah as an Educational Leader and Value Planter

The findings of the study show that madrasah heads carry out an educational role through teacher training and affirmation that character education must be integrated into the learning process. Madrasah heads do not interpret PPK as limited to mastering concepts or memorizing moral values, but as a process of internalizing these values in institutional governance and madrasah life. This statement shows a leadership orientation that seeks to connect academic goals with personality formation.

The educational function can also be seen from the direction to teachers not to limit learning to the delivery of material. Teachers are expected to integrate the values of discipline, honesty, responsibility, and religiosity into teaching methods, class interactions, and attitude assessments. This practice is in line with Mulyasa's view that school principals need to mobilize school residents to make character part of educational activities. Madrasah heads have a position to clarify the expectations of the institution, but teachers are the implementers who connect these expectations with the concrete experiences of students. Therefore, teacher development is an important mechanism to transform general policies into pedagogical actions that can be observed (H. E. Mulyasa, 2022).

Educational roles also involve instilling an understanding in teachers that character is not only formed in special activities. The value of honesty, for example, can be developed through fair judgment, acknowledgment of mistakes, and the prohibition of copying one's work. Discipline can be strengthened through class agreement, punctuality, and consistency in the implementation of rules. Responsibility can be linked to task completion, maintenance of facilities, and participation in group activities. Religiosity can be instilled through worship activities as well as behavior of respect for others, trust, and social concern. In this way, character education has the potential to be part of learning practices, not just conveyed as a verbal message.

The Islamic leadership framework discussed in the thesis emphasizes the nature of *sidik*, *amanah*, *tabligh*, and *fatanah* as the principles of leadership example. These qualities can be read as a demand to be correct, trustworthy, communicative, and intelligent in making decisions. The Prophet's leadership practice emphasizes deliberation of respect for others, gentleness accompanied by firmness, unity, and consistency of rules (Hasan, 2010). In the context of the head of the madrasah, these values are relevant when the leader gives direction, handles violations, resolves differences, and builds communication with teachers and family. Value-based leadership will be more convincing if the values conveyed are reflected in daily decisions and behavior.

Analytically, the educational role of madrasah heads has two directions. First, direct direction to students through culture and habituation programs. Second, indirect direction through strengthening competence and teacher orientation. The second direction is equally important because students experience character education, especially through daily relationships with teachers. If teachers understand the purpose of the program and have appropriate strategies, values can be practiced in a consistent way. On the other hand, if teachers only know that certain activities are mandatory, these activities risk losing pedagogical meaning. Therefore, coaching needs to contain discussions about grades, examples of integration in learning, case reflection, and follow-up on real problems in the classroom.

Managerial Roles: Policy, Programs and Coordination

In addition to the educational role, the head of the madrasah carries out managerial functions through policy setting and organizing PPK activities. The thesis reports the existence of a program of religious habituation, literacy, discipline, and social activities. The program connects character values with schedules and repetitive activities. In management theory, the function of the head of the madrasah includes planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling resources to achieve

the goals of the institution (Munir, 2008). In the PPK, this function is needed to determine the value of priorities, objectives, persons in charge, implementation time, facility support, and how to assess the implementation of the program.

An organized policy allows the program to run beyond schedule changes or personnel changes. In the thesis, one of the problems noted in the initial observation is the lack of a written SOP that systematically regulates the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the PPK. This condition is an important point for managerial improvement. The SOP is not intended to over-bureaucratize character education, but rather provides minimum guidance so that each party understands its role and the implementation can be reviewed. A simple document can contain the purpose of the activity, the values developed, the implementers, schedules, supervision mechanisms, and reflection indicators. With consistent documentation, the madrasah can distinguish between the activities carried out and the changes that are beginning to appear in the behavior of students.

