

Character Education as a Bulwark against Bullying: Insights from Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in Pamekasan, Madura

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Abstract. This study examines the implementation and effectiveness of character education session II as a strategic approach to prevent bullying in the context of Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in Indonesia. Recognizing the rising incidences of bullying, including annoyed hitting, playful hitting and profanity, the research highlights how integrating religious teachings, moral values, and holistic educational practices can foster a respectful and empathetic school environment. Utilizing qualitative methods such as interviews, observations, and document analysis, the study underscores the importance of role modeling, continuous mentoring, and systematic behavior monitoring as key strategies in cultivating positive student interactions. The findings reveal that while substantial progress has been made, challenges remain, notably inconsistent role modeling among staff and external influences on student behavior. The research emphasizes the need for deeper student engagement, tailored religious and ethical content, and sustained commitment from educators and community stakeholders. Overall, the paper advocates for a culturally contextualized, holistic character education framework as an effective means to reduce bullying, reinforce moral development, and nurture a supportive school climate. The insights serve as a valuable model for similar institutions aiming to integrate moral virtues and behavioral interventions within their educational practices.

Keywords: Character Building, Bullying prevention, educational Environment

Introduction

The prevalence of bullying in educational settings constitutes a vital concern that undermines the safety and well-being of students. (Qamar & Farid, 2023). Recent statistics from the United Federation of Indonesian Teachers (FSGI) indicate a noticeable increase in bullying incidents in Indonesian schools, with cases rising from 23 in 2022 to 30 in 2023 (Aranditio, 2024). Alarmingly, 80% of these incidents occur within schools governed by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, particularly among junior high school students. This troubling trend underscores the urgent need to explore effective interventions to prevent bullying, with character education emerging as a promising strategy. Understanding the dynamics of bullying and its implications on student life is crucial for developing effective countermeasures that create safe and supportive learning environments. (Hamsah Hamsah et al., 2024).

Character education aims to cultivate ethical and moral development among students, emphasizing values such as respect, empathy, honesty, and integrity (Purba, 2024). This educational approach is grounded in the belief that fostering positive character traits can significantly reduce bullying occurrences by promoting a culture of mutual respect and understanding among peers (Widyani & Prayitno, 2024). Indonesia's national education policy supports character development through the "*Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter*" (Character

Education Strengthening) initiative, which seeks to embed these values within the education system. However, while the policy frameworks exist, the successful implementation of character education programs varies across educational contexts, revealing challenges that need to be addressed, especially within traditional Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*) (Alfi et al., 2024).

These *pesantren* occupy a unique niche within Indonesia's educational ecosystem, where religious and academic instruction converge. Their commitment to character education is particularly significant, as these institutions serve not only as centers of learning but also as places for moral and ethical development. (Anam et al., 2019). The holistic philosophy inherent in *pesantren* education provides a distinctive environment conducive to nurturing character. The integration of Islamic values with modern educational strategies enables these schools to address behavioral issues effectively, including bullying. This dual approach reinforces the importance of ethical behavior while equipping students with the necessary skills to engage positively with their peers. (Jenuri et al., 2024).

Established in 2005, Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School in Pamekasan is a dedicated institution committed to nurturing students who are not only religiously devout and academically accomplished but also possess strong moral character. Under the guidance of KH. Abdul Hannan Tibyan, the Boarding school, prioritizes fostering harmonious relationships among individuals, encompassing both physical and non-physical interactions. This vision is realized through the flagship "Character Building" program, a comprehensive initiative designed to create a welcoming, healthy, and inclusive environment within the boarding school, populated by individuals who embody empathy and mutual respect.

The "Character Building" program is structured into distinct sessions. The first session, launched in 2022, focused on enhancing the physical environment of the boarding school through the BERSERI program (*Bersih, Sehat, Rapi, dan Indah*, which translates to Clean, Healthy, Tidy, and Beautiful). The program's success is evident in the significant transformation of the school grounds, which are now cleaner, tidier, healthier without smoking, and aesthetically pleasing. In November 2023, the second session commenced, themed "True Muslims with Empathetic Hearts," focusing on shaping the character and conduct of the students and all members of the school community. This session aims to instill values of compassion, discourage harmful behavior towards others (both physically and verbally), and promote the avoidance of profanity, aligning with Islamic teachings that emphasize the importance of guarding one's speech and actions.

The second session of the "Character Building" program specifically targets the reduction of three primary behaviors: annoyed hitting, playful hitting, and profanity. A comprehensive range of strategies and steps has been implemented to ensure the program's success. The program's effectiveness is measured by the reduction of violence, bullying, and the enhancement of empathy among the students. Students with a high level of empathy are expected to develop an understanding of their surroundings, comprehend the emotions of others, and actively contribute as solutions to solving problems within their community.

