

STRENGTHENING STUDENT CHARACTER THROUGH INTERNALIZATION OF CHARACTER VALUES BASED ON CONTEXTUAL ASSISTANCE

Alex Haris Fauzi¹⁾, Nasrodin²⁾, Mulin Nu'man³⁾, Maryono⁴⁾, Gelar Dwirahayu⁵⁾,
Lisa⁶⁾, Ninik Zuroidah⁷⁾

^{1,2} Universitas Islam Ibrahimy Banyuwangi, Indonesia

³ Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, Indonesia

⁴ Universitas Islam Negeri Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Indonesia

⁵ Universitas Islam Negeri Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, Indonesia

⁶ Universitas Islam Negeri Sultanah Nahrasiyah Lhokseumawe, Indonesia

⁷ Universitas Islam Negeri Kediri, Indonesia

e-mail: 1pakalexharisfauzi@gmail.com, 2nzulfi6@gmail.com, 3mulin.nu@uin-suka.ac.id, 4maryono@uinsatu.ac.id, 5gelar.dwirahayu@uinjkt.ac.id,
6lisa.iainlsm@gmail.com, 7ninikzuroidah@uinkediri.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Character education is an important component of education because students need not only academic competence but also the ability to demonstrate positive values in their daily lives. This community service program addressed the need to strengthen students' understanding and awareness of character values at MTsN 5 Cluring Banyuwangi. The program involved 25 students representing grades VII and VIII and the Student Intra-School Organization (OSIM). The intervention was implemented through a character education seminar using a contextual mentoring approach that connected character values with situations encountered by students in their daily lives. The activities consisted of an initial assessment (pretest), interactive seminar, contextual case discussion, question-and-answer session, reflection, and final assessment (posttest). The results showed an increase in the students' mean scores from 67.80 in the pretest to 84.20 in the posttest, with a 16.40-point increase and a normalized gain of 0.509, categorized as moderate. Observations also indicated positive student enthusiasm and active participation during the activity. These findings indicate that contextual mentoring can serve as an effective initial strategy for strengthening students' understanding and awareness of character values. Further programs should emphasize continuous habituation, exemplary behavior, and school-based character development to achieve sustainable behavioral change.

KEYWORDS: *Character Education; Character Internalization; Contextual Mentoring; Student Character; Madrasah.*

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan karakter merupakan bagian penting dalam pendidikan karena peserta didik tidak hanya membutuhkan kompetensi akademik, tetapi juga kemampuan menerapkan nilai-nilai positif dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Kegiatan pengabdian kepada masyarakat ini dilaksanakan untuk memperkuat pemahaman dan kesadaran siswa terhadap nilai-nilai karakter di MTsN 5 Cluring Banyuwangi. Kegiatan melibatkan 25 siswa yang terdiri atas perwakilan kelas VII, kelas VIII, dan Organisasi Siswa Intra Madrasah (OSIM). Intervensi dilaksanakan melalui seminar pendidikan karakter dengan pendekatan pendampingan kontekstual yang menghubungkan nilai karakter dengan situasi yang dihadapi siswa dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Tahapan kegiatan meliputi asesmen awal (pretest), seminar interaktif, pembahasan kasus kontekstual, sesi tanya jawab, refleksi, dan asesmen akhir (posttest). Hasil kegiatan menunjukkan peningkatan nilai rata-rata siswa dari 67,80 pada pretest menjadi 84,20 pada posttest, dengan peningkatan sebesar 16,40 poin dan nilai normalized gain sebesar 0,509 yang berada pada kategori sedang. Hasil observasi juga menunjukkan antusiasme dan partisipasi siswa selama kegiatan. Temuan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa pendampingan kontekstual dapat menjadi strategi awal untuk memperkuat pemahaman dan kesadaran siswa terhadap nilai karakter. Program lanjutan perlu diarahkan pada pembiasaan, keteladanan, dan pengembangan karakter berbasis budaya madrasah secara berkelanjutan.

