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Implementing Character Education through Integrated Social Science Learning to Shape Junior High School Students' Social Character

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ABSTRACT

Background: Character education plays a vital role in shaping students' behavior and attitudes, particularly in the development of social character during adolescence. Social Science, as a subject that discusses human relationships and social phenomena, serves as a strategic medium for internalizing character values. **Objective:** This study aims to examine the implementation of character education through integrated Social Science learning in shaping the social character of junior high school students. **Method:** A descriptive qualitative approach was employed in this study, which was conducted at Al Hasib Junior High School, Pakis District, Malang Regency in 2024. Data collection techniques included interviews, observations, and documentation. Data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. **Result:** The findings show that the implementation of character education at Al Hasib Junior High School is conducted through three main school programs: (1) curriculum development that integrates character values into learning materials; (2) extracurricular and school-wide activities designed to cultivate students' social behavior; (3) evaluation mechanisms to assess character development; and (4) the application of core character pillars. **Conclusion:** Integrated Social Science learning can be effectively utilized as a vehicle for character education, especially in fostering social character among junior high school students. The structured programs and institutional policies at Al Hasib Junior High School have successfully supported this educational goal. **Contribution:** This study provides practical insights for educators and school policymakers into how character education can be systematically implemented through subject-based learning. It serves as a reference for schools aiming to integrate character values into their curriculum and build a strong social foundation in their students.

KEYWORDS

Character education; Integrated social science learning; Social character

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1. INTRODUCTION

Currently, education is not only focused on intellectual pursuits but must be integrated with others such as good character and behavior. Through education, a person is also expected to be able to foster the ability to become an objective person, to make smart learners, and be able to build a good personality and noble attitude (Baharun &

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Ummah, 2018; Salamah et al., 2020). One of the ways to obtain intellectual education and character education is through school (Subhi, 2018). School is an education that has an important role for students. School is a formal education that has a role in educating students to make a useful generation that is beneficial to the nation and state generations. Junior High School students are at an age where at this age it is a process in the early stages of humans looking for their identity and starting to understand their meaning. At the age of 12 to 14 years, they will find many thoughts in an event and will accept it well or not. As stated by several theorists (Makkawaru, 2019).

In the world of education must have an initiative program in actualizing moral education in the school system. teachers, schools, and parents become facilitators for students in assisting students and encouraging good values in the process of growth and development (Kadir, 2018), therefore the implementation of education in schools must carry out formation in it not only in family and community environmental factors but also guidance from the school (Anshori, 2016). This is also explained in the function of national education, namely "developing abilities and shaping the character and civilization of a dignified nation in educating the nation's generation, the life of the nation, aims to develop the potential of students to become human beings who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent and become democratic and responsible citizens (Harahap, 2019).

Character education is a deliberately designed effort to improve the character of students. Character is the values of human behavior related to God Almighty, self, fellow human beings, environment and nationality, which are manifested in thoughts, attitudes, feelings, words, and actions based on religious norms, laws, manners, culture, and customs. The reason for the need to build national character is that the existence of national character is the foundation (Aprianti et al., 2022). A nation that has a strong character can make itself a nation that is dignified and respected by other nations. Therefore, becoming a nation of character is the goal of national character building (Utomo & Pahlevi, 2022). A nation with character is a nation that has characteristics including having a high national spirit, love for the country, discipline and responsibility, tolerance, and respect for differences, love of peace, social care, and environmental care (Fauzi, 2016).

Character education is an educational innovation to overcome the character problems of the Indonesian nation's children and as a form of a reform of changing times in education that needs to be carried out by involving all existing school components, to create meaningful learning (Astamal et al., 2021). This is in line with Marzuki's research on integrating character education into school learning that character education is a teaching that is carried out to instill good habits so that students understand, feel, and want to do good (Erliani, 2016). Therefore, it is clear that moral values relate to the efforts made by each person to realize goodness, namely by creating good humanity in the whole society.