Based on the above explanation, this research investigates the character-building program session II at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School by: (1) detailing its implementation steps and strategies; (2) rigorously evaluating its effectiveness in reducing anti-violence and anti-bullying behaviors (particularly the decrease in incidents of annoyed hitting, playful hitting, and profanity; and (3) identifying supporting and hindering factors influencing its success. This multifaceted approach provides a comprehensive understanding of the program's impact.

Materials and Methods

This qualitative case study investigates the implementation and effectiveness of character-building session II in preventing bullying at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School. The study focuses on three key bullying indicators: "annoyed hitting," "playful hitting," and "profanity," and seeks to understand how character education is integrated into the school culture and its impact on students' behavior. Three research questions guided the data

collection and analysis: (1) How is character education implemented? (2) How effective is it? (3) What are the supporting and hindering factors?

Data were collected using semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (founder, administrators, teachers, students), field observations of classroom and social interactions, and analysis of relevant school documentation (policies, curriculum, reports). The data analysis employed a rigorous thematic analysis approach. The process began with data preparation, including verbatim transcription of interviews and organization of field notes and documents. Initial coding involved systematically identifying recurring words, phrases, and concepts within the data, assigning codes to represent specific themes emerging directly from the data. These codes were then refined and categorized through an iterative process, grouping similar codes and ensuring clarity and consistency across different data sources (interviews, observations, documents). This led to the development of broader thematic categories representing overarching patterns and insights related to the research questions.

Results and Discussion

Implementation of Character Education at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School

This section details the findings regarding the implementation of Character Building Session II at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School, Pamekasan. The analysis focuses on the initial stages of program implementation as follows:

Team Formation

The implementation of Character Building Session II commenced with the formation of a dedicated team. According to an interview with the program executor, Ust. Rofi'i, the program's inception, originated from the founder of Puncak Darussalam. He initiated discussions regarding the program within Puncak Darussalam, leading to the formation of a team responsible for its execution. (M. Rofi'i, personal communication, April 15, 2025).

This team formation was formalized through a Foundation Decree, dated November 15, 2023. The decree outlines the team structure - KH. Abdul Hannan Tibyan as Supervisor, Moh. Rofi'i as Program Manager and nine mentors are R.H. Musyaddad, Ahmad Muzammil Karim, Ahmad Wafir, Ibnul Khofifin, Wahed, Moh, Ashim, Abdullah, Ahmad Fauzan, and Moh. Adnan Maulana.

The structured team formation, formalized by the Foundation Decree, is crucial for the character-building program's success at Puncak Darussalam. The clear hierarchy, with the founder as Supervisor and Ust. Rofi'i, as Program Manager, establishes accountability and efficient resource allocation. This demonstrates institutional commitment, fostering a shared purpose and motivating the nine mentors. The defined roles minimize ambiguity, ensuring cohesive planning and execution, and maximizing the program's impact. (Hidayat & Hidayat, 2023).

This structured approach enhances program sustainability by institutionalizing processes and reducing reliance on individual personalities. The clear lines of authority promote effective collaboration and communication, facilitating prompt responses to challenges. This formal structure serves as a model for other educational programs seeking efficient and impactful implementation. (Kvelde & Odina, 2023).

Program Launching

The second step in the implementation of Character-Building Session II at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is the **Program Launching**. This launching event was held at the Puncak Darussalam Mosque and organized formally. All elements of Puncak Darussalam were invited, including the founder, the Chairman of the Foundation, formal teachers, Pesantren teachers (ustadz), and students (santri). During this event, the program was explained in detail to ensure that all participants understood its objectives and could contribute to its success.



Figure 1. Program launching of character building session II

The formal launching of the program signifies a critical phase in the implementation process. (Yusuf et al., 2024). By inviting key stakeholders from the Puncak Darussalam community, the program aims to foster a sense of collective ownership and support among all involved parties. This inclusive approach not only enhances awareness but also encourages collaboration, which is essential for the program's success.

The presence of various stakeholders indicates a commitment to transparency and communication, which are vital for building trust and enthusiasm around the initiative. Additionally, providing a comprehensive explanation of the program's goals and processes equips participants with the necessary information to actively support the program. This strategic communication can lead to increased engagement and participation, ultimately contributing to the effectiveness of the character-building efforts. (Oktriani et al., 2023).