KATA KUNCI: *Pendidikan Karakter; Internalisasi Karakter; Pendampingan Kontekstual; Karakter Siswa; Madrasah*

Received:
August, 05 2025

Revision:
September, 09 2025

Published:
October, 31 2025

INTRODUCTION

Education not only aims to form students who master knowledge, but also to be able to apply it responsibly in social life. In the context of Indonesian education, character is an important part because students are expected to be able to understand values, make the right decisions, and behave according to those values. Sakban & Sundawa, (2023) place character education as a strategic part of national character development, while Rohman (2024) shows the relationship between personal commitment, goal orientation, and student self-efficacy. Therefore, character education needs to be understood as a process that is integrated with the learning experience and life of students, not just additional material.

The main problem with character education is the gap between the understanding of values and their application in behavior. Students can know

honesty, discipline, responsibility, mutual cooperation, tolerance, and care, but this knowledge does not automatically become a habit. Hidayat et al., (2022) show that character internalization takes place through habituation, integration, and example, so it requires a real and continuous process, not just the delivery of theory. Sislan et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of the role of teachers in planning, implementing, and assessing character values in learning. Therefore, character building needs to be designed through real-life experiences that encourage students to make decisions, reflect on choices, and apply values in action.

The problem of character education lies in the gap between the understanding of values and their application in daily behavior. An understanding of honesty, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, mutual cooperation, and social concern does not guarantee the formation of consistent behavior. Therefore, character education needs to be realized through real experiences that encourage students to make decisions, consider the consequences, and reflect on their behavior. Hidayat et al., (2022) emphasized that character internalization is closely related to teacher-student interaction and educational experiences that allow values to be put into practice. Thus, character education is not sufficiently oriented to the delivery of values, but must be directed at the formation of students' mindsets, attitudes, and habits.

The need to strengthen character education is increasingly relevant at the tsanawiyah madrasah level, because students are in a developmental phase with social interaction, critical thinking skills, and independence in making increasingly developed decisions. At this stage, students are not enough to just accept the rules, but need to understand why a behavior is judged well and apply those values in concrete situations. Sobri et al. (2019) stated that school culture plays an important role in character formation through the rules, habits, rituals, values, and beliefs that develop in the educational environment. Therefore, character strengthening needs to integrate learning with the student's life environment so that the values learned are more meaningful and relevant.

In this context, MTsN 5 Cluring Banyuwangi is a strategic partner in this community service activity. The activity involved 25 students consisting of representatives of class VII, class VIII, and Intra-Madrasah Student Organization (OSIM). The composition provides an opportunity for character building activities to not only touch individual participants, but also expand their impact through student networks in the classroom and organizations. The involvement of OSIM students is especially important because student organizations can be one of the spaces for the formation of leadership, responsibility, cooperation, and social

concern. By involving student representatives, service activities are expected to be the starting point for the formation of character driving agents in the madrasah environment.

The problem that became the focus of the activity was not solely the lack of students' knowledge about character values, but the need to strengthen the process of internalizing character values so that they could be linked to daily behavior. The character values that are the focus include religious, honesty/integrity, discipline, responsibility, mutual cooperation, tolerance, and social concern. These values were chosen because they are directly related to student life, both in learning activities, relationships between friends, organizational activities, and madrasah life in general. Strengthening these values also needs to be done integratively. Maulana (2022) through a study on teacher practice in character education in Indonesia, shows that character education needs to be integrated into learning activities and requires teachers' consideration in selecting, planning, implementing, and evaluating the character values to be developed.

One relevant approach to bridging grades with student experiences is the contextual approach. The contextual approach allows learners to connect the material learned with real-life situations so that knowledge does not stop at abstract understanding. Rahmawati et al. (2019) show that Contextual Teaching and Learning integrated with character education provides a difference in the character of honesty, discipline, and responsibility compared to conventional learning. The study also showed a positive response of students to learning that integrated a contextual approach with character education. Thus, contextual approaches have strong relevance to be used in service activities that aim to strengthen students' understanding and awareness of character values.