The head of the madrasah also plays a role in coordinating teachers so that the PPK is not charged to religious teachers or managers of certain activities only. An integrated approach requires cross-subject agreement and common standards of behavior. For example, the value of responsibility needs to be seen in academic assignments and picket duties; mutual respect needs to be applied to class discussions and religious activities; and honesty needs to be maintained in academic assessments and social activities. Coordination becomes more effective if meetings not only deliver instructions, but provide space to share experiences, identify obstacles, and design follow-up together. Madrasah heads provide motivation, training, and discussion space for teachers to share experiences and find solutions to obstacles to the implementation of PPK. This support shows that management is not solely oriented to control, but also to human resource empowerment. The importance of the professional ability of teachers and education personnel in supporting the educational process (Sagala, 2018). In this context, madrasah heads need to manage capacity development in a targeted manner, for example through discussions of good practices, assistance in the preparation of learning tools that integrate character, peer observation, and reflection on student behavior cases.

Managerial leadership is also seen in external relationships. Madrasah heads strive to establish communication with parents or guardians and religious leaders so that the values built in the madrasah receive support outside the school environment. Synergy between schools, teachers, students, and parents in the implementation of PPK is a very important factor. External collaboration needs to be built through realistic two-way communication. It is not enough for parents to just receive information about the rules, but they need to understand the values developed and know how to support habituation at home. (Hidayah & Rahman, 2022). On the other hand, madrasahs need to listen to the family conditions and the obstacles they face so that cooperation does not become a one-sided demand. The managerial function in the PPK includes more than setting a schedule of activities. It connects vision, programs, resources, division of roles, documentation, and partnerships. The findings on the need for SOPs and more organized documentation show that leadership commitment needs to be followed by system strengthening. A simple but consistently executed system can help maintain program sustainability and provide a stronger basis for evaluation.

Religious Habituation as a Character Internalization Strategy

One of the main practices of PPK at MTs Habibi Nurul Ain is religious habituation. The head of the madrasah mentioned the activities of Duha prayer, congregational Zuhur prayer, the recitation of Asmaul Husna, and dhikr as part of the madrasah program. The thesis also notes social activities such as Friday infak. The practice provides a repetitive structure for students' religious experiences. Habituation can support character formation when it is done consistently, the purpose is understood, and is linked to a broader attitude. (Zubaedi, 2020) emphasizing the importance of habituation, example, and a supportive environment in the design of character

education. Therefore, religious activities can be a means of internalizing values if students are not only directed to participate in activities, but are also invited to understand the relationship between worship, discipline, responsibility, care, and respect for others.

Congregational prayers, for example, have the potential to foster discipline through regularity of time and compliance with common ordinances. However, this potential does not automatically become a sedentary character. Reinforcement needs to be done by explaining the reasons for the activity, setting an example, and keeping the implementation not solely oriented to momentary obedience. The value of responsibility can be emphasized through readiness to participate in activities, maintaining the cleanliness of the place of worship, and respecting other participants. The value of mutual respect can be instilled through the way teachers guide students who are not in order, avoid degrading reprimands, and treat all students fairly.

The reading of Asmaul Husna and dhikr is another practice that strengthens the religious identity of the madrasah. This activity can be a space to build a spiritual atmosphere as well as reflective habits. So that the values built do not stop at verbal repetition, teachers and leaders can connect the meaning of values with concrete behavior in daily life. Discussions about compassion, justice, trust, or patience, for example, can be related to the way students talk to friends, resolve conflicts, admit mistakes, and carry out assignments. This attribution is a pedagogical interpretation of the program reported in the thesis, not a claim that all activities have been carried out with a formal reflection method.

Friday infak activities also have a social dimension. The program can provide sharing experiences, care, and responsibility for others. In order for these values to be internalized, transparency of management, volunteerism, and explanation of goals need to be maintained. Social activities should not generate a stigma against students who are unable to contribute materially. Character education must pay attention to the dignity of students and avoid practices that make sharing activities become social pressure. In this context, the role of the madrasah head is to ensure that the intended value is in accordance with the way the program is implemented.

The findings of the study also show that habituation is combined with supervision and evaluation. The head of the madrasah conducts monthly reflections in work meetings to review the impact of the program on student behavior. This practice is important because habituation needs to be seen as a growing process, not just a list of activities. Evaluation questions can include whether students understand the purpose of the activity, whether the level of participation is consistent, whether the behavior of mutual respect is increasing, and whether there are certain constraints in the student group. Evaluation notes should be used to improve the program, not just to state that the activity has been carried out.