Guidance and Mentorship

The third step in the implementation of Character Building Session II at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is Guidance and Mentorship. Based on an interview with Ust. Rofi'i, the program manager, designed this character-building initiative as a specific mentorship program conducted through regular visits to each student's room. The mentorship team is scheduled to visit each room regularly (once in two weeks in a row) to monitor students' behavior, focusing on three negative behaviors: "annoyed hitting, playful hitting, and profanity."



Figure 2: Room visit and mentoring by mentors of character building

During these visits, if conflicts among students are identified, the mentorship team intervenes to mediate the situation. They provide motivation and guidance using a humanistic and religious approach. Additionally, students are encouraged to memorize verses from the Qur'an or hadith that relate to character-building principles.

The Guidance and Mentorship phase of the program is crucial for fostering a positive environment conducive to character development. The proactive approach of visiting students in their living spaces allows for personalized interactions, which can enhance trust and rapport between mentors and students (Arifin, 2024). By monitoring specific negative behaviors, the program can target interventions effectively, addressing issues before they escalate. The

emphasis on mediation and conflict resolution reflects a commitment to creating a harmonious community within the boarding school. This approach not only resolves immediate conflicts but also teaches students valuable skills in communication and empathy. This mentorship model aligns well with contemporary educational practices that advocate for social-emotional learning and character education (Lane-Garon et al., 2005).

Learning Activities: Memorization of Relevant Texts from the Qur'an and Hadith

The fourth step in the implementation of Character-building Session II at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is learning Activities: Memorization of Relevant Texts from the Qur'an and Hadith. Based on interview data, it was found that this step involves providing students with a deeper understanding of the importance of improving morals (akhlaq). Mentorship team members visit students' rooms and provide printed sheets containing one verse from the Qur'an and two hadiths related to the issues faced by the students. Students are then tasked with memorizing these texts, and during subsequent visits, their memorization is checked.

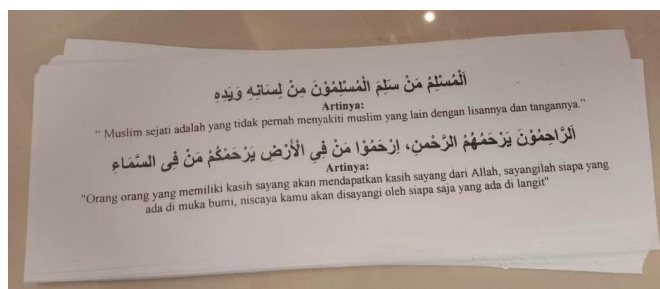


Figure 3. A printed sheet of hadith or Ayat

Currently, there is no standardized guidebook for the selection of these verses and hadiths, meaning that the texts provided are conditional and based on the specific situations observed among the students.

The emphasis on memorizing relevant Qur'anic verses and hadiths is a significant aspect of the character-building program, as it directly connects moral education with religious teachings. (Nurchayani et al., 2023). This strategy not only reinforces the importance of good character but also integrates spiritual development into the students' daily lives.

By visiting students and providing personalized texts based on their specific behavioral issues, the mentorship team tailors the learning experience to meet individual needs. This individualized approach can enhance student engagement and motivation, as they see the direct relevance of the teachings to their personal experiences. (Samudera & Uyun, 2022).

However, the lack of a standardized guidebook for selecting verses and hadiths may pose challenges in ensuring consistency and comprehensiveness in the materials provided. The conditional nature of the texts means that some students may miss out on essential teachings if their issues do not align with those being addressed at the time. Developing a structured guide that includes a range of key verses and hadiths related to character building could enhance the program's effectiveness and provide a more uniform framework for mentorship. (Sahabuddin et al., 2022).

Monitoring and Evaluation

The fifth step in the implementation of Character-Building Session II at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is Monitoring and Evaluation. According to data from an interview with Ust. Rofi'i, to ensure that negative behaviors such as annoyed hitting, playful hitting, and profanity do not worsen, each mentor selects a coordinator or room leader for each student's room. The primary responsibility of this room leader is to document occurrences of the three specified behaviors.

Every morning, the room leader gathers the members of their room and inquires about any instances of these behaviors. This data is then reported to the mentors who visit the students' rooms. Additionally, to facilitate reporting, Puncak Darussalam has developed a digital

application designed namely “Character building & Ubudhiyah,” to streamline the report. This digital tool allows for real-time monitoring of negative behaviors, enabling prompt intervention when necessary.

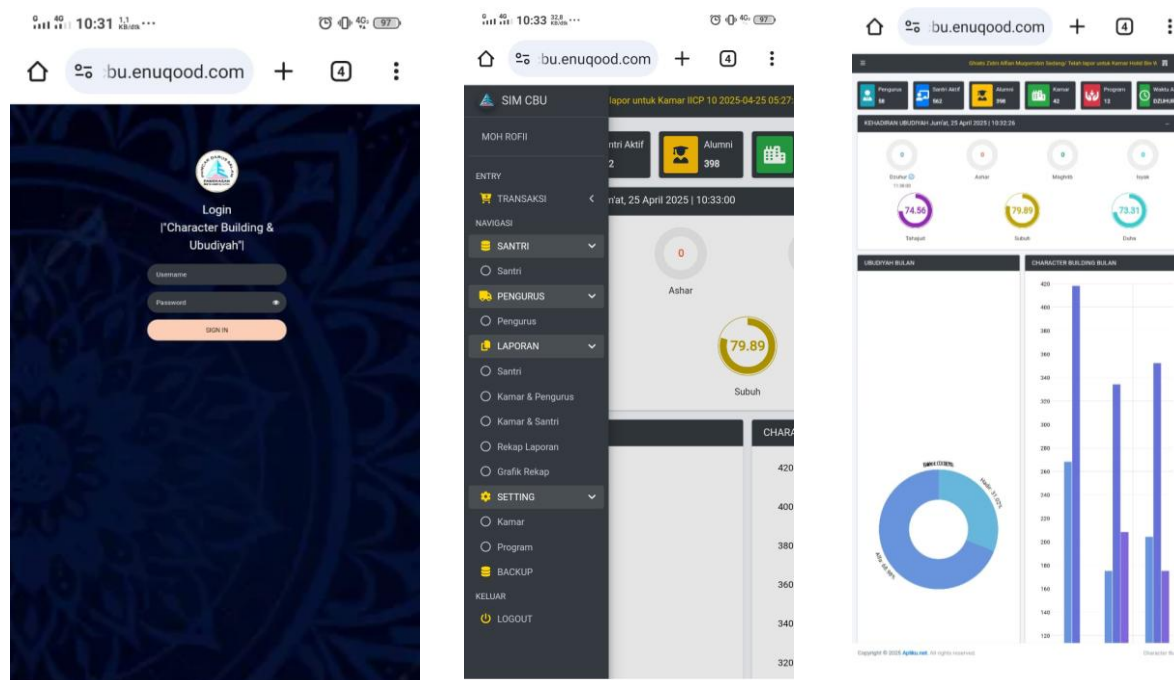


Figure 4. Digital application ‘character building & ubudhiyah’

The establishment of a structured monitoring and evaluation system is crucial for the effective implementation of the character-building session II program. By assigning a room leader to track specific behaviors, the program encourages student accountability and peer support. This peer-led initiative not only fosters a sense of responsibility among students but also promotes a culture of open communication regarding behavioral issues. (Susniwati et al., 2023).

The introduction of a digital application significantly enhances the efficiency of the monitoring process. Digital tools can streamline data collection and reporting, making it easier for mentors to access real-time information about student behavior. This immediate access allows for quicker responses to any issues that arise, minimizing the potential for negative behaviors to escalate. (Fitriati et al., 2021).

Giving Reward and Recognition

The sixth step in the implementation of Character-Building Session II at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is Giving Rewards and Recognition in the form of an award and having a meal together with the founder and all components of the program. Based on interviews with Ust. Rofi'i and the founder (KH. Abdul Hannan), the reward system is currently under review and development. The intention is to reward rooms where instances of negative behaviors (annoyed hitting, playful hitting, and profanity) are significantly reduced or absent. However, because these behaviors are often not directly observable and rely heavily on reports from the room leaders, the integrity and honesty of the reporting process are critical considerations. The caregivers and the mentorship team are actively analyzing how to ensure the accuracy and honesty of the reported data before implementing a formal reward system, recognizing that the potential for rewards (and punishments) could influence the honesty of the students' reporting.



Figure 5. giving a reward (recognition) and having a meal together

The careful consideration being given to the design of the reward system highlights a nuanced understanding of the complexities involved in behavior modification. (Jansen & Glinow, 1985). The reliance on self-reporting and peer reporting introduces the potential for bias and dishonesty, which could undermine the effectiveness of the reward system. The decision to postpone the implementation of rewards until a reliable system for data collection and verification is in place demonstrates a responsible approach to program development.

The team's focus on ensuring the honesty of the reported data is commendable. A poorly designed reward system could inadvertently incentivize dishonesty or create an environment where students feel pressured to misrepresent their behavior. Therefore, the ongoing analysis to improve the accuracy of the data is a crucial step in ensuring the fairness and effectiveness of any future reward system. (Kr et al., 2023). Furthermore, the implementation of character building session II is conducted through several strategies as follows:

Role Modelling

One of the key strategies employed in the implementation of Character-Building Session II at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is **role modeling**. Interview data indicate that role modeling is considered the primary and most important strategy for the program's success. Currently, this strategy involves all leadership figures within the boarding school (founder, foundation chairman, teachers, ustaz, and administrative staff) actively demonstrating positive behavior and refraining from exhibiting the three targeted negative behaviors: annoyed hitting, playful hitting, and profanity. The founder provides motivation and encouragement to all teachers and staff to avoid any form of violence. Future plans include conducting Islamic sermons, workshops, and training sessions to further strengthen and solidify this role-modelling approach.

The prioritization of role modeling as the primary strategy reflects a deep understanding of the powerful influence that leaders and authority figures have on shaping the behavior of students (Fithriani et al., 2021). By consistently demonstrating positive behavior, leaders create a behavioral norm that students are more likely to emulate (Havid & Fahriyan, 2024). This approach is particularly effective in fostering a culture of respect and non-violence within the boarding school community.

The proactive measures taken by the caregivers to motivate staff and avoid violence underscore a commitment to creating a safe and supportive learning environment. The planned lectures, workshops, and training sessions will further reinforce this commitment and provide staff with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively model positive behavior. These initiatives will not only enhance the effectiveness of the role-modeling strategy but also contribute to the overall professional development of the staff. (Dian et al., 2024).

Understanding

The second strategy employed in the character-building program at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is "Understanding." This strategy integrates relevant religious texts into the curriculum to enhance students' comprehension of character-building principles. Students memorize and understand Quranic verses and Hadiths directly related to desired character

traits. This approach connects ethical behavior and character development to the students' spiritual beliefs. Memorization fosters discipline and focus, while comprehension cultivates a deeper understanding of moral and ethical guidance within Islamic teachings. Educators ensure students grasp the practical application of these texts in daily life, exploring how principles like compassion and honesty translate into real-world interactions. The aim is to achieve "knowing and practicing virtuous behavior".

The integration of religious texts into character education is a significant aspect of the program's approach. (Syukrin & Salahudin, 2024). This strategy leverages the existing faith-based framework of the students' lives to reinforce moral development. By connecting ethical principles to religious teachings, the program provides a strong foundation for students' understanding and internalization of virtuous behavior. (Idawati et al., 2024). The emphasis on both memorization and comprehension is crucial. Memorization provides a disciplined learning process, while comprehension ensures that the students understand the deeper meaning and application of the texts. The focus on practical application, through real-world examples, bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical behavior. This approach is likely to be more effective than simply rote memorization, as it fosters a deeper understanding and internalization of the moral principles. (Martínez & Fernandez, 2024).

Powering

A core strategy of the character-building Session II program at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is the "Powering" component. This component focuses on instilling faith, enthusiasm, and hope for a positive future within the students. The program aims to empower students holistically—academically, personally, and spiritually. By fostering a sense of purpose and agency, it encourages students to believe in their potential and develop aspirations aligned with their faith. Activities include mentoring and guidance, doing worship together, and keeping environmental tidiness and cleanliness.

The integration of spiritual and practical elements underscores the importance of a holistic education that nurtures mind, body, and spirit. (Arianto et al., 2024). The goal is not just theoretical knowledge but the development of skills and a mindset enabling students to overcome life's challenges and contribute positively to society. Interview data emphasizes that "Powering" aims to strengthen students both internally and externally, ensuring that the instilled character traits become inherent, leading to consistent positive behavior (anti-violence, anti-bullying, positive communication and interaction) in all situations, reflecting the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

The "Powering" component represents a significant departure from a purely behavioral approach to character education. It recognizes the importance of fostering intrinsic motivation and a strong sense of self-belief. By focusing on faith, enthusiasm, and hope, the program aims to cultivate a positive and resilient mindset within the students. The inclusion of activities like community service projects is particularly noteworthy, as it provides students with opportunities to apply their values and contribute to their community. (Garwood, 2022). This practical application of learned principles reinforces their understanding and internalization.

Problem Solving

One strategy employed in the implementation of Character-building Session II at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School is "Problem-Solving." This strategy aims to cultivate independent and environmentally aware students who can proactively address challenges. When conflicts arise within student rooms, mentors allow students time to resolve issues independently, providing guidance and direction only when necessary. The emphasis is on practical application rather than solely theoretical instruction; students are encouraged to discover solutions to problems through experience.

The program's approach to problem-solving aims to foster resilience and critical thinking skills, enabling students to effectively confront and resolve issues. Through guided activities and real-life scenarios, students learn to identify problems, explore solutions, and evaluate consequences. (Rusmin et al., 2024). Educators facilitate discussions and guide students as they navigate disputes or challenges, sometimes using role-playing to illustrate

approaches to conflict resolution with empathy and creativity. This process instills a sense of accountability and empowers students to effect positive change in their environment.

The emphasis on practical problem-solving aligns with contemporary pedagogical approaches that prioritize experiential learning. By moving beyond theoretical discussions and encouraging students to actively engage in resolving conflicts, the program fosters crucial life skills such as critical thinking, resilience, and self-reliance. (Hughes et al., 2019). The mentorship approach, where guidance is provided only when needed, promotes independence and encourages students to take ownership of their challenges. This approach is particularly valuable in preparing students for the complexities of adolescent life and beyond.

The use of role-playing exercises is a particularly effective method for developing empathy and communication skills, essential components of effective conflict resolution. By simulating real-life scenarios, students can practice different approaches to conflict and learn from their experiences in a safe and controlled environment. The program's focus on accountability, where students understand that their actions have consequences, is also crucial for fostering responsible behavior. (Türk, 2017).

Effectiveness of Character Education program session II

The character-building program implemented at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School has shown substantial efficacy in reducing bullying behaviors, as evidenced by a comprehensive analysis of three key behavioral indicators: "annoyed hitting", "playful hitting", and "profanity" during the academic year of 2024-2025. The findings are derived from a combination of quantitative data from monthly reports, qualitative insights from field observations, semi-structured interviews with educators and students, and documentation analysis of program materials and student activities.

Reduction in Annoyed Hitting

Analysis of monthly reports reveals a significant decrease in the frequency of angry hitting incidents from November 2023 through January 2025. Initially, the number of reported incidents was notably high, with specific monthly data as follows:

Table 1

Annoyed by hitting incidents

Month, year	Total Incidents of Annoyed-hitting	Total Students	Average Per Student
Nov-23	431	431	0
Dec-23	2865	431	7
Jan-24	3542	431	8
Feb-24	1522	431	4
Mar-24	-	-	-
Apr-24	-	-	-
May-24	1048	431	2
Jun-24	418	362	1.2
Jul-24	342	434	0.8
Aug-24	398	436	0.9
Sep-24	65	437	0.1
Oct-24	166	437	0.4
Nov-24	53	426	0.1
Dec-24	54	425	0.1
Jan-25	38	425	0.1

Table 1 reveals a significant reduction in annoying hitting incidents at the school from November 2023 to January 2025. While initially high (e.g., 3542 incidents in January 2024), the frequency dramatically decreased to only 38 incidents by January 2025. This decline, corroborated by field observations and staff/student interviews, suggests the effectiveness of the character-building program's focus on emotional intelligence and self-regulation. Educators

attributed the positive change to training sessions equipping students with non-aggressive conflict resolution skills, a finding supported by student testimonials indicating improved ability to manage frustration and conflict without resorting to violence.

Fluctuations in Playful Hitting

The category of playful hitting displayed variability throughout the year, with some months exhibiting peaks while others reported declines. Here is the relevant data:

Table 2
Data on playful-hitting incidents

Month, year	Total Incidents of Playful-hitting	Total Students	Average Per Student
Nov-23	431	431	0
Dec-23	2865	431	7
Jan-24	3542	431	8
Feb-24	1522	431	4
Mar-24	-	-	-
Apr-24	-	-	-
May-24	1048	431	2
Jun-24	418	362	1.2
Jul-24	342	434	0.8
Aug-24	398	436	0.9
Sep-24	65	437	0.1
Oct-24	166	437	0.4
Nov-24	53	426	0.1
Dec-24	54	425	0.1
Jan-25	38	425	0.1

Analysis of playful hitting incidents reveals a fluctuating pattern throughout the year, peaking in December 2023 and then gradually declining, with a significant drop observed from September 2024 onwards (Table B.2). While playful hitting is a common social interaction among peers, the data suggests a long-term decrease in its frequency. Qualitative data supports this trend, indicating that while instances still occur, they are less aggressive and more consensual, reflecting an improved understanding of boundaries and appropriate social interaction among students. This suggests the implemented program effectively teaches students about appropriate playful engagement, fostering mutual respect. However, continued monitoring and educator guidance are crucial to maintain this positive trend.