The contextual approach is becoming increasingly important as character values essentially develop through the relationship between knowledge, experience, reflection, and action. When students are presented with a case or problem that is close to their lives, students have the opportunity to consider action options based on certain grades. The process allows students to understand that character is not just a concept that must be memorized, but rather a principle used to make decisions. Research on the implementation of character education through school culture also shows the importance of routine activities, spontaneous activities, examples, teaching, and strengthening the school environment in the process of internalizing character values (Safitri, 2015). Thus, seminars or character socialization need to be designed interactively so that they can be a learning experience that encourages students to think and reflect on behavior.

Previous studies have also shown that school culture is an important component in shaping students' character. Supraptiningrum & Agustini, (2015) found that character formation through school culture is carried out through routine activities, spontaneous activities, exemplary, and the creation of environmental conditions that support character education. The findings reinforce the view that character education cannot be imposed solely on teachers or given in the form of special materials. Character values will be easier to develop if the educational environment consistently provides examples and opportunities for students to practice them.

Although various studies have proven the importance of integrating character education, contextual learning, and school culture, there is still room to strengthen devotional practices that specifically link the socialization of character values with students' concrete experiences and reflection processes. Some approaches to character education are still value-oriented, while character change requires experiences that allow students to understand problems, discuss options, and reflect on actions. Therefore, this activity offers a contextual mentoring approach as a reinforcement of the character socialization model. Mentoring is not only directed at the delivery of material, but also at the process of connecting values with the context of students' lives through case examples, interactions, discussions, and questions and answers.

The novelty of this activity lies in the effort to build an internalization process through a series of context–experience–reflection–practice–commitment. Context is used to connect character values to students' lives; experience presents a situation that allows students to face character problems; reflection helps students understand the reasons and consequences of behavioral choices; practice encourages the application of values in daily life; While commitment is directed at the formation of a willingness to maintain positive behavior. The framework is in line with research findings that show that character internalization requires habituation, integration, and example, but is developed in these activities through a more structured and participatory design of service (Hidayat et al., 2022).

Based on these conditions, this community service activity aims to strengthen the understanding and awareness of MTsN 5 Cluring Banyuwangi students on character values through seminars and contextual mentoring. In particular, the activity is directed to improve students' ability to understand the meaning of character values, identify behaviors that are in accordance with character values, connect values with daily life problems, and encourage students to apply these values in interactions in the madrasah environment. The success of

the activity was identified through student responses and involvement during the activity as well as the evaluation of understanding before and after the activity. Thus, this activity is expected not only to result in an increase in student understanding, but also to be the first step for the formation of a stronger character culture through the involvement of students, teachers, and student organizations in the MTsN 5 Cluring Banyuwangi environment.

IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

The subject of the activity consisted of 25 MTsN 5 Cluring Banyuwangi students who were selected purposively by considering the representation of the class level and student organization. Participants included 10 grade VII students, 10 grade VIII students, and 5 students representing OSIM. The composition aims to ensure student representation while supporting the sustainability of the program through the involvement of students who are active in the organization. Participants not only play the role of recipients of material, but also as part of the madrasah community which is expected to be able to disseminate character values through peer interaction.

The implementation of service is carried out through several interrelated stages, namely:

1. Preparation Stage

At the preparation stage, the service team coordinated with MTsN 5 Cluring to determine participants, time, place, materials, and evaluation tools. At this stage, presentation materials and test instruments are also prepared to determine students' understanding of character values.

2. Initial Assessment

The next stage is the initial assessment (pretest). The pretest is given to participants before the delivery of the material to get an initial overview of students' understanding of character values. The instrument consists of 20 multiple-choice items with a maximum score of 100. The questions were arranged based on seven character values, namely: religious, honesty/integrity, discipline, responsibility, mutual cooperation, tolerance, and social care, and mostly used simple situations or cases that were close to the student's experience. The instrument grille is as follows:

Table 1. Instrument Grille

No.	Character Value	Indicator	Question Number
1	Religious	Showing an attitude according to religious values	1 – 2
2	Honesty/Integrity	Honest, admitting mistakes, trustworthy	3 – 5
3	Discipline	Obey the time and rules	6 – 8
4	Responsibilities	Completing obligations	9 – 10
5	Gotong Royong	Cooperate and help	11 – 12
6	Tolerance	Respect differences	13 – 14
7	Social Care	Helping and caring for others	15 – 16
8	Character Integration	Apply multiple values in real-life situations	17 – 20

3. Seminars and Contextual Mentoring

At this stage, the resource person delivered material on the importance of character, types of character values, forms of behavior that reflect character, and consequences of behavior that is not in accordance with character values. The delivery of material is developed interactively by including case examples related to student life.