One of the elements of character education is attitude or behavior (Hermanto et al., 2019). The good and bad behavior of a person is judged based on other people as well, which is called social behavior. Social character is a person's physical and psychological activity towards others or vice versa to fulfill themselves or others by demands, social behavior is an atmosphere of dependence where humans are in it (Utomo et al., 2022).

Currently, integrated Social Science is an important subject for students' intellectual, cultural, and emotional development (Nurfirdaus & Sutisna, 2021). Social Science also functions as a potential development of students' attitudes and the growth and development in growing their social spirit. Socializing outside of school, socializing, between friends or with elders must have good dedication of course. Moreover, Social Science is a lot of learning which includes studying social issues, the context of events, and generalizations. According to the character values contained in the Learning Implementation Plan this Social Science learning has several points that must be implemented which include social character, namely, students are expected to form active, independent, cooperative, polite, and well-spoken learners in society and the state.

Through learning Social Science, students are taught to become good and peaceful Indonesian citizens. Social Studies is necessary for the successful transition of life towards a more mature life in an effort to shape the character of the nation in accordance with national principles and spirit. Thus, students in learning Social Science are trained to solve social problems with a holistic and integrated approach from various points of view. Regarding the implementation of character education in Social Studies learning, teachers stated the need for integration of character values in Social Studies learning. This is related to the purpose of Social Studies, which is to form students who are able to socialize well in society. In addition, character values are very suitable with the materials in Social Studies lessons at school, such as mutual cooperation, helping, and so on. However, the implementation of character education should not only be in one subject, but in all subjects (Wijayanti & Armiyati, 2014).

A very strong reason for the need for Social Studies learning as a social sciences education program is that teaching social sciences separately burdens school students circularly (Saidang & Suparman, 2019). Disciplinary

(separate) learning programs will only increase the burden on school students (elementary school to high school) in learning. Because the level of psychological development of school-age children is not yet fully specific or directed, but still holistic, the approach to learning social knowledge should be integrated, the more mature the more specific (Yusmuliadi & Agustang, 2021). Therefore, until now there are still frequent conflicts and disagreements between groups of social science experts in compiling social science material as a Social Science learning program (Furner, 2017). However, there is an acclamation in Social Science as a social science education program, namely that public school students must learn the structure and inquiry processes of the scientific discipline (Rachman & Sunardi, 2022).

Al Hasib Junior High School is a junior high school where this school is located in Pakis Jajar village, Malang district. This school has a vision of realizing the institution as an educational center that can prepare and develop human resources based on "AL HASIB" (Religious, Leadership, Hygiene, Customs, Social, Intellectual, and Empowered). This school has a lot of excellence in various fields. Among them are in terms of religion, implementing dhuha prayers in congregation once a week, holding several religious activities, reading Al_Qur'an every month, and other religious activities.

In terms of discipline, this school is also much prioritized. Students who violate the rules will get punished by school regulations, Al Hasib Junior High School is also an educational institution that prioritizes student achievement, both in the academic and non academic fields. So that later students who are educated at the school have superior quality knowledge, intelligence, and good and commendable morals. However, several things make researchers interested in conducting research at this school. In preliminary observations that have been made, one of the teachers mentioned that many students have been affected by the changing times, starting from behavior and several other attitudes in ethics.

Based on data findings at school, there are still many students who are less able to socialize in make friends, the attitude of students towards teachers is also still not good, as well as other opinions. From the background and description above related to the implementation of social behavior character education is an important thing to be applied in the learning curriculum, then the researcher wants to examine more deeply what forms of social behavior are applied, how the implementation process and the results of the implementation of social character education itself, by raising the title "Implementation of Character Education in Shaping Social Character through Integrated Social Science Learning at SMP Al Hasib Malang Regency".

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

The research approach uses qualitative, where qualitative itself is a source of broad, solidly grounded descriptions, and contains various processes that occur in a local environment. With this qualitative approach, it will be able to understand and follow the flow of events. The research method uses descriptive qualitative research, where in this type of research it will make a description of something into complex components. Descriptive methods are used by researchers to describe a phenomenon under study with the actual circumstances that occur in the field, and the research location, the data obtained will be in the form of oral and written descriptions and can be obtained with as much accuracy as possible.

The presence of researchers in qualitative research plays an important role in the process of running the research. By the approach used in this qualitative research, the presence of the researcher determines the entire course of the research scenario. Therefore, this research runs as a key instrument, full participant as well as data collector, while other instruments are only as support.

In this study, the researcher directly observed the activities that were being carried out so that the researcher obtained information about Al Hasib Junior High School students who had implemented integrated Social Science learning in first grade.

2.2 Research Location

The location of this research is in Pakis District, Malang Regency. The name of the school that will be used as a research location is Al Hasib Junior High School, located right on Jalan KH Hasib, Trajeng Pakis Jajar village, Pakis District, Malang Regency. This school is under the auspices of a foundation institution consisting of MI and SMP itself.

2.3 Data Source

2.3.1 Primary Data

Primary data is a data source where data will be obtained directly from informants in the field through indepth interviews and participant observation. Data taken from the source directly, observed and recorded directly such as interviews, observations, and documentation with related parties, especially the principal, Social Studies teachers, and students.

2.3.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data is data that can support primary data. Secondary data is a source obtained indirectly from informants in the field, such as documents and so on. Documents can be in the form of books and other literature related to the problem being studied. Secondary data is data obtained directly from literature related to the problem under study including, (1) Previous research, (2) Research journals, (3) Internet sites, (4) Articles

2.4 Data Collection

2.4.1 Interview

Interview, which is the process of collecting data/information on the subject through the process of asking questions, interviews are divided into two forms, namely structured and unstructured interviews (Utomo et al., 2024). Interviews are used to explore and delve deeper into an incident and explore more information, and data that must be sought in the activities of the research subject. Researchers use interview guidelines that have been prepared for data collection. All data obtained is then recorded and developed more extensively in data collection.

2.4.2 Observation

Researchers came directly to the location by reviewing and observing events around the school. Observation or observation is where the researcher makes systematic notes and sees symptoms of the object to be studied.

2.4.3 Documentation.

Documentation is a data collection technique by collecting and analyzing documents, both written, pictorial, and electronic documents. In this study, the documents needed are school documents such as school profiles, madrasas, years of establishment of the school, activities of the integrated Social Science learning process in the classroom, and others

2.5 Data Triangulation

2.5.1 Time Triangulation

Researchers use time triangulation because time can affect data credibility. Data collected with interview techniques in the morning when the source is fresh, there are not many problems, and will provide more valid data so that it is more credible.

2.5.2 Triangulation Technique

Triangulation techniques to test the credibility of data are done by checking data to the same source with different techniques. Through technical triangulation, researchers check the data that has been obtained from the same source using different techniques, for example, data obtained from observations is then checked by interview.

2.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study researchers used data analysis techniques developed by Miles & Huberman. The data that has been collected is made in a matrix and then presented in the form of descriptive data from the findings of the data that has been collected both before and after. After that the data is entered into the matrix and then a checklist is made. The Miles & Huberman data analysis process is described in the following figure:

2.6.1 Data Reduction

The data obtained in the field is quite a lot of data, for that the researcher must record carefully and in detail. As has been stated, the longer the researcher goes into the field, the more the amount of data will be numerous, complex, and complicated. For this reason, it is necessary to process through data reduction. Reducing data means summarizing, selecting the most important data, focusing on important things, and looking for themes and patterns.

During data collection, further stages of reduction were carried out (summarizing, coding, tracing themes, making clusters, making partitions, and making memos). This data reduction/transformation continues after field research until the final report is complete.

2.6.2 Data Display

Data presentation is done in the form of brief descriptions, charts, relationships between categories, flowcharts, and the like. By presenting the data, it will make it easier to understand what is happening and plan further work based on what has been understood. Thus the author can see what is going on, and determine whether to draw the right conclusions or continue to carry out an analysis according to the suggestions told by the presentation as something that might be useful.

2.4.3 Inference Drawing

Concluding is done through a complete configuration activity, the process of drawing conclusions that have been taken by researchers is verified during the research. Conclusions were drawn as the researcher made notes, patterns, statements, configurations, causal directions, and propositions.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

3.1.1 School Policy in Shaping Students' Social Character

1) Curriculum

In implementing the curriculum at Al Hasib Junior High School, it fully refers to the regulations and guidelines by the provisions of the Ministry of Education. The curriculum used is related to character education.

In making lesson plans, it must include aspects that have been determined. Likewise, schools also take part in making activity programs, regulations, and so on. The forms of social character that are implemented in Social Studies learning adjust to the theme or material to be discussed. These forms of social character are also in line with the school's vision and mission, namely having a high leadership and social spirit.

2) Activities

The forms of activities at Al Hasib Junior High School in the classroom and outside the classroom are by the school's vision and mission and the aspects of social character. Teachers as facilitators of students play an important role in implementing students' social character. Some policies and regulations set by the school, and teachers, will support students in carrying out activities to implement their social character. Here the teacher's role is very important as a student facilitator. The forms of this activity are divided into 2, namely activities in the classroom and outside the classroom.

3) Evaluation

Schools and teachers in each subject can review the character of students directly and indirectly. Then in this indirect evaluation, the teacher assesses as a whole during the end-of-semester meeting. At the evaluation stage, teachers in the end-of-semester meeting always consider the academics and attitudes of each student by all teachers, for example, terms of good academics in attitudes, behavior, and manners can reduce the value of the student's report card.

4) Pillars of Embedded Social Character

The implementation of social character education at Al Hasib Junior High School is carried out to build fighting power intelligence, and moral and emotional power. The social characteristics implemented in this Integrated Social Science learning include (1) Active; (2) honest, confident, and independent; (3) caring; (4) conducive; (5) Discipline and Obey; (6) responsibility; (7) polite. The cultivation of social character in students is sufficient and by the scope based on the applicable curriculum and by the existing guidelines for strengthening character education. As explained in the guidelines for strengthening character education, teachers have implemented several learning methods that are suitable for students such as problembased learning, literacy-based learning, question and answer, cooperation, and so on according to the theme and material. Students also carry out social characters as they should in learning Social Studies.

3.1.2 The Implementation Process of Character Education in Shaping Students' Social Character

The process of implementing character education implementation is divided into 2, namely implementation in the classroom and outside the classroom. 1) Implementation in the classroom. The process of implementing character education implementation cannot be separated from several objectives of strengthening the character itself. Including building fighting power intelligence, and moral and emotional power. In the student assessment and graduation standards, it is also explained that character education itself includes many things including attitudes toward God or religion, attitudes towards self, and the environment. Therefore, the implementation of social character education must be carried out effectively in the classroom when learning hours take place. Some of the social characters implemented in this Integrated Social Science learning include (1) active; (2) honest, confident, and independent; (3) caring; (4) conducive; (5) disciplined and obedient.

2) Out-of-Class Implementation

The implementation of social character education at Al Hasib Junior High School is also not only in the classroom during lessons but outside the classroom as well. Habituation activities carried out by students will also have a positive impact and characterize their daily character. Some other things that must be applied especially in character building outside the classroom, for example, are (1) responsibility; (2) politeness; (3) tolerance; (4) mutual respect; (5) love peace; (6) care for others.

3.2 Discussion

From the results of the research in the process of implementation of character education in shaping social character, the researcher concluded that all students have relatively implemented character education, which in social character itself includes the values of independence, honesty, responsibility for rights, and obligations, honesty, caring, and so on. The strengthening of character education guidelines in Al Hasib Junior High School is by its provisions. Although Al Hasib Junior High School has not used references in the guidelines for strengthening character education, the forms of character education instilled by the junior high school itself have included the content of strengthening character education.

From several observations made at AL Hasib Junior High School for 1, 2 dan 3th grade the implementation of character education in shaping students' social character, there is harmony between the theory and data obtained by researchers. Based on the research results obtained, teachers carry out the cultivation of good and positive attitudes, especially in instilling social character. In instilling this social attitude, of course, the teacher adjusts to the material and learning methods in learning Social Studies. This is in line with the guidelines for strengthening character education set by the Ministry of Education and Culture in the implementation of strengthening character education in the classroom. Among other things, strengthening character education in the classroom can be chosen by the teacher contextually, there are discovery learning methods, group work, discussions, and so on by adjusting the material and conditions of students in their understanding.

The implementation of social character education integrated into Social Science learning certainly aims to shape students' social character. The formation of students' social character is important to build a mindset of character, and student attitudes and also in the graduation standards set by the government (Siswati et al., 2018). Then, the process of character education in shaping students' social character at Al Hasib Junior High School is by the theory above, where in its implementation the integration of Social Science subjects with social character is carried out by adjusting the learning material, where the suitability will be sustainable in it (Utomo & Alawiyah, 2022).

About the theory and provisions of the Ministry of education regarding character education, this is in line with several Al Hasib Junior High School programs created to shape students' social character. Some of the programs established at Al Hasib Junior High School include holding social services, and donations every Friday. This is in line with the provisions of the student graduation competency standards with the character value of relationships with fellow environments. Then there are several competitions, basic leadership training, and habituation of praying and shaking hands with teachers before entering class, this is in line with the provisions of the Ministry of Education in character values with God, with oneself and the environment. This is sustainable and has integration with the purpose of character education where moral intelligence is the certainty of individuals in understanding and distinguishing between what is good and what is right. This shows that every individual must have a strong ethical stance and be able to act in the right behavior.

The implementation process of character education implementation at Al Hasib Junior High School is the process of instilling the pillars of social character in students which include (1) active; (2) honest, confident and independent; (3) caring; (4) conducive; (5) discipline and obedient; (6) responsibility; (7) polite; (8) hard work; (9) reli-

gious; (10) love for the country; (11) tolerance and love of peace. The process of implementing character education is not only carried out in the classroom but also outside of teaching and learning activities. AL Hasib Junior High School students implement social character through many things. As is known, before entering the class, students shake hands with the teacher neatly lined up, this is in line with the guidebook put forward by the Ministry of Education and Culture that one of the social character of students is to be polite to others and others. Then in carrying out rights and obligations, students have also been applied by doing picket cleaning of the school and class. The character values formed by teachers in Social Studies subjects have covered several aspects of character strengthening guidelines. The education curriculum regarding student graduation standards and strengthening character education includes several aspects of student attitude and skills assessment (Davidson, 2014). Teachers integrate social character with existing learning materials (Safitri et al., 2021). Based on the guidelines for assessing student character, teachers assess it through 3 stages, namely how students form speech, form ways of thinking, and form student behavior that is applied daily. After that teachers are required to have a daily student journal. In the assessment to determine the final result, the teacher first observes the closest student friend, and other subject teachers after that it is discussed with the homeroom teacher.

Personal development of a person through Social Science learning is not immediately visible, but at least through Social Science learning it will equip a person's ability to develop themselves through various social skills in their lives (social life skills) (Utomo et al., 2022). Social Science learning here must equip students with knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values so that all of them can shape students' self-image into human beings who have an identity that can live in society peacefully and can make role models and give their advantages to others (Durdukoca, 2019).

The purpose of Social Studies education is to emphasize an understanding of the nation, national spirit, patriotism, and community activities in the economic field in the space or space of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia. This aims to equip students to have the ability to think logically and rationally, have a social spirit that prioritizes social values in making decisions and actively participate in state life in the community, nation, and world (Russell & Waters, 2021). Social Science also aims to form good citizens, who can communicate, work together as well as compete, and have skills that are useful for themselves and others (Zevin, 2015).

In learning, of course, not only assessing the cognitive and academic aspects, this is by the objectives of character education where the objectives include building students' emotional intelligence and building relationships with others and others (Kaur et al., 2019). This emotional intelligence also includes how the character of students can be sympathetic, responsible, and easy to get along with others (MacCann et al., 2020). As with the purpose of character education itself, education does not only make students smart in the classroom but shaping personality character by applicable norms is very important (Nurgiansah & Al Muchtar, 2018).

The process of implementing character education is not only carried out in the classroom but also outside of teaching and learning activities. AL Hasib Junior High School students implement social character through many things. As is known, before entering the class, students shake hands with the teacher neatly lined up, this is in line with the guidebook put forward by the Ministry of Education that one of the social characteristics of students is to be polite to others and others. Then in carrying out rights and obligations, students have also been applied by doing picket cleaning of the school and class.

For the sustainability of implementing character education for students, schools can socialize and provide more understanding when implementing character education activities. As in the case of manners towards teachers or others. Some activities that build social character can be added in the future (Rokhman et al., 2014). Giving consequences to students who behave badly may also be further enhanced (Goss & Sonnemann, 2017). As well as providing some special training held for teachers related to the implementation of social character education. In assessing student character, this can be done in performance, teachers, and students. The notes are compiled from the values or forms of social character that are instilled when learning takes place in the classroom later (Khoury, 2017). This student character assessment is of course seen from the attitudes and skills of students and then will be recorded in the student observation sheet, in the subject teacher's daily journal, but in practice, the teacher can evaluate at the end of the semester (Cheng & Hitt, 2018).

Regarding some students learning Social Studies, of course, it must carry a message and become a habit or habit so that it is embedded and integrated into social and daily life. By the nature of Social Science learning where among other things Social Science learning is the development of social personal life (social studies as personal development of individuals) in its definition, this Social Science learning must provide provision for attitudes towards students so that the student's self-image can be integrated into social life and can make an example of others. In the research results obtained, students have obtained these social values in learning Social Studies. Al Hasib Junior High School students have relatively captured some social value messages that can be integrated later into social life.

The implementation of character education in Social Studies subjects at Al Hasib Junior High School has been going well although not yet correctly. This is related to the teachers' understanding of character education which is in accordance with the definition of character education according to the Center for Curriculum and Bookkeeping. Character education is understood by teachers as an effort to instill moral values in students. But in terms of implementation in learning activities, there are differences in integrating character values in Social Studies subjects. However, the majority of teachers integrate character values spontaneously, incidentally (not planned).

The results of this study reveal that in addition to making students master the targeted material, the integration of character education in learning is also designed to make students recognize, realize, and care about values, and be able to apply them in everyday life. Character education is integrated into subjects with the introduction of values, which enables the acquisition of awareness of the importance and internalization of values into the daily behavior of students through the learning process. The values that have begun to be integrated into all subjects are mainly the development of religious values, discipline, and environmental care.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Implications

The findings of this study imply that character education when thoughtfully integrated into Social Science learning, can serve as a strategic platform for shaping students' social character. Schools can nurture core values such as cooperation, empathy, social responsibility, and respect for diversity through well-planned curricular design, school-based programs, and consistent evaluation. This integration enriches students' academic understanding and equips them to become socially aware citizens. This highlights the need for educators to employ interactive and reflective teaching strategies like storytelling, discussions, and group projects that embed character values into daily instruction. It also underscores the necessity of teacher training and institutional support to ensure implementation aligns with educational standards. Moreover, sustained collaboration among teachers, school leaders, parents, and policymakers is essential, as a collective commitment to character development creates a school culture where social values are actively taught, modeled, and reinforced.

4.2 Research Contributions

This study contributes to the existing knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the effective integration of character education within Social Science learning to foster students' social character. It broadens theoretical understanding in educational science, particularly values education, by presenting practical models and strategies schools use to embed character values into academic subjects. For schools and educators, the findings offer actionable insights into policy development, curriculum design, and learning activities that emphasize social values. These serve as a valuable guide for aligning educational practices with national character-building objectives. Furthermore, this research is a foundational reference for future studies and policymaking by emphasizing the importance of integrated learning approaches in character development and encouraging collaborative efforts among educational stakeholders to promote students' moral and social growth.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

5.1 Research Limitations

This study is limited by its scope, focusing on a single junior high school and relying primarily on qualitative methods, which may not fully capture the diversity of practices or outcomes in other educational contexts. The findings, while insightful, are context-specific and may not be generalizable to broader populations. Additionally, the study primarily relies on interviews, observations, and documentation, which may be subject to researcher interpretation and bias despite using triangulation techniques to validate data.

5.2 Recommendation for Future Research Direction

Future research should consider employing mixed-method approaches, combining qualitative and quantitative data, to provide a more comprehensive analysis of character education implementation. Expanding the study to include multiple schools across different regions would also allow for comparative analysis and greater generalizability of findings. Moreover, longitudinal studies could offer insights into the long-term impact of integrated character education on students' social behavior and academic development.

Another important direction for future research involves examining the role of digital and media-based tools in supporting character education within Social Science learning. Investigating how teachers can integrate technological innovations to enhance student engagement and reinforce character values could contribute to the modernization and scalability of character education practices. Collaboration between educators, policymakers, and researchers will be vital in shaping sustainable models for developing students' social character in diverse educational environments.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of character education at Al Hasib Junior High School has generally aligned with the Ministry of Education and Culture guidelines. The school's programs and policies intentionally integrate character-building efforts into the academic curriculum, particularly through Integrated Social Science (IPS) learning. IPS subject teachers have actively embedded character values into lesson plans and linked them with relevant learning materials. This strategy has enabled students to engage with cognitive knowledge and affective aspects such as empathy, cooperation, and civic responsibility during classroom activities.

In classroom settings, teachers have modeled and encouraged the development of social character values such as caring, responsibility, and active participation. These values are reflected in students' behavior during learning sessions, where mutual respect and attentiveness are consistently emphasized. Beyond the classroom, students also exhibit positive social behaviors, including shaking hands with teachers after the morning roll call as a gesture of respect, helping to maintain school cleanliness as part of their responsibility, and calling teachers into class to start lessons punctually demonstrating their understanding of rights and obligations within the school community. These routine practices indicate that the school environment supports cultivating disciplined and socially aware students.

Character assessment is also embedded into the evaluation system, where student attitudes and behaviors significantly influence academic standing and class promotion. Teachers assess students' social development alongside their academic performance, acknowledging that character plays a vital role in holistic education. Through these assessments, educators have identified various challenges and factors that hinder character development, such as peer influence or lack of support at home. Despite these challenges, after undergoing Integrated Social Science learning, students show an improved understanding of moral messages conveyed through the subject material. This indicates that IPS can effectively foster students' social character when supported by structured guidance and a value-based school culture.

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Author Contribution Statement

All researchers can work according to their respective tasks. The first author plays a role in developing the research framework, and the second author collects data in the field. All data presented and reported in this article are original according to and based on data that researchers have obtained in the field, therefore researchers guarantee and are responsible for the authenticity of the data.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors confirm that there are no known conflicts of interest associated with this publication and there has been no significant financial support for this work that could have influenced its outcome.

Ethical Approval Statement

The author declares that this study was conducted in accordance with research ethics principles and has received ethical approval from the author's institution, including respect for participants' autonomy, confidentiality of data, and ensuring their safety and well-being, as outlined in the applicable research ethics guidelines.

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