

CHARACTER EDUCATION MODELS FOR MI TEACHERS: A NARRATIVE REVIEW

MODEL PENDIDIKAN KARAKTER BAGI GURU MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH: SEBUAH TINJAUAN NARATIF**Nur Innayah Ganjarjati¹, Dwi Purbaningrum²**Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah Tunas Bangsa^{1,2}

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Character education based on religious moderation has become a strategic agenda in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary schools) to address the challenges of information disruption and social polarization. This study aims to synthesize effective character education models for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah teachers through a narrative review approach of literature published over the last decade (2016–2026). Thematic analysis identified three dominant models: (1) the Role Modeling Model, which positions teachers as *uswatun hasanah* (exemplary role models); (2) the Curriculum Integration Model, which incorporates character values into all components of the learning process; and (3) the Culture-Building Model, which relies on social habituation and a supportive school climate. The findings indicate that although these three models are effective, their implementation is often constrained by administrative burdens, limited resources, and the pressures of the digital environment. The study concludes that character development requires a holistic approach that integrates all three models while strengthening teacher capacity and providing systemic support. This review recommends the integration of technology-based character education to ensure the effective internalization of *wasathiyah* (religious moderation) values among students in the digital era. The findings are expected to serve as a reference for policymakers in strengthening the role of madrasahs as adaptive institutions for character education.

Keywords: Character Education, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Religious Moderation, Teacher Role Modeling, Narrative Review.

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan karakter berbasis moderasi beragama merupakan agenda strategis di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) untuk menghadapi tantangan disrupsi informasi dan polarisasi sosial. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mensintesis model pendidikan karakter yang efektif bagi guru MI melalui pendekatan *narrative review* terhadap literatur satu dekade terakhir (2016-2026). Analisis tematik mengungkapkan tiga model dominan: (1) Model Keteladanan, yang menempatkan guru sebagai *uswatun hasanah*; (2) Model Integrasi Kurikuler, yang menyisipkan nilai-nilai karakter dalam seluruh komponen pembelajaran; dan (3) Model Pembangunan Budaya, yang mengandalkan habituasi sosial dan iklim sekolah. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa meskipun ketiga model tersebut efektif, implementasinya sering terhambat oleh beban administratif, keterbatasan sarana, dan tekanan lingkungan digital. Kesimpulannya, penguatan karakter memerlukan pendekatan holistik yang memadukan ketiga model tersebut dengan penguatan kapasitas guru dan dukungan sistemik. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan integrasi pendidikan karakter berbasis teknologi untuk memastikan efektivitas internalisasi nilai-nilai *wasathiyah* bagi peserta didik di era digital. Hasil kajian ini diharapkan menjadi rujukan bagi pembuat kebijakan dalam memperkuat eksistensi madrasah sebagai lembaga pendidikan karakter yang adaptif.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Karakter, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, Moderasi Beragama, Keteladanan Guru, Narrative Review.

1. INTRODUCTION

Character education is a strategic agenda in Indonesia's national education system, particularly in addressing the challenges of information disruption, social polarization, and the increasing complexity of interactions in a multicultural society. These challenges are even more pronounced in the digital era. Data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association

(APJII) shows that the number of Indonesian internet users in 2024 will reach 221.56 million, or 79.5% of the total national population (APJII, 2024). High internet penetration provides significant opportunities for students to access various sources of knowledge, but at the same time, it also increases the risk of exposure to information containing intolerance, hate speech, radicalism, and disinformation. In the context of Islamic education, character building is directed not only at developing individual moral competence but also at internalizing the values of religious moderation (*wasathiyah*), which emphasize the principles of balance, tolerance, justice, and social harmony. The concept of *wasathiyah* is widely positioned as the normative foundation of Islamic education in Indonesia that guides curriculum development, learning practices, and various educational activities in madrasas (Priatna, 2020; Faiz & Fadlan, 2022; Shulhan, 2022; Ghozali, 2024).