4. Discussion and Q&A

At this stage, participants are given the opportunity to ask questions, provide responses, and discuss situations related to the application of character values. This stage becomes an important part of the contextual approach as students are encouraged to relate the material to their own experiences.

5. Evaluation

The fifth stage is the final evaluation (posttest). Posttest is used to determine changes in student understanding after participating in activities. The posttest instrument has the same indicator structure as the pretest so that score changes can be used to describe changes in participant understanding.

6. Follow-up

In the follow-up stage, participants were directed to identify behaviors that they could apply after the activity, both in learning, interaction with friends, and organizational activities. Especially for participants from OSIM, the follow-up is directed at the use of the position of the student organization as a space to strengthen character habituation in the madrasah environment.

Activity data was collected using tests and observation sheets. The test is used to obtain quantitative data on participants' understanding before and after the

activity. The instrument consists of 20 multiple-choice questions that include seven character values. Each correct answer is given a score of 5 and a false answer is given a score of 0 so the maximum score is 100. Participant scores are calculated using the formula:

$$N = \frac{R}{20} \times 100$$

where N is the final value and R is the sum of the correct answers.

In addition to the test, observation sheets are used to record participants' responses and engagement during activities. The aspects observed included attention to the material, participation in activities, courage to submit questions or responses, involvement in case discussions, and enthusiasm during seminars. Observation data is used to complement quantitative data so that the results of activities can be seen not only based on changes in test scores, but also based on the dynamics of participants during the mentoring process. Documentation of activities in the form of photos of the seminar, interaction of resource persons with participants, question and answer sessions, and evaluation activities were used as supporting data to describe the service process.

Furthermore, quantitative data on the results of the pretest and posttest were analyzed descriptively by comparing the minimum, maximum, and average values before and after the activity. Furthermore, the increase in participant understanding can be calculated using the percentage increase and Normalized Gain (N-Gain), with the following formula:

$$N - Gain = \frac{Posttest\ Score - Pretest\ Score}{100 - Pretest\ Score}$$

The results of the N-Gain calculation are then interpreted based on the following categories (Diawati et al., 2022):

Table 2. N-Gain Value Categories

N-Gain Value	Category
$g \geq 0,70$	Height
$0,30 \leq g < 0,70$	Medium
$g < 0,30$	Low

Meanwhile, observation data was analyzed descriptive-qualitatively by identifying participants' response patterns during the activity. Participants' attention, enthusiasm, questions, responses, and involvement are grouped as indicators of involvement in the mentoring process. Documentation data is used as supporting evidence for the implementation of activities. Quantitative and

qualitative analysis were then combined to provide an overview of the effectiveness of the activity. Test data was used to describe changes in understanding, while observation data was used to explain the dynamics of participant engagement during the seminar process.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Results

The community service activity was held on January 10, 2021 at MTsN 5 Cluring Banyuwangi involving 25 students consisting of 10 students representing class VII, 10 students representing class VIII, and 5 students representing the Intra Madrasah Student Organization (OSIM). The activity was carried out in the form of a character strengthening seminar with a contextual approach. The material is directed to seven character values, namely religious, honesty/integrity, discipline, responsibility, mutual cooperation, tolerance, and social concern.

a. Implementation and Dynamics of Activities

The series of activities began with the provision of an initial assessment (pretest) to find out the participants' understanding of character values before obtaining the material. Furthermore, participants participated in a seminar accompanied by the presentation of examples and contextual situations related to student life in the madrasah environment. The material not only explains the meaning of each character value, but also directs students to recognize the form of behavior that corresponds to those values in daily life.