Overall, religious habituation is an important force because it is in accordance with the identity of the madrasah and the vision of forming students who love the Qur'an and have noble character. However, the success of this strategy needs to be judged from the quality of the educational experience and the connection with daily behavior. Routine activities, consistent examples, explanation of values, and structured reflection are elements that can strengthen the transition from obedience to activity formation to character formation.

Exemplary and Formation of Madrasah Culture

Example is an important aspect in the leadership of karalter education because students and teachers pay attention to the suitability between the leader's message and actions. The head of the madrasah as an exemplary figure who emphasizes discipline, religiosity, integrity, responsibility, and mutual respect. In the perspective of values-based leadership, example provides concrete examples of how institutional principles are applied. (Suyatno, 2020) linking educational leadership with values as the basis for decision-making, while (E. Mulyasa, 2021) Setting an example as one way to build a culture of character in schools.

Example does not only appear in formal activities, but also through simple actions: arriving on time, carrying out agreements, listening to teachers' opinions, resolving problems fairly, and providing corrections in a way that respects the dignity of students. If leaders ask teachers to build discipline but are not consistent in implementing rules, the credibility of the program can be weakened. Conversely, the consistency of leaders gives moral legitimacy to policies and clarifies the expected standards of behavior. This is in line with the discussion (Cardona, 2020) about leadership as a process of social influence, not just a formal position.

Madrasah culture is formed through a pattern of interaction that is repeated and accepted together. Religious programs, disciplinary policies, the way teachers respond to violations, and the relationship between madrasah leaders and residents together shape the daily experience of students. Therefore, it is not enough to build character culture through slogans or posters. Written messages need to be supported by governance that makes these values visible in practice. For example, integrity can be strengthened when madrasahs implement transparent procedures; responsibility can grow when tasks are shared fairly; and mutual cooperation can flourish when madrasah residents are involved in joint activities with clear roles.

Teachers state that a culture of discipline, religious, and mutual respect is beginning to take shape, although it still requires continuous reinforcement and evaluation. This statement needs to be read proportionately. The findings show positive perceptions from informants and signs of cultural change, but they are not yet longitudinal measurements that ensure the stability of the character of all learners. Therefore, this article does not conclude that all of the goals of the PPK have been achieved. It is more accurate to say that leadership practices and habituation have shown a perceived positive contribution, while consistency and sustainability remain a development agenda.

Strengthening a culture of character also requires a fair approach to violations. A clear reward and consequences system can help learners understand the boundaries of behavior, but its implementation needs to be educational, proportionate, and not embarrassing. The thesis notes that at initial observation, there is no measurable and sustainable system of rewards and sanctions. This condition marks the need to agree on rules, behavioral indicators, handling procedures, and communication mechanisms with families. Transparent rules can reduce the impression that disciplinary actions depend on individual preferences, while opening up opportunities for students to understand consequences and improve behavior.

Academic Supervision, Motivation, and Teacher Capacity Development

The role of supervision of the madrasah head is realized through classroom observation, examination of learning tools, monitoring of classroom management, and reflective discussions with teachers. The supervision is directed not only to check the completeness of the administration, but also to assess how character values are applied in learning interactions. The head of the madrasah, for example, pays attention to whether the teacher appreciates the honesty of the students and reprimands students who are less orderly in a polite manner. This shows that academic supervision can be a means to connect pedagogical standards with character orientation.

Development-oriented supervision should provide information that teachers can use to improve practice. Examination of learning tools can be followed by a discussion about the location of character values in objectives, methods, activities, and assessments. Classroom observations can be followed by specific feedback, such as consistency of rules, students' opportunities to express

opinions, fairness of treatment, and how teachers respond to mistakes. This approach is different from supervision which only results in administrative assessments. (Suhertian, 2018) placing educational supervision within the framework of coaching and improving the quality of the implementation of educational tasks. In the context of PPK, coaching will be more meaningful if teachers receive support to try strategies, evaluate results, and improve practices gradually.

The support of the madrasah head in the form of motivation, training, and discussion rooms as reported by the teacher shows the existence of an element of supportive leadership. Teachers can face difficulties when they have to integrate character into the subject, especially if there is no example of tools or indicators that are understood together. Discussion rooms can be used to identify cases, share strategies, and formulate solutions. Professional development activities should also not be incidental. Madrasah heads can develop a development agenda based on identified needs through supervision, interviews with teachers, and observation of student behavior.