The urgency of strengthening religious moderation is also reflected in various national indicators related to Indonesian social life. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia reported that the Interfaith Harmony Index (KUB) in 2024 reached 76.47, an increase compared to 76.02 in 2023 and 73.09 in 2022 (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024). Despite this positive trend, this data indicates that efforts to maintain and strengthen the values of tolerance and harmony must be systematically implemented through education from an early age to create a generation with moderate character and able to live harmoniously in a pluralistic society.

Within this framework, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) holds a highly strategic position as a primary education level that plays a role in shaping the foundation of students' character from an early age. This significant role is reflected in the number of MI educational units, which reached 26,794 in the 2024/2025 academic year, making it the madrasah level with the largest number of institutions in Indonesia (Central Statistics Agency, 2025). Various studies have shown that MI is an effective educational space for integrating character development with moderate Islamic values through both curricular and extracurricular activities. The MI environment allows for a balance between students' intellectual and spiritual development within a diverse societal context (Ichsan et al., 2023; Shulhan, 2022; Faiz & Fadlan, 2022). In addition, character education in MI also contributes directly to the implementation of national programs, such as Strengthening Character Education (PPK) and the Pancasila Student Profile (P5), which place character formation as the main goal of national education (Huda et al., 2023; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Wahib et al., 2023).

Despite this, the implementation of character education and religious moderation policies still faces various challenges. Normatively, the PPK and P5 policies have provided clear direction for strengthening student character. However, various studies indicate a gap between policy design at the macro level and classroom implementation. Teachers often face administrative pressures, limited learning time, and a dense curriculum, which results in character education not being fully integrated into daily learning processes (Huda et al., 2023; Wahib et al., 2023; Shulhan, 2022). As a result, the internalization of character values and religious moderation tends to be symbolic or partial, thus suboptimal in their impact on students' long-term character development (Huda et al., 2023; Wahib et al., 2023; Shulhan, 2022).

In response to these challenges, religious moderation has been integrated into various aspects of madrasah education, particularly through Islamic Religious Education (PAI). This integration is carried out not only through the insertion of learning materials, but also through strengthening pedagogical approaches, school programs, and a hidden curriculum that supports the development of moderate attitudes in students (Huda et al., 2023; Mala & Hunaida, 2023; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Ghozali, 2024; Faiz & Fadlan, 2022). The government's commitment to improving the quality of madrasah education is also evident in the implementation of the 2024 Indonesian Madrasah Competency Assessment (AKMI), which involved 12,192 madrasahs and 515,980 students throughout Indonesia (Ministry of Religious

Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024a). The large scope shows that madrasas have a very significant role in developing the quality of human resources, including in the aspects of character formation and religious moderation.

In practice, strengthening religious moderation is largely developed through the values of Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah (Aswaja), which emphasize the principles of tawasuth, tasamuh, tawazun, and i'tidal as the foundation for character building for students (Ary et al., 2023; Putra et al., 2024; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Ibda et al., 2024). Numerous empirical studies show that various Islamic elementary schools (MI) have developed strategies for implementing religious moderation through integrated thematic learning, strengthening school culture, Aswaja education, and developing teacher professionalism. These efforts demonstrate that wasathiyah values can be operationalized as core values of educational institutions, not simply as additions to the formal curriculum (Ary et al., 2023; Wibowo & Kurniawan, 2023; Ichsan et al., 2023). Furthermore, a cross-institutional perspective confirms that the integration of religious moderation in school governance, curriculum, learning processes, and organizational culture contributes to improving the quality and inclusiveness of madrasas in diverse societies (Wahib et al., 2023; Faiz & Fadlan, 2022).