The activity then continued with a question and answer session and discussion. Based on the results of observations, participants showed good enthusiasm during the activity. Participants pay attention to the delivery of material and show engagement through questions and responses in interactive sessions. The question and answer session provides a space for students to connect the material with the problems they experience in school life, such as honesty in doing assignments, discipline to madrasah rules, responsibility in group activities, respecting differences of opinion, and helping friends.

These dynamics show that the activity takes place in a participatory manner. Students not only play the role of receivers of information, but gain the opportunity to clarify understanding and discuss the application of character values in concrete situations. This is an important part of the contextual approach because the process of character strengthening is directed from understanding concepts to recognizing behaviors and reflecting on students' experiences.

b. Pretest and Posttest Results

Comprehension evaluation was carried out using a test consisting of 20 questions with a maximum score of 100. The test measures students' understanding of the seven character values that are the focus of the activity. Based on the data from the evaluation results used in the analysis of the activity, the following results were obtained:

Table 3. Pretest and Posttest Results

Components	Pretest	Posttest
Number of Participants	25	25
Minimum Grade	55	70
Maximum Value	80	95
Average Score	67,80	84,20
Average Increase	16.40 points	

Table 3 shows that there is an increase in students' understanding achievement after participating in the seminar. The average score of participants increased from 67.80 in the pretest to 84.20 in the posttest, or an increase of 16.40 points. If calculated based on the percentage of the initial score, the increase is 24.19%. In addition to the average, the minimum value also increased from 55 to 70, while the maximum value increased from 80 to 95.

The improvement showed a positive change in participants' understanding of character values after receiving interventions in the form of seminars and contextual mentoring. In particular, the increase in the minimum score showed that participants with relatively low initial achievement also experienced improved comprehension after the activity. Meanwhile, the increase in maximum scores showed that participants with better initial achievement still had room to strengthen their comprehension.

c. Analysis of Normalized Gain (N-Gain) Calculation Results

To determine the level of increased understanding more proportionally, the Normalized Gain (N-Gain) analysis was carried out as follows:

$$N - Gain = \frac{84,20 - 67,80}{100 - 67,80} = \frac{16,40}{32,20} = 0,509$$

Thus, the N-Gain value is 0.509. Based on the Hake criteria, the N-Gain value is between 0.30 to less than 0.70 in the medium category.

d. Results of the Change

Based on the results of tests and observations during the activity, there are two main forms of change identified. First, in the aspect of understanding, there was an increase in the average score of participants after participating in the

activity. Second, in the aspect of engagement, students show a positive response through attention to the material, enthusiasm for participating in activities, and participation in question and answer sessions, which can be briefly observed in the following table:

Table 4. Results of the Change

Aspects	Initial Conditions	Conditions After the Activity
Understanding Character Values	Average score 67.80	Average score 84.20
Minimum Grade	55	70
Maximum Value	80	95
Increased Understanding	-	N-Gain=0.509 (medium category)
Student Engagement	Has not been measured through observation of activities	Students show enthusiasm and participate in questions and answers
Awareness of Character Application	Becoming the focus of the	Students gain the opportunity to connect grades to everyday situations

These results show that the activity has achieved the initial changes that were expected, especially in strengthening students' understanding and awareness of character values. However, the results of observations and tests cannot be used to conclude that there has been a permanent change in character behavior. Behavior change requires a longer process of habituation and monitoring in the madrasah environment.

e. Key findings of the Activity

The main finding of this service activity is that character seminars with a contextual approach are able to improve students' understanding of character values at a moderate level, as shown by an N-Gain of 0.509. The increase was reinforced by participants' responses that showed enthusiasm and involvement during the activity process, especially when the material was related to issues close to students' lives. Thus, the results of the activity show that an approach that combines value delivery, contextual examples, interactions, and questions and answers can be an initial strategy to strengthen students' understanding of character. The activity also produces potential follow-up through the involvement of students, class representatives and OSIM as part of the student community that can help disseminate character values in the madrasah environment.

2. Discussion

The results of the activity showed that the character strengthening seminar based on contextual mentoring provided positive changes to the understanding of

MTsN 5 Cluring Banyuwangi students. This is shown by an increase in the average score from 67.80 in the pretest to 84.20 in the posttest, with an increase of 16.40 points or 24.19%. The calculation of the Normalized Gain results in a value of 0.509, which is in the medium category. The quantitative findings were strengthened by observation results that showed that participants participated in the activity enthusiastically and engaged in the question and answer session. Thus, the activity not only results in changes in the aspect of understanding, but also shows the involvement of participants in the process of learning character values.

This improvement can be understood from the characteristics of the intervention that not only provide an explanation of the meaning of character values, but also relate it to situations that are close to students' lives. This approach is relevant to the findings of Rahmawati et al., (2019) that Contextual Teaching and Learning integrated with character education can have a positive influence on students' character. In the study, a contextual approach is used to connect the learning process with the real situation faced by students, so that character values are not positioned as stand-alone material (Mahbubi & Sa'diyah, 2025). Thus, the increase in scores in this service activity can be understood as a consequence of giving students the opportunity to connect character concepts with the experiences and problems they recognize.

The findings also show the importance of distinguishing between knowledge of character and character internalization. An increase in posttest scores mainly indicates that students become better able to understand and recognize character values after the activity. However, this increase in understanding cannot be directly interpreted as a change in sedentary behavior. Hidayat et al., (2022) explained that the internalization and implementation of character education takes place through a process of habituation, integration, and imitation. The results of the study show that character implementation is related to educational interactions and experiences that allow character values to be realized in practice (Faradila & Khasanah, 2026). Therefore, the N-Gain value of 0.509 is more accurately interpreted as an indicator of strengthening understanding and early awareness, not as evidence that all participants have experienced permanent character changes.

From the perspective of the internalization process, the results of the activity provide support for the idea that character education needs to move from cognitive aspects to affective and behavioral aspects (El Zaldie & Hanif, 2025). Furthermore, Maulana, (2022), added that the implementation of character education includes cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. However, the study also found that the implementation of character education by teachers can take place unplanned and

has not always been assessed systematically. The findings provide an important perspective for this service activity. Pretest-posttest seminars and evaluations have provided a more measurable structure to the intervention, but the behavioral aspects still require observation and mentoring over a longer period of time.

The enthusiasm of the participants and their involvement in the question and answer session were also important findings. The engagement showed that students responded positively to the material when character values were discussed through issues close to their lives. Pedagogically, this condition strengthens the argument that the internalization process will be more meaningful if students are given space to express their experiences, question the situation they are facing, and consider behavioral choices. Thus, the question and answer session in this activity is not just a complement to the seminar, but is part of a reflective process that allows students to connect knowledge with experience.

These findings are in line with Safitri, (2015) research which shows that the internalization of character education in schools cannot be separated from routine activities, spontaneous activities, modeling, teaching, and strengthening the school environment. The research also emphasizes the importance of the role models of school principals, teachers, education staff, and students in building a positive school culture (Supaiseh & Astutik, 2026). Thus, the seminar activities carried out in this service can be seen as a form of teaching and strengthening awareness, but it does not include the entire mechanism needed to build a culture of character.

This perspective is strengthened by Supraptiningrum & Agustini, (2015), who show that character formation through school culture is carried out through routine and spontaneous habituation, example, and environmental conditioning. This means that if the results of this activity want to produce stronger social change, increasing student understanding needs to be followed by a support system in the madrasah environment. Students need to have the opportunity to practice religious values, honesty, discipline, responsibility, mutual cooperation, tolerance, and social concern repeatedly in learning activities and school activities.

The findings became increasingly relevant because the participants of the activity not only came from grades VII and VIII, but also involved five students representing OSIM. OSIM's involvement provides opportunities for the sharing of activities to be expanded from individual changes to changes at the student group level. Students who have a role in the organization can be the driving force of character habituation activities, for example through social activities, cooperation between students, concern for the environment, and strengthening discipline. However, this potential will not develop automatically. The support of teachers and

madrassas is needed so that students who have received reinforcement through seminars have the space to practice and disseminate these values.

The findings regarding the importance of the madrasah environment are also strengthened by Firdausih, (2024) research on the implementation of character education through school culture at MTsN Bondowoso II. The research shows that school culture is an important aspect in the process of internalizing character values and can be done through routine activities, spontaneous activities, examples, teaching, and strengthening the school environment. These efforts require synergy between school principals, teachers, education staff, and students in creating an environment that supports character (Rarasati et al., 2025). This finding has strong relevance to the context of service in MTsN 5 Cluring because they are both in the madrasah environment and show that strengthening character requires the support of the educational ecosystem, not just intervention for students.

From this point of view, the N-Gain value of the medium category actually provides important implications for the development of service programs. The program should not stop after seminars and posttests, but needs to be developed into ongoing mentoring. The next stage can be done through character habituation in the classroom, weekly reflection, social action-based assignments, teacher examples, and the development of OSIM programs that specifically strengthen character values. This strategy is consistent with the research of Hidayat et al., (2022) which places habituation, integration, and imitation as important mechanisms in character internalization.

Thus, the main contribution of this activity does not solely lie in improving test scores, but in the formation of the early stages of the process of internalizing characters through contextual learning experiences. The seminar approach accompanied by cases, discussions, and questions and answers provides opportunities for students to move from knowing to reflecting. The next stage that needs to be strengthened is practicing and habituating, so that the values that have been understood can be realized into consistent behavior. In this framework, character change is seen as a process that takes place through a continuum of knowledge, reflection, practice, habituation, and environmental support.

Overall, the results of this service show that contextual mentoring can be a potential initial strategy in strengthening students' character, especially in increasing understanding and awareness of character values. However, the sustainability of the impact is highly dependent on the ability of the madrasah to integrate these values into the learning and culture of the school. Therefore, the next activity needs to expand the goals from students as seminar participants to the

entire madrasah ecosystem, including teachers, homeroom teachers, student managers, and OSIM. With this strategy, character strengthening is expected to develop from a momentary intervention to a character culture that takes place consistently in the madrasah environment.

CONCLUSION

Community service activities through strengthening students' character through internalization of character values based on contextual mentoring at MTsN 5 Cluring Banyuwangi have made a positive contribution to strengthening students' understanding and awareness of character values. The activity involving 25 students from representatives of class VII, class VIII, and OSIM showed that an approach that integrates seminars, presentation of the context of daily life, discussions, and questions and answers can be a relevant means to introduce and strengthen religious values, honesty/integrity, discipline, responsibility, mutual cooperation, tolerance, and social concern.

Based on the results of the evaluation, the activity showed an increase in participants' understanding after participating in the intervention. These results, which were reinforced by the enthusiasm and involvement of students during the activity process, showed that the contextual approach was able to bridge the conceptual understanding of character with problems that were close to students' lives. Thus, the purpose of the activity to strengthen students' understanding and awareness of character values and encourage the ability to relate them to daily behavior has been achieved at the initial level. These findings also show that seminars can serve as an entrance to build character awareness, but deeper internalization requires an advanced process of practice, habituation, example, and strengthening the madrasah environment.

The main implication of this activity is that strengthening character education needs to be positioned as an ongoing process, not an activity that is completed after the delivery of material and evaluation. Increasing student understanding needs to be followed by opportunities to practice character values in learning, social interaction, organizational activities, and madrasah life. The involvement of OSIM students also provides strategic opportunities to develop the sustainability of the program through student activities oriented towards social care, discipline, cooperation, responsibility, and peer example.

For the development of the next program, similar activities are recommended to be carried out in the form of continuous mentoring by involving teachers, homeroom teachers, student managers, and OSIM. The program can be

developed through character habituation, periodic reflection, student social projects, behavioral monitoring, and character evaluation over a longer period of time. Replication in madrassas or other schools is also possible by adjusting character values, contextual cases, and forms of activities to the socio-cultural characteristics of each community. With this approach, the program's contribution does not only stop at improving student understanding, but is expected to develop towards the formation of a sustainable culture of character in the educational ecosystem.