Initial Surge and Stabilization of Profanity

The use of profanity presented a more complex pattern. Here are the relevant statistics:

Table 3
Data on playful-hitting incidents

Month, year	Total Incidents of Profanity	Total Students	Average Per Student
Nov-23	15280	431	35
Dec-23	22384	431	52
Jan-24	20711	431	48
Feb-24	16996	431	39
Mar-24	-	-	-
Apr-24	-	-	-
May-24	10483	431	24
Jun-24	5288	423	12.5
Jul-24	9115	434	21.0
Aug-24	14990	436	34.4
Sep-24	5628	437	12.9

Oct-24	11063	426	26.0
Nov-24	7470	426	17.5
Dec-24	7736	425	18.2
Jan-25	7178	425	16.9

The data in Table B.3 reveal a dynamic trend in profanity use among students participating in the character-building session II program. An initial surge in profanity incidents during November 2023 and December 2023 (peaking at 52 incidents per student in December) likely reflects students exploring social boundaries within the new program environment. However, this trend reversed significantly over the following months, indicating a substantial decrease in profanity use. While there's a slight uptick in the late summer and fall of 2024, the overall trajectory shows a clear stabilization and reduction by January 2025 (down to 16.9 incidents per student). This shift aligns with field observations and interview data suggesting the program's positive influence on student communication, fostering a greater awareness of the impact of negative language and encouraging the adoption of more respectful interactions. The emergence of student-led initiatives further supports the conclusion that the program's emphasis on positive dialogue is proving effective in the long term.

Supporting and Hinder Factors

Supporting factors

The findings highlight several crucial factors that support the effective implementation of character education within the institution.

Firstly, the **strong institutional support** emerges as a foundational element in this process. Insights from interviews with KH. Abdul Hannan Tibyan, the founder, and Ustad Wafir, the principal, reveal a deep commitment from the school's administration to facilitate the character-building program. This commitment is reflected in the allocation of necessary resources, including funding for materials, training programs, and moral support for educators and students alike. During field observations, it became evident that this support is actively demonstrated through the administration's participation in character-building activities, which not only enhances the program's visibility but also sets a positive example for both staff and students.

Additionally, the **cooperation among stakeholders** stands out as a vital factor in reinforcing the objectives of character education. The interviews underscored the active involvement of parents, who participate in character-building workshops and events, thereby ensuring that the values cultivated at school are mirrored at home. Field observations further illustrated this collaborative spirit through community engagement initiatives, where educators, parents, and local community members come together to participate in activities aimed at fostering character development. Documentation analysis confirms that structured feedback mechanisms are in place, allowing for continuous communication between the school and families, thus creating a supportive network that nurtures students' growth.

Another key aspect is the emphasis on **continuous training** for educators, which is facilitated through regular "Training of Trainers" (TOT) sessions. These training opportunities equip teachers with the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively deliver the character education curriculum. Insights from interviews indicated that educators feel empowered and well-prepared to implement innovative teaching strategies following these sessions. Observations within classrooms showed educators applying various techniques they had learned, fostering an engaging and dynamic learning environment. Additionally, feedback from the teaching staff highlighted the beneficial camaraderie developed through these training programs, which strengthens the overall school culture and enhances the collective commitment to character education.

The success of the character education program is significantly underpinned by three key factors: strong institutional support, collaborative stakeholder engagement, and continuous educator training. The school's leadership demonstrates a clear commitment, allocating resources and actively participating in character-building activities, creating a positive and

visible model for the school community. (Komariah et al., 2020). This commitment is further strengthened by the active collaboration between school, parents, and the wider community, fostering a cohesive environment where values are consistently reinforced both inside and outside the classroom. (Eden et al., 2024). Regular "Training of Trainers" (TOT) sessions empower educators with the necessary skills and knowledge, enhancing their confidence and fostering a supportive professional culture committed to the program's goals. (Qasserras, 2024). This multi-faceted approach, encompassing leadership commitment, stakeholder collaboration, and ongoing professional development, aligns with research indicating that effective character education requires a holistic and sustained effort across all levels of the school and wider community.

Hindering Factors

Despite the notable progress achieved in implementing the character education program, several challenges remain that affect its overall effectiveness. These challenges were identified to reveal critical areas for improvement.

Role Model Limitations

One of the primary challenges highlighted is the limitations in role modeling among senior figures within the institution. During interviews with KH. Abdul Hannan Tibyan and Ustad Wafir, both leaders, acknowledged that while many educators and administrative staff strive to embody the principles of character education, not all senior figures consistently exhibit these defined positive behaviors. This inconsistency can lead to mixed messages for students regarding the importance of character development.