Nevertheless, the existing literature still shows differing perspectives regarding the most effective mechanisms for internalizing the values of religious moderation. Some studies emphasize the importance of explicitly reinforcing curriculum content, while others emphasize the role of school culture, habituation, and the learning atmosphere as key factors in shaping students' moderate character (Huda et al., 2023; Mala & Hunaida, 2023; Ghozali, 2024; Wahib et al., 2023; Ibda et al., 2024). Furthermore, measuring the long-term impact of internalizing moderate values on students' character remains a conceptual and methodological challenge that has largely remained unaddressed in previous research.

Furthermore, several studies confirm that the success of character education and religious moderation is determined not only by schools, but also by family and community involvement. The role of parents in accompanying children in the digital era, along with the support of a conducive social environment, are important factors in strengthening students' understanding and practice of religious moderation outside the school environment (Putra et al., 2024; Faiz & Fadlan, 2022; Ibda et al., 2024). These findings indicate that internalizing wasathiyah values requires synergy between schools, families, and communities to produce sustainable behavioral change.

Based on this description, there is still a need for a more in-depth study of how wasathiyah values are internalized at the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah level, particularly in bridging the gap between religious moderation policies and learning practices in the field. This study is crucial for producing a more effective implementation model for integrating religious moderation into the curriculum, school culture, and learning process, thereby strengthening the sustainable character development of students.

To date, the literature on character education in madrasa environments is still dominated by partial and localized case studies. *research gap* One obvious challenge is the lack of a narrative review that comprehensively maps, critiques, and synthesizes current character education models relevant to the specific characteristics of MI teachers. Much existing research fails to connect contemporary pedagogical theory with the practical obstacles faced by educators in madrasahs. Without a systematic model mapping, teachers struggle to adopt a framework that is not only theoretically effective but also applicable in the unique context of the madrasah environment.

Based on these conditions, this article aims to synthesize the most effective and sustainable character education models for MI teachers. Through this approach, *narrative review* This study will evaluate various pedagogical models implemented over the past decade, identify success factors, and formulate practical recommendations. The results are expected to serve as a strategic reference for education practitioners and policymakers within the Ministry

of Religious Affairs to strengthen the existence of madrasahs as superior, character-based educational institutions that are adaptive to the challenges of the times.

2. METHODS

This research uses an approach/narrative *review* to synthesize relevant literature on character education models for teachers in Islamic Elementary Schools (MI). This approach was chosen because of its ability to integrate various theoretical perspectives and scattered empirical findings, thus providing a comprehensive overview of the evolution of pedagogical models over the past decade.

The literature selection process was conducted using a systematic search strategy in reputable academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, to ensure broad and credible coverage. The search focus was limited to scientific articles published within the last ten years (2016–2026) to capture the latest developments in education policy and teaching practices. Keywords used in the data extraction process included: "*character education*", "*MI teachers*", "*Islamic primary school*", as well as "*pedagogical models*". Inclusion criteria prioritized studies that discussed practical implementation in the classroom, the theoretical framework of character education in madrasahs, and the challenges teachers face in integrating these values into the curriculum.

Following the data collection phase, a narrative analysis approach was applied to filter and group the literature into thematic categories. The selected literature was analyzed using the thematic synthesis method, where each article was reviewed based on the focus of the character education model offered, the effectiveness of the method, and the context of its application within the Islamic elementary school (MI) ecosystem. This process not only aimed to describe existing models but also to critically analyze their suitability to the characteristics of Islamic elementary school (MI) teachers in the field. By categorizing the literature thematically, this review was able to identify dominant patterns and theoretical gaps, which then served as the basis for developing strategic recommendations for practitioners and policymakers in Islamic elementary schools (MA).

3. RESULTS

Based on a literature synthesis of various studies conducted over the past decade, three character education models were identified as being most dominantly implemented in Islamic elementary schools (MI). These three models reflect teachers' adaptation to the need for internalizing character values within the Islamic elementary education ecosystem in Indonesia.

3.1. Teacher Exemplary Behavior as the Main Instrument for Character Internalization

The results of the literature synthesis indicate that the Exemplary Model positions teachers as the most central educational instrument in the process of internalizing character values in Islamic Elementary Schools (MI). From an Islamic pedagogical perspective, teachers function not only as learning facilitators or material transmitters, but also as *uswatun hasanah* which serves as a moral reference for students in their daily lives. Various studies consistently show that teacher behavior shapes the school's moral climate, which serves as a primary space for students to observe, emulate, and internalize character values through direct experience in social interactions and learning (Dewi et al., 2023; Desrianti & Mulis, 2022; Rahayu et al., 2023).

Findings indicate that the effectiveness of role models is not primarily determined by the verbal transfer of moral knowledge, but rather by the consistency of teachers' behavior in practicing the values taught. The most frequently identified role model characteristics include honesty, discipline, humility, responsibility, and compassion for students. These behaviors create a learning environment that allows students to gain direct moral experiences, allowing

character formation to occur naturally through observation and habituation (Dewi et al., 2023; Rahayu et al., 2023).

3.1.1. Pedagogical Foundations of Exemplary Behavior in Islamic Educational Tradition

Literature analysis also shows that the exemplary model has a strong foundation in Islamic educational traditions. The relationship between teacher and student is not viewed solely as an academic relationship, but as an educational relationship oriented toward holistic personality development. In this context, the concept of *manners* is a fundamental element connecting the learning process with character development. Teachers are positioned as representatives of moral values that must be reflected in everyday behavior so that students can understand and internalize these values contextually (Şahin, 2018; Tan, 1970; Desrianti & Mulis, 2022).

Furthermore, the integration of values/manners and piety. The integration of character education into learning activities demonstrates that character education in madrasas is not treated as a standalone subject but rather as an integral part of the entire educational process. When teachers consistently practice these values, students tend to demonstrate greater engagement in developing ethical behavior and fostering good morals (Şahin, 2018; Erihadiana, 2019; Rahayu et al., 2023).

3.1.2. Reflective Practice and Behavioral Consistency as Determining Factors for Success

Another important finding suggests that the success of role modelling is highly dependent on teachers' ability to maintain consistency between the values taught and the behaviors they display. The literature consistently identifies reflective practice as a key mechanism that enables teachers to evaluate the alignment between beliefs, professional values, and actions taken in the learning process. Teachers who demonstrate high integrity through alignment between words and actions have been shown to be more effective in facilitating character internalization compared to approaches that rely solely on the delivery of rules or formal moral advice (Dewi et al., 2023; Rahayu et al., 2023).

Conversely, several studies have found that a mismatch between the values taught and the practices demonstrated by teachers can diminish teachers' moral legitimacy in the eyes of students. This situation has the potential to weaken the process of character internalization because students receive contradictory messages between cognitive aspects and the social experiences they directly observe. Therefore, continuous professional development and a school culture that supports reflective practice are crucial factors in maintaining the effectiveness of role models (Abdalla et al., 2022; Kholis, 2022; Desrianti & Mulis, 2022).

3.1.3. Structural and Contextual Factors in the Implementation of the Exemplary Model

The synthesis also shows that the success of exemplary models depends not only on individual teacher capacity but is influenced by broader structural and contextual factors. Several studies emphasize the importance of school culture, leadership support, institutional governance, and professional development programs that systematically strengthen teachers' positions as moral authorities within the school environment. Teacher forums, professional learning communities, and data-driven development systems have been reported to contribute to increasing the consistency of exemplary practices across levels and subjects (Kholis, 2022; Daulay et al., 2023).

However, the implementation of the exemplary model varies across institutional contexts. Several studies have identified challenges arising from administrative pressures, increasingly complex curriculum demands, and external environmental influences that do not

always align with Islamic educational values. Nevertheless, the exemplary model remains highly relevant when schools consciously develop an Islamic pedagogical ethos that makes teacher role models a key pillar in shaping student character (Abdalla et al., 2022; Kholis, 2022; Anisah, 2023).

3.1.4. The Impact of Exemplary Models on the Formation of Student Character

In general, all of the studies analyzed showed convergence of findings regarding the positive contribution of role models to the formation of student character. Teachers' exemplary behavior was associated with improved school climate quality and the strengthening of values. *manners* And *morals*, and the development of more positive social behavior in students. Although most research still uses qualitative approaches and case studies, there is a strong consensus that teacher role models are one of the most effective mechanisms for building student character in MI environments (Dewi et al., 2023; Desrianti & Mulis, 2022; Rahayu et al., 2023).

However, several studies highlight that the sustainability of the impact of exemplary models requires adequate resource support, professional recognition for Islamic religious education teachers, and a competency development system that enables teachers to maintain the quality of their exemplary practices amidst various job demands and changes in the educational environment (Abdalla et al., 2022; Kholis, 2022; Anisah, 2023).

3.1.5. Variations in Perspectives in the Literature

While there is broad consensus on the importance of teacher role models, the literature shows varying views regarding the role model's place within the overall learning system. Some studies position role models as the primary mechanism for character formation, while others emphasize that the effectiveness of role models depends heavily on their integration with the curriculum, student-centered learning strategies, and supportive school governance systems (Kadis et al., 2024; Kholis, 2022; Anisah, 2023).

These findings indicate that exemplary behavior cannot be understood solely as a teacher's personal qualities, but must be positioned as part of an educational ecosystem encompassing curriculum, school culture, leadership, and professional development. Therefore, the impact of exemplary behavior will be more optimal if supported by an institutional framework capable of institutionalizing moral values in all aspects of school life (Kholis, 2022; Daulay et al., 2023).

3.2. Curricular Integration Model

Literature synthesis shows that the curricular integration model is one of the most widely used approaches in implementing character education in Islamic elementary schools. Unlike approaches that position character education as a separate program or subject, this model integrates character values into all learning components, making them an inherent part of the educational process. Character is not taught separately but is instilled through learning objectives, teaching materials, learning strategies, classroom activities, and the assessment system used by teachers (Huda et al., 2023; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Wahib et al., 2023).

Findings indicate that curricular integration enables character values and religious moderation to be transformed from normative concepts into concrete learning experiences. In practice, teachers connect academic material with relevant moral messages so that students can understand the relationship between knowledge and behavior. In mathematics learning, for example, the concepts of accuracy and honesty are linked to systematic problem-solving processes. In science learning, the order of nature is understood as a manifestation of God's greatness, encouraging the growth of gratitude, ecological responsibility, and concern for the environment. Meanwhile, in social and language learning, the values of tolerance, cooperation,

and respect for diversity are integrated through discussions, group work, and analysis of various social phenomena (Ichsan et al., 2023; Faiz & Fadlan, 2022; Shulhan, 2022).

Literature shows that this model has the advantage of reducing the dichotomy between academic learning and character education. Moral values are no longer perceived as supplementary material, but rather as an integral part of the process of developing student competencies. This approach also aligns with the Strengthening Character Education (PPK) policy and the Pancasila Student Profile, which emphasize the importance of integrating character into all educational activities, not just through specific subjects (Huda et al., 2023; Wahib et al., 2023; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023).

In addition to supporting character education in general, the curricular integration model is also a key instrument in strengthening the values of religious moderation in madrasas. Various studies have shown that wasathiyah values can be internalized through the development of learning objectives, material selection, teaching methods, and learning evaluations oriented towards strengthening attitudes of tawasuth (moderation), tasamuh (tolerance), tawazun (balance), and i'tidal (justice). Thus, religious moderation is not merely taught as a theoretical concept but becomes part of students' daily learning experiences (Ghozali, 2024; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Mala & Hunaida, 2023).

However, the findings also identified several challenges in implementing the curricular integration model. The most frequently cited factor was teachers' limited competence in reconstructing learning materials to meaningfully incorporate character dimensions. The integration undertaken is often declarative and does not fully produce learning experiences capable of encouraging deep internalization of values. Furthermore, curriculum pressures, limited learning time, and assessment orientations that emphasize cognitive achievement often hinder the optimization of character education through regular learning (Huda et al., 2023; Wahib et al., 2023; Shulhan, 2022).

To address these challenges, various studies emphasize the importance of teacher professional development focused on character-based learning design, integrating religious moderation values into the curriculum, and strengthening teachers' reflective capacity to connect academic material to students' life contexts. Institutional support through academic supervision, teacher learning communities, and the development of integrated learning tools have also been reported to play a crucial role in increasing the effectiveness of this model's implementation (Kholis, 2022; Daulay et al., 2023; Muslihuddin et al., 2024).

Overall, the literature demonstrates a consensus that the curricular integration model is the most pragmatic and sustainable strategy for character education in Islamic elementary schools. However, its effectiveness is largely determined by teachers' ability to construct meaningful connections between academic material and character values, as well as the support of the school system that allows for consistent integration throughout the learning process (Huda et al., 2023; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023; Ichsan et al., 2023; Wahib et al., 2023).

3.3. Cultural Development Model

The results of the literature synthesis show that the cultural development model (culture-building model) views character education as a collective process shaped through the social environment, organizational culture, and daily practices that occur continuously within the madrasah environment. From this perspective, students' character is formed not only through formal learning interventions but also through social experiences gained from routine interactions with teachers, peers, and the entire school ecosystem. Therefore, the main focus of this model is to create a school culture that systematically instills and reinforces moral values through various activities, habits, and norms that are present in daily madrasah life (Ichsan et al., 2023; Shulhan, 2022; Wibowo & Kurniawan, 2023).

The findings indicate that school culture serves as a mechanism for internalizing character, enabling students to directly experience moral values in real-life contexts. Various

habituation practices found in the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah environment include congregational prayer, Quranic recitation before lessons, and a culture of greeting and respecting teachers (born), routine religious activities, and enforcement of rules oriented toward character development. These practices form recurring behavioral patterns, fostering values such as discipline, responsibility, respect, religiosity, and social awareness through a continuous process of habituation (Ary et al., 2023; Wibowo & Kurniawan, 2023; Ichsan et al., 2023).

Literature shows that the effectiveness of the culture-building model lies in its ability to integrate character education into all dimensions of school life. Character values are not only present in learning activities but are also reflected in institutional governance, social relationships among school members, institutional symbols, and various consistent routines. Thus, students receive repeated exposure to values from multiple sources, resulting in a stronger internalization of character compared to approaches that rely solely on classroom learning (Shulhan, 2022; Wahib et al., 2023; Faiz & Fadlan, 2022).

In the context of strengthening religious moderation, school culture also plays a key role in internalizing wasathiyah values. Numerous studies have shown that a madrasah environment that consistently practices tolerance, respects differences, prioritizes dialogue, and instills the principle of balance in daily life can foster a moderate mindset in students. Values such as tolerance, tawasut, modesty, and i'tidal not only understood conceptually, but also realized in social practices that are observed and experienced directly by students in school life (Faiz & Fadlan, 2022; Ghozali, 2024; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023).

Other findings indicate that the success of a culture-building model is greatly influenced by the consistency of the entire school community in upholding agreed-upon values. The principal, teachers, education staff, and students must act as cultural agents, collectively maintaining the continuity of positive norms and habits. Therefore, school leadership is crucial in building a shared vision, developing participatory rules, and ensuring that all school activities align with the goals of character building (Wahib et al., 2023; Faiz & Fadlan, 2022).

However, several studies have identified challenges in maintaining consistent implementation of the culture-building model, particularly when students interact with the broader social environment outside of school. The influence of digital media, changing social values, and differences in parenting patterns within families can reduce the effectiveness of character internalization developed in the madrasah environment. Therefore, several studies emphasize the importance of synergy between schools, families, and the community to ensure that the values instilled in madrasahs are consistently reinforced in students' daily lives (Putra et al., 2024; Faiz & Fadlan, 2022; Ibda et al., 2024).

Overall, the literature demonstrates a consensus that the culture-building model is one of the most effective approaches to character education because it provides an environment that continuously reinforces positive student behavior. Through integrated routines, symbols, social interactions, and organizational culture, madrasahs are able to create an educational ecosystem that not only teaches character values but also makes them a living practice directly experienced by students every day (Ichsan et al., 2023; Wibowo & Kurniawan, 2023; Wahib et al., 2023).

4. DISCUSSIONS

4.1. Comparative Analysis of Effectiveness Between Models

A literature synthesis shows that character education in Islamic Elementary Schools (MI) operates through three complementary mechanisms: role modeling, curricular integration, and cultural development. The role modeling model positions teachers as the moral epicenter through *uswatun hasanah*, which according to [Dewi et al., 2023] and [Rahayu et al., 2023] has proven to be most effective in direct character formation through observation and habituation. Meanwhile, the Curricular Integration Model provides a formal framework for

transforming normative values into learning experiences, as emphasized by [Huda et al., 2023] and [Wahib et al., 2023]. However, the Cultural Development Model offers a broader reach by synergizing the entire school ecosystem as a medium for internalization [Ichsan et al., 2023]. This comparison indicates that the highest effectiveness is not achieved by a single model, but through synergistic integration where teacher role models are the main pillar, curriculum integration as a cognitive instrument, and school culture as a sociocultural vehicle [Kholis, 2022; Faiz & Fadlan, 2022].

4.2. Implementation Challenges: Administrative Barriers, Workload, and Limited Facilities

While theoretically promising, their implementation in practice faces significant systemic barriers. Teachers are often trapped under the pressure of high administrative burdens and a dense curriculum, which limits their scope for in-depth reflective practice [Huda et al., 2023; Wahib et al., 2023]. Limited resources and institutional support are also frequent obstacles, with teacher professional development often misaligned with demands for character-based learning materials [Shulhan, 2022; Daulay et al., 2023]. Furthermore, there is a gap between the values taught in madrasas and external influences—such as digital media and family parenting styles—requiring more intensive, consistent supervision [Putra et al., 2024; Ibda et al., 2024].

4.3. Future Trajectory: Technology-Based Character Education Integration(*Digital Character Education*)

In the future, internalization of the values of religious moderation (moderate) in madrasas must adapt to the digital reality. Given that internet penetration has reached 79.5% [APJII, 2024], character education can no longer be limited to physical interactions in the classroom. The integration of technology-based character education (digital character education) is a necessity, where teachers must be able to utilize digital tools to strengthen moral literacy and religious moderation in virtual spaces [Putra et al., 2024]. This approach is expected to bridge the gap between macro-education policies and the reality of student behavior in the era of information disruption, making it more adaptive and sustainable [Ghozali, 2024].

5. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that character building in Islamic elementary schools relies heavily on the harmony of teacher role models, curricular integration, and the establishment of a moderate school culture. These three models collectively strengthen the internalization of values (moderate) (tawasuth, tasamuh, tawazun, and i'tidal) which are essential in maintaining religious harmony [Ary et al., 2023; Rahmadi & Hamdan, 2023].

For policymakers in madrasah settings, the results of this study imply the need for a paradigm shift from an administrative-symbolic approach to character education toward a more substantive approach based on teacher professional development. Policies should prioritize support for teachers in fulfilling their role as moral agents, supported by a conducive madrasah ecosystem. For future research, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies measuring the long-term impact of these character education models on students' ethical behavior, as well as exploring digital risk mitigation strategies through religious moderation in technology based curricula.

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