REFERENCES

- Diawati, C., Fadiawati, N., & Syamsuri, M. M. F. (2022). Improving Creative Thinking Skills of Junior High School Students through a Project-Based Learning of Cassava Peel Waste Processing. *Jurnal Pendidikan MIPA*, 23(4), 1850–1861.
- El Zaldie, Z., & Hanif, M. (2025). Peranan psikologi pendidikan dalam mendorong pertumbuhan dan perkembangan holistik peserta didik melalui aspek kognitif, afektif, dan psikomotorik. *Al-Ilmiya: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 1(3), 536–545.
- Faradila, F., & Khasanah, N. (2026). Proses Internalisasi Nilai Religius Anak Usia Dini Melalui Pembiasaan Ibadah di RA Rowolaku. *Jurnal Ilmiah Profesi Pendidikan*, 11(2), 1208–1217.
- Firdausih. (2024). Implementasi Pendidikan Karakter Melalui Kultur Sekolah di MTsN Bondowoso II. *Al Qodiri: Jurnal Pendidikan, Sosial Dan Keagamaan*, 21(1), 365–378. <https://doi.org/10.53515/qodiri.2023.21.1.365-378>
- Hidayat, M., Rozak, R. W. A., Hakam, K. A., Kembara, M. D., & Parhan, M. (2022). Character education in Indonesia: How is it internalized and implemented in virtual learning? *Jurnal Cakrawala Pendidikan*, 41(1), 186–198.
- Mahbubi, M., & Sa'diyah, H. (2025). Penerapan pendekatan kontekstual terhadap motivasi belajar siswa pada mata pembelajaran PAI. *ANSIRU PAI: Pengembangan Profesi Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam*, 8(2), 168–176.
- Maulana, M. I. (2022). Teachers' enactments of character education: A case study from Indonesia. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*, 123–132.
- Rahmawati, L., Supardi, K. I., & Sulistyaningsih, T. (2019). Contextual Teaching and Learning Integrated with Character Education to Improve Student's

Motivation and Character in Concentration of Solutions Topic at Pharmacy Vocational School. *Journal of Innovative Science Education*, 8(3), 239–247.

Rarasati, P. M. D., Lapasere, S., & Rahmawati, D. (2025). Strategi kepala sekolah dalam menerapkan pendidikan karakter pada siswa sekolah dasar. *Kelola: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan*, 12(1), 90–104.

Rohman, K. N. (2024). Sinergi guru pendidikan agama islam dan bimbingan konseling dalam meningkatkan efikasi diri siswa di MAN 3 Bantul. *Indonesian Journal of Action Research*, 3(2), 95–103.

Safitri, N. M. (2015). Implementasi pendidikan karakter melalui kultur sekolah di SMP N 14 Yogyakarta. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*.
<https://jurnal.uny.ac.id/index.php/jpka/article/view/8621>

Sakban, A., & Sundawa, D. (2023). Character education: Direction and priority for national character development in Indonesia. *Jurnal Kependidikan: Jurnal Hasil Penelitian Dan Kajian Kepustakaan Di Bidang Pendidikan, Pengajaran, Dan Pembelajaran*, 9(3), 794–807.

Sislan, M., Maulana, G. A., & Wati, F. K. (2022). Keteladanan guru dalam pembentukan karakter siswa. *Fikri: Jurnal Kajian Agama, Sosial Dan Budaya*, 7(2).

Sobri, M., Nursaptini, N., Widodo, A., & Sutisna, D. (2019). Pembentukan karakter disiplin siswa melalui kultur sekolah. *Harmoni Sosial: Jurnal Pendidikan IPS*, 6(1), 61–71.

Supaiseh, S. A., & Astutik, K. (2026). Peran Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah dalam Membangun Budaya Sekolah yang Positif. *JPIK–Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Dan Studi Keislaman*, 2(2), 288–302.

Supraptiningrum, S., & Agustini, A. (2015). Membangun Karakter siswa melalui budaya sekolah di sekolah dasar. *Jurnal Pendidikan Karakter*.
<https://jurnal.uny.ac.id/index.php/jpka/article/view/8625>