For instance, some educators were observed to participate actively in character-building activities during official events or meetings, but displayed less enthusiasm in day-to-day interactions with students. In one notable observation, a senior teacher was seen reprimanding a student harshly in the classroom after a minor infraction, contrasting sharply with the program's emphasis on supportive and constructive communication. Interviews with students confirmed this disconnect; they often expressed confusion when their educators' behaviors did not align with the values being taught. One student remarked, "It feels like we're being told to be kind, but sometimes the teachers don't show that kindness when they're upset." Such inconsistencies undermine the credibility of the character education program, as students may become sceptical of the lessons being imparted if their role models do not consistently demonstrate these values.

Educators' inconsistent modeling of positive behaviors undermines character education programs. Bandura's Social Learning Theory research shows that consistent role modeling by educators, particularly a unified school-wide commitment, is crucial for student engagement and belief in the program's authenticity (Ansani & Samsir, 2022). The lack of such consistency, as revealed in the findings, necessitates stronger accountability measures to ensure alignment between stated values and educators' actions (Khozin et al., 2024).

External Influence

Another significant challenge stems from external influences that affect students' behaviors and attitudes toward character development. Through field observations and interviews, it was evident that the broader social environment often undermines the character education efforts being made at the institution. Students frequently encounter various forms of peer pressure, as well as negative influences from technology and media, which can encourage behaviors that are contrary to the values promoted by the school.

For example, during focus group discussions, students shared experiences of being pressured by peers to engage in behaviors such as using inappropriate language or participating in gossip, which they often noticed on social media platforms. One student candidly stated, "Sometimes, it's hard to remember to be nice when everyone around you is joking and saying things that aren't kind." This sentiment underscores the powerful impact that peers and external media can have on students, often leading them to mimic undesirable behaviors despite the character education program's teachings.

Field observations also revealed that certain students would exhibit behaviors, such as mockery and negative comments, influenced by media content they consumed outside school, which conflicted with the values the institution promoted. Instances were noted where students who usually exhibited good character would, in social settings, engage in banter that included offensive language or actions, reflecting outside influences rather than the principles instilled at school.

Interviews with parents further corroborated this issue, as many expressed concern over the disparity between the school's efforts and the external environment their children navigate daily. Parents reported feeling challenged to reinforce character education at home when facing conflicting messages from social circles and media. One parent mentioned, "We try to teach our kids the values they learn at school, but it's tough when what they see on their phones or what their friends do is so different."

The findings highlight a significant challenge: the conflict between the school's character education program and powerful external influences. Peer pressure, media, and technology expose students to behaviors contradicting school values, creating a dissonance between classroom teachings and real-world experiences. (Marwan et al., 2025). Students reported succumbing to peer pressure to engage in undesirable behaviors, mirroring what they observe online and amongst their social circles. This external pressure, corroborated by parental concerns, underscores the need for strategies that address these conflicting influences and fortify the positive values instilled within the school environment. This dissonance aligns with research emphasizing the significant impact of social context on moral development. Bandura's social cognitive theory highlights the role of observational learning and modeling in shaping behavior, suggesting that exposure to negative behaviors through peers and media can override positive messages received at school. (Bussey, 2023). Similarly, Ellul (2020) emphasized the importance of considering the broader social context, including peer influence and media exposure, when designing and implementing effective character education programs. The parental concerns echo the need for a cohesive approach involving schools, parents, and the community to create a consistent environment that supports positive character development.

Conclusion

The character-building program implemented at Puncak Darussalam Islamic Boarding School demonstrates noteworthy success in fostering a positive educational environment and reducing instances of aggressive behaviors among students. The data collected from November 2023 to January 2025 illustrates a significant decline in "Annoyed-hitting," showcasing an approximately 89.5% reduction in physical aggression, which underscores the effectiveness of the program's multifaceted approach. This includes the integration of religious teachings, empowerment activities, and systematic monitoring of student behavior. While the program has successfully reduced severe forms of aggression, challenges remain with the continued prevalence of "Playful-hitting" and "Profanity." These ongoing issues highlight the complexities of behavior management and the necessity for ongoing intervention and adaptation within the character education framework. Future initiatives should focus on deeper engagement with students, incorporating their feedback into program adjustments, and addressing the influences of external environments on behavior. Overall, the findings emphasize the value of structured character education combined with bullying prevention strategies to nurture respectful and empathetic student interactions. The substantial progress made thus far lays a strong foundation for further developments, necessitating sustained commitment from educators, students, and community stakeholders to ensure the continuous cultivation of a supportive and respectful school community.

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