The motivation of madrasah heads has an important function to maintain teachers' commitment. However, motivation cannot replace structural support. Teachers need time to design learning, learning resources, collaboration opportunities, and clarity of expectations. If all responsibility for the PPK were left to individual initiatives, the quality of implementation would vary. Therefore, motivation and support need to be combined with a fair work system, division of tasks, provision of facilities, and feedback. This approach reflects the understanding that organizational behavior is influenced by the relationships between individuals, structures, and work cultures (Thoha, 2020).

Family and Community Collaboration

Madrasah heads strive to build communication with parents or guardians and religious leaders to maintain the continuity of character education outside the madrasah. This collaboration is important because students' behavior develops through various social environments. The values practiced in madrasas can be strengthened when the family provides consistent examples and support. Conversely, differences in habituation patterns between madrasas and homes can make the internalization of values take place more slowly or inconsistently. (Hidayah & Rahman, 2022) emphasized that synergy between madrasah heads, teachers, students, and parents is an important element in the implementation of PPK.

In the context of MTs Habibi Nurul Ain, the results of the study identified that the support of some parents is not evenly distributed and that communication between the madrasah and the surrounding environment still needs to be strengthened. These findings show that family partnerships cannot be treated as a completely stable factor. To improve this, communication needs to be carried out regularly, with clear information about priority values, activities carried out, and forms of support that families can provide. Madrasas can use parent meetings to discuss behavioral developments, not just convey administrative problems or demands.

The involvement of religious and community leaders can expand social support for character programs. However, collaboration must still have clear goals and role boundaries. Madrasas need to ensure that external activities are appropriate to the needs of students and do not distract from the learning process. If managed well, partnerships can reinforce the message that character is not just an institutional demand, but part of broader social life. Ultimately, the madrasah-family-community relationship is one of the indicators that the leadership of character education is not closed, but manages relationships with its social ecosystem.

Supporting Factors for the Implementation of Strengthening Character Education (PPK)

The first supporting factor is the commitment and example of the madrasah head. This commitment can be seen in the existence of religious habituation programs, teacher coaching, classroom supervision, and communication efforts with parents. Leaders who consistently elevate character as a priority can help unify the orientation of madrasah residents. In leadership theory, the influence of leaders does not only arise from formal authority, but also from the ability to build

trust, convey direction, and show exemplary behavior (Wahjosumidjo, 2019a). In this case, the leadership's commitment is the initial capital for the sustainability of the program, although it still needs to be translated into a measurable institutional system.

The second factor is the support of teachers and education staff. Teachers are the direct implementers of learning and daily interaction with students. When teachers are willing to include character values in methods, communication, and assessment, the PPK message becomes more consistent. This support is also seen through teachers' participation in activities and willingness to participate in coaching. However, support needs to be accompanied by increased competence so that implementation does not only rely on good intentions. Training, discussion, and supervision are instruments that help teachers turn commitment into effective practice.

The third factor is the culture of madrasahs that are oriented towards religious values and noble morals. The vision of a madrasah that emphasizes love for the Qur'an, noble morals, and achievements gives legitimacy to habituation activities. Institutional identity can be a strength if understood together and applied in daily interactions. Congregational prayer activities, Asmaul Husna, dhikr, and Friday infak provide a space for repetition to build habits. This culture will be stronger if religious practices are associated with honesty, responsibility, care, and respect for others.

The fourth factor is the coaching and supervision program that is running. The head of the madrasah not only sets the activities, but also conducts direct supervision and provides support to the teacher. The existence of reflection in the work meeting is the capital to make improvements. The fifth factor is the relationship with the family and the community that has begun to be pursued. Although the involvement of parents is not evenly distributed, the awareness of the leadership to build communication is a condition that can be developed. Overall, these supporting factors are interconnected: the leader's commitment to mobilizing teachers, the madrasah culture provides a context of values, the coaching program supports the capacity of the executive, and family collaboration expands the strengthening outside the school.

Factors Inhibiting the Implementation of Strengthening Character Education (PPK)

The first obstacle is the limited understanding of some teachers in integrating character values into learning. This obstacle shows that policy delivery is not always followed by mastery of pedagogical strategies. Teachers can understand that character is important, but it is not necessarily able to translate values into learning activities and behavioral indicators. Relevant responses are practical training, preparation of examples of learning tools, peer observation, and reflective discussions departing from classroom problems. Coaching needs to be done gradually and avoid a blame-off approach, because the main goal is to strengthen professional capacity.

The second obstacle is the uneven involvement of parents. Limited communication can reduce the continuity of values between the madrasah and the home. Madrasah heads need to build regular and two-way communication channels, explain the program's objectives, and invite parents to provide input. The communication approach should not only appear when violations occur. Relationships built from the beginning can increase trust and open up space for joint problem-solving. Madrasahs can also provide a choice of forms of involvement according to family conditions so that partnerships do not only depend on attendance at formal meetings.

The third obstacle is the influence of the social environment and the development of technology that is less controlled. This challenge is not appropriate to be solved by simply prohibiting the use of technology, because technology has become a part of students' lives. Character education needs to include digital literacy, information sorting skills, communication ethics, privacy protection, and responsibility in the use of media. (Ridwan, 2023) highlighting the importance of madrasah heads' strategies in strengthening Islamic character values in the digital era. In the context of this study, the strategy can be developed through communication with parents, proportionate rules for the use of gadgets, case discussions, and learning about digital

ethics. This step is an analytical recommendation that is consistent with the reported obstacles, not a statement that all of these strategies have been fully implemented.

The fourth obstacle is the limitation of supporting facilities. Limited resources can affect program implementation space, availability of learning materials, and documentation. However, character education does not always require expensive facilities. Madrasas can start from utilizing available resources, clear division of tasks, and simple recording of activities. Priorities need to be set based on the most urgent needs. If the lack of facilities has a direct impact on the safety or access of students, it needs to be addressed through planning and communication with the foundation or relevant stakeholders.

It is also important to distinguish between evaluation activities and evidence of success. Reflection meetings, supervision, and behavioral recording are processes that help madrasas understand program development, but their success needs to be demonstrated through adequate data. Madrasas can compile simple behavioral indicators such as punctuality, responsibility for tasks, honesty in work, concern for friends, and participation in activities. Assessments should be carried out with attention to context and avoid permanent labeling of students. Progress records are more useful when they are used for mentoring and improvement, not as the only basis for sanctioning.

CONCLUSION

The leadership of the head of the madrasah at MTs Habibi Nurul Ain Bangomolunow plays a role in strengthening character education through educational, managerial, supervision, motivation, and exemplary functions. This role is realized through teacher coaching, integration of character values in learning, habituation of Duha and Zuhur prayers in congregation, reading of Asmaul Husna and dhikr, social activities, class supervision, and communication with parents and the community. These practices show efforts to connect the vision of the madrasah with daily culture and the learning process.

The main supporting factors include the commitment and example of the madrasah head, the support of teachers and education staff, the religious orientation of the madrasah, coaching programs, supervision, and efforts to build family and community partnerships. The inhibiting factors include the limited understanding of some teachers, uneven parental support, the influence of the social and technological environment, limited facilities, and the inconsistent awareness of some students. The head of the madrasah responds to these obstacles through teacher coaching, communication with parents, strengthening habituation, supervision, and continuous evaluation. The main implication of the research is that the leader's commitment needs to be accompanied by a more structured implementation system. Madrasas need to develop guidelines or SOPs for PPK, tidy up activity documentation, agree on behavioral indicators, strengthen teacher capacity, and expand two-way communication with families. Evaluation should not only calculate the implementation of activities, but also examine students' understanding and behavioral development proportionally. Given the limitations of informant coverage and the descriptive nature of the research, follow-up studies need to expand the informant's perspective and use longitudinal observations to understand the sustainability of students' character changes

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI

During the preparation of this article, the author used ChatGPT, an AI-based language model developed by OpenAI, to assist with language refinement, grammatical correction, and the improvement of academic writing clarity. The use of this tool was intended to support the presentation and organization of the manuscript. The research design, data collection, interpretation of findings, and analysis of madrasah leadership in strengthening character education were reviewed and verified by the author. The author takes full responsibility for the accuracy, integrity, and final content of the manuscript.

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