



RELIGIOUS VALUE INTERNALIZATION THROUGH REFLECTIVE HABITUATION IN MULTICULTURAL INDONESIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This article examines religious character formation in culturally and religiously diverse primary-school environments through the lens of character education, school culture, and contemporary Indonesian curriculum policy. The problem addressed is that routine worship and moral reminders often remain ceremonial when they are not followed by guided reflection, dialogic meaning-making, and consistent modelling across the school day. The study aims to formulate a coherent pedagogical model explaining how reflective habituation can strengthen religious values expressed as faith, gratitude, honesty, empathy, tolerance, and responsible conduct toward others in multicultural Indonesian primary schools. The article uses an integrative literature review and conceptual synthesis of recent academic literature, education policy documents, and character education theory published within the last decade. The synthesis indicates five central findings: structured moral routines require explicit meaning-making; students need repeated opportunities to practise values in authentic social situations; teacher modelling and peer interaction mediate value internalization; reflection converts behaviour into moral awareness; and school-family-community alignment is necessary for sustainability. The article contributes a practical framework consisting of value orientation, learning design, guided practice, reflective assessment, and institutional reinforcement. The proposed model is intended to support schools in designing character education that is systematic, culturally relevant, and pedagogically accountable.

Keywords: religious value internalization; reflective habituation; character education; multicultural primary school; Indonesia

INTRODUCTION

Character education has returned to the centre of educational debate because schools are increasingly expected to prepare learners not only for academic achievement but also for ethical participation in plural, digital, and socially complex societies. In the Indonesian context, this expectation is intensified by the national commitment to form learners who are competent, faithful, independent, collaborative, critical, creative, and capable of living with diversity. The focus of this article is religious character formation in culturally and religiously diverse primary-school environments, an issue that is significant because student character is not formed through isolated advice but through repeated social experiences, institutional culture, and reflective

meaning-making. This orientation is consistent with contemporary scholarship which treats character as a set of learnable dispositions rather than a fixed personal trait.

The urgency of the problem lies in the distance between normative character slogans and everyday pedagogical practice. Many schools already display moral values in vision statements, classroom posters, morning routines, and extracurricular programs. However, the educational impact of these activities depends on whether students are helped to understand the moral reason behind the routine, practise it in authentic contexts, receive feedback, and connect it with their own decisions. When value education is reduced to ceremonial repetition, students may comply temporarily without developing stable moral judgement. For that reason, this article examines how reflective habituation can serve as a systematic pathway from external regulation to internalized character.

The Indonesian curriculum environment provides a relevant foundation for this discussion. The Pancasila Student Profile emphasizes holistic character and competence formation across six interrelated dimensions, including faith and noble character, global diversity, gotong royong, independence, critical reasoning, and creativity. These dimensions require learning designs that are not limited to cognitive transmission. They demand pedagogical arrangements in which students encounter real problems, negotiate responsibilities, reflect on consequences, and experience values as part of everyday school life. In this sense, religious values expressed as faith, gratitude, honesty, empathy, tolerance, and responsible conduct toward others should be treated as a pedagogical outcome that can be intentionally cultivated through curricular and co-curricular design.

International literature also supports the need for integrated character education. Social and emotional learning studies show that students require explicit opportunities to develop self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. At the same time, moral and character education scholarship argues that character formation requires schoolwide coherence: adults must model the values they teach, institutional norms must reinforce them, and students must be given chances to practise them in increasingly autonomous situations. These arguments are particularly relevant for multicultural Indonesian primary schools, where students encounter overlapping influences from family, peers, religious communities, digital media, and local culture.

A specific challenge in this topic is that routine worship and moral reminders often remain ceremonial when they are not followed by guided reflection, dialogic meaning-making, and consistent modelling across the school day. This challenge is pedagogical, not merely administrative. It cannot be solved only by adding more rules, increasing slogans, or delivering more moral lectures. Instead, the school must organize learning experiences in which values become visible in action. Students need to see how values solve real interpersonal problems, how they structure responsibility toward others, and how they guide decisions when no teacher is directly supervising them. This article therefore positions character education as a process of internalization supported by practice, modelling, reflection, and institutional consistency.

The theoretical basis of the article combines social learning theory, reflective practice, moral internalization theory, and the Pancasila Student Profile. Social learning theory explains why students imitate significant adults and peers, especially when the observed behaviour is rewarded or respected. Reflective and experiential learning perspectives explain why repeated action must be followed by interpretation in order to become personally meaningful. Culturally responsive pedagogy explains why character education should not be detached from learners social worlds. Finally,

the Pancasila Student Profile provides a normative Indonesian framework that connects individual virtue with civic responsibility.

This article also assumes that character education must be multicultural and dialogic. In diverse school communities, values cannot be taught as narrow conformity to one group identity. They must be introduced as moral commitments that support respect, responsibility, care, and common welfare across difference. This is particularly important in Indonesia, where classrooms may contain students from different ethnic, linguistic, religious, socioeconomic, and digital backgrounds. A character education model that is insensitive to plurality may create obedience but not moral maturity. Conversely, a dialogic model can help students connect their own value traditions with shared public ethics.

Previous studies on character education in Indonesia have examined habituation, teacher modelling, school culture, local wisdom, digital citizenship, and the Pancasila Student Profile. These studies generally agree that values are strengthened when they are embedded in routines and reinforced by teachers, families, and communities. However, there remains a need to synthesize these strands into a practical framework that explains how a particular character value can move from curriculum aspiration into student behaviour. This article addresses that gap by developing a conceptual and operational model for reflective habituation.

The article is guided by three research questions. First, what conceptual mechanisms explain the relationship between reflective habituation and the strengthening of religious values expressed as faith, gratitude, honesty, empathy, tolerance, and responsible conduct toward others? Second, what learning conditions are required so that character education becomes meaningful rather than ceremonial? Third, how can schools operationalize the model through planning, practice, assessment, and institutional reinforcement? These questions are answered through an integrative review and thematic synthesis of recent literature and policy documents.

The contribution of this article is both theoretical and practical. Theoretically, it clarifies that character formation is not a single intervention but an ecology of repeated practice, adult modelling, peer interaction, reflection, and assessment. Practically, it provides a structured model that teachers and school leaders can adapt to their local conditions. The model is deliberately framed as flexible because character education must respond to student development, school culture, community expectations, and available resources. The next section explains the method used to build the synthesis.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed an integrative literature review and conceptual synthesis. The approach was selected because the article aims to construct a pedagogical model rather than to test a statistical hypothesis. The review focused on literature discussing character education, value internalization, school culture, student discipline, digital citizenship, local wisdom, contextual learning, social-emotional learning, and the Pancasila Student Profile. Policy documents and scholarly articles were treated as complementary sources because character education in Indonesia is shaped by both academic debate and national curriculum direction.

The review used four stages: identification, screening, thematic coding, and model construction. Identification began with key terms derived from the article title and theoretical framework. Screening prioritized publications from 2016 to 2026, with emphasis on peer-reviewed articles, scholarly books, policy documents, and research reports that explicitly discussed character formation in school settings. Sources were excluded when they did not address educational practice, when the publication date

fell outside the period, or when the discussion was unrelated to the value focus of the article.

The unit of analysis was not individual student behaviour but the pedagogical mechanism through which schools attempt to cultivate religious values expressed as faith, gratitude, honesty, empathy, tolerance, and responsible conduct toward others. Therefore, the review examined how learning activities, teacher behaviour, institutional routines, peer relations, family participation, and community resources were described in the literature. This level of analysis is appropriate because character education is rarely produced by a single classroom technique. It emerges from the interaction of personal, social, cultural, and institutional conditions.

The thematic coding process used deductive and inductive categories. Deductive categories were derived from character education theory, including modelling, habituation, reflection, practice, reinforcement, and assessment. Inductive categories were added when recurring themes appeared across the literature, such as authenticity of context, digital mediation, community validation, student voice, and the risk of ceremonial implementation. Each source was read for its claim, educational mechanism, practical implication, and limitation.

Validity in this article was pursued through conceptual triangulation. Findings were compared across theoretical perspectives, Indonesian curriculum policy, and recent empirical or review-based studies. A theme was considered strong when it appeared in different types of sources and when it provided a plausible explanation for how reflective habituation could influence student character. This procedure does not replace field verification, but it supports a systematic and transparent conceptual synthesis.

The analysis produced three outputs. The first was a thematic map of the main mechanisms linking pedagogy and character outcomes. The second was an operational table translating each mechanism into school practices and observable indicators. The third was a conceptual figure showing the sequence from value orientation to internalized student conduct. These outputs are presented in the results and discussion section to make the synthesis useful for teachers, school leaders, and future researchers.

Because the study is literature-based, its findings should be interpreted as a model for planning and further empirical testing rather than as evidence of causal effectiveness in a particular school. The proposed model can guide classroom action research, qualitative case studies, or mixed-method evaluation in multicultural Indonesian primary schools. Future studies may test the model with student questionnaires, observation rubrics, teacher interviews, parent feedback, and longitudinal behavioural records.

Ethical considerations in this review concerned accurate representation of sources, avoidance of fabricated field data, and clear distinction between synthesized findings and empirical claims. No student participants were involved, and no personal data were collected. The article therefore does not claim to report direct classroom intervention results. Instead, it presents a scholarly synthesis designed to support evidence-informed character education practice.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The synthesis indicates that reflective habituation strengthens character when it is designed as a coherent cycle rather than as a single activity. The cycle begins with value orientation, continues through guided practice, becomes meaningful through reflection, and is stabilized through institutional reinforcement. This finding is important because religious values expressed as faith, gratitude, honesty, empathy, tolerance,

and responsible conduct toward others cannot be developed only through verbal instruction. Students need repeated opportunities to enact the value, observe trusted adults performing it, and evaluate their own conduct in relation to shared moral standards.

Table 1 summarizes the review logic used to construct the synthesis. The table does not represent a bibliometric database count; rather, it presents the inclusion logic used to identify sources that were most relevant for building the article model. The strongest sources were those that connected character education with actual school practice, such as habituation, project work, teacher modelling, school culture, digital citizenship, or contextual learning. Policy sources were included when they clarified the normative direction of Indonesian education, especially the Pancasila Student Profile.

Table 1
Review Focus and Inclusion Logic

Component	Operational decision in this article	Rationale
Time frame	Sources published from 2016 to 2026	To align the synthesis with current character education and curriculum discourse
Document type	Peer-reviewed articles, scholarly books, policy documents, and institutional reports	To combine theoretical, empirical, and policy perspectives
Inclusion focus	Sources explaining reflective habituation, religious values expressed as faith, gratitude, honesty, empathy, tolerance, and responsible conduct toward others, or school-based character formation	To maintain relevance to the article problem
Analytical lens	social learning theory, reflective practice, moral internalization theory, and the Pancasila Student Profile	To connect findings with established educational theory
Output	Thematic synthesis, implementation matrix, and conceptual model	To produce a practical article aligned with the journal template

Source: Compiled by the author from the integrative review framework, 2026.

The first thematic result is the importance of habituation with meaning. In the literature, character grows when students encounter values in situations that are concrete enough to demand action. Abstract exhortation is insufficient because it does not require students to negotiate competing interests, take responsibility for consequences, or recognize the needs of others. In multicultural Indonesian primary schools, this means that teachers must design routines and learning tasks that make religious values expressed as faith, gratitude, honesty, empathy, tolerance, and responsible conduct toward others visible in decisions, interaction, and classroom organization. The issue is not whether students can define a value, but whether they can apply it when the situation becomes inconvenient.

This theme also shows that values become durable when students experience moral coherence across the school environment. A classroom may teach responsibility, empathy, or discipline, but the effect weakens if school rules are inconsistent or if adults model contradictory behaviour. Teacher consistency therefore functions as a hidden curriculum. Students interpret punctuality, fairness, careful speech, and respect for others through the behaviour of adults before they accept such values as personal commitments. The operational implication is that character programs must begin with adult alignment, not only student instruction.

The second thematic result is the role of reflective dialogue. Reflection helps students move from behavioural repetition to moral understanding. Without reflection, habituation can produce compliance but not internalization. Reflection may take the form of short journals, classroom dialogue, peer feedback, teacher questioning, or portfolios. The essential element is that students are invited to explain why a behaviour matters, who benefits from it, what difficulties occurred, and what improvement is

needed. This process develops moral language and strengthens the link between action and conscience.

Reflection is particularly important in plural and digital contexts because students often face situations where rules are not immediately clear. They may need to decide whether to share information, how to respond to conflict, how to distribute group work, or how to respect differences. In these cases, moral maturity requires judgement rather than mechanical obedience. The article therefore positions reflection as the pedagogical bridge between external school values and internal student agency. It enables students to see themselves as moral actors rather than passive recipients of rules.

The third thematic result concerns teacher exemplarity. Across the reviewed sources, character education becomes more effective when students participate in structured practice with clear roles, feedback, and assessment. Practice gives students a chance to transform moral vocabulary into habits of action. In project learning, practice may involve completing agreed tasks on time, documenting contributions, listening to peers, and improving a shared product. In habituation programs, practice may involve routine greetings, worship, cleanliness, queueing, or respectful communication. In digital literacy, practice may involve verifying information, protecting privacy, and refusing harmful sharing.

This emphasis on practice also requires assessment reform. Character assessment should not rely only on teacher impressions or final products. It should combine observation rubrics, student reflection, peer comments, evidence of task completion, and records of improvement over time. Such assessment should be formative rather than punitive. Its purpose is to help students recognize progress, receive specific feedback, and build self-regulation. Table 2 translates the thematic findings into observable school mechanisms and expected student indicators.

Table 2
Thematic Synthesis of Character Education Mechanisms

Theme	Mechanism	Expected student indicator
Habituation with meaning	routine value exposure becomes character-forming only when students understand its moral meaning	Students show observable growth in habituation with meaning through repeated conduct, reflection, and peer interaction.
Reflective dialogue	teacher modelling is the strongest mediator between religious routines and student conduct	Students show observable growth in reflective dialogue through repeated conduct, reflection, and peer interaction.
Teacher exemplarity	multicultural dialogue prevents religious habituation from becoming exclusivist	Students show observable growth in teacher exemplarity through repeated conduct, reflection, and peer interaction.
Multicultural tolerance	reflection journals, class circles, and peer feedback translate rituals into moral reasoning	Students show observable growth in multicultural tolerance through repeated conduct, reflection, and peer interaction.
Home-school reinforcement	whole-school consistency is required to align classroom, playground, and family reinforcement	Students show observable growth in home-school reinforcement through repeated conduct, reflection, and peer interaction.

Source: Processed from reviewed literature and policy documents, 2026.

The fourth thematic result is multicultural tolerance. Character education must be culturally and socially grounded. When learning tasks are connected to local wisdom, religious ethics, community problems, or school culture, students can see why values matter outside the classroom. Context prevents character education from becoming an abstract moral lecture. It also helps teachers respect the cultural resources that students bring from families and communities. However, cultural grounding must remain inclusive. Local and religious values should be presented in a way that supports dignity, care, and cooperation among all students.

The synthesis suggests that contextualization produces two benefits. First, it gives students authentic reasons to practise character because the task affects real people or real relationships. Second, it allows teachers to connect national curriculum values with local meanings familiar to students. For example, responsibility can be connected to community trust, discipline to collective order, digital ethics to religious accountability, and gotong royong to mutual assistance. This connection strengthens relevance and reduces the gap between curriculum language and student experience.

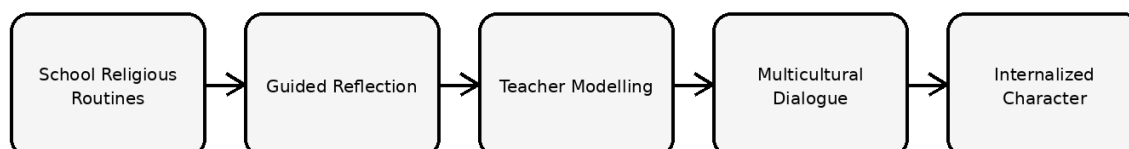
The fifth thematic result is home-school reinforcement. Character is sustained when reinforcement extends beyond a single teacher or subject. Students should encounter similar expectations in classroom learning, extracurricular activities, school ceremonies, digital communication, family interaction, and community service. This does not mean that all contexts must be identical. It means that the core message should be coherent: students are expected to act responsibly, care for others, respect difference, and reflect on consequences. Incoherent reinforcement weakens internalization because students learn that values are situational performances rather than stable commitments.

The operational model in Figure 1 describes this process as a sequence of five connected components. The model begins with value orientation because students need to know the moral focus of learning. It continues with guided practice because values must be enacted. It adds modelling and dialogue because students learn through example and interpretation. It includes reflection because students need to evaluate their own conduct. Finally, it ends with internalized character because the desired outcome is self-regulated behaviour that continues even when external supervision decreases.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model of Character Internalization

Conceptual Model of Character Internalization



Source: Compiled for this article, 2026.

Table 3 presents a practical implementation matrix. The table can be adapted by teachers during lesson planning, by school leaders during program evaluation, and by researchers during instrument development. The matrix deliberately separates pedagogical activity from evidence of character growth. This distinction is crucial because the existence of a program does not automatically prove character formation. Evidence must be gathered from student behaviour, student reflection, peer interaction, teacher observation, and community feedback.

Table 3
Operational Model for School Implementation

Stage	Teacher action	Evidence to collect
Value orientation	Introduce religious values expressed as faith, gratitude, honesty, empathy, tolerance, and responsible conduct toward others through cases, questions, and shared standards	Lesson plan, student baseline reflection, class agreement
Guided practice	Organize activities using reflective habituation with clear student roles	Observation notes, role checklist, task completion records
Reflective assessment	Ask students to explain decisions, difficulties, and improvement plans	Reflection journal, peer feedback, teacher rubric
Institutional reinforcement	Align classroom, school routine, family communication, and community support	School program notes, parent feedback, community validation
Continuous improvement	Review evidence and revise the learning design	Teacher meeting record and follow-up action plan

Source: Developed by the author for implementation planning, 2026.

The discussion confirms that reflective habituation is most effective when it combines normative clarity and pedagogical openness. Normative clarity is needed so that schools can define what value is being cultivated and why it matters. Pedagogical openness is needed so that students can explore the meaning of the value through dialogue, project work, feedback, and contextual problem solving. A program that has clarity without openness may become authoritarian. A program that has openness without clarity may become unfocused. The proposed model attempts to balance both conditions.

Another implication concerns teacher professional development. Teachers need support not only in content delivery but also in moral facilitation. They must be able to design reflective questions, manage dialogue, distribute roles fairly, respond to conflict, and assess character development without humiliating students. This requires school-level planning and collaborative teacher learning. Character education should therefore be included in teacher meetings, lesson study, mentoring, and supervision. It should not be treated as an additional administrative burden attached to already crowded lesson plans.

The model also has implications for school leadership. School leaders are responsible for creating an ecology in which values are consistently communicated and practised. This includes aligning school rules, teacher conduct, student organizations, parent communication, digital policy, and community partnerships. Leadership is especially important because isolated teachers may struggle to sustain character programs when the wider school culture contradicts them. A coherent school culture can convert individual teacher effort into institutional habit.

Although the model is promising, several limitations should be acknowledged. Literature-based synthesis cannot determine the magnitude of impact in a specific school. The model may also require adaptation across age groups, school types, cultural contexts, and resource conditions. In schools with limited teacher capacity, implementation should begin with small routines and simple reflection tools before expanding to complex projects. In schools with strong community support, the model can be extended into community service or local problem-solving initiatives.

Future empirical research should test the model through classroom action research, qualitative case studies, or mixed-method evaluation. Researchers can develop observation rubrics for religious values expressed as faith, gratitude, honesty, empathy, tolerance, and responsible conduct toward others, compare student reflection before and after intervention, examine teacher modelling practices, and measure school climate changes. Longitudinal research is especially needed because character growth is gradual. Short interventions may produce visible behaviour change, but internalization requires repeated practice across time and contexts.

A further issue emerging from the synthesis is the need to distinguish character instruction from character formation. Instruction can introduce definitions, examples, and normative reasons, but formation requires students to experience value conflict, make choices, receive feedback, and revise behaviour. This distinction is crucial for religious character formation in culturally and religiously diverse primary-school environments because students may be able to repeat moral vocabulary while still failing to apply it in peer interaction, group work, digital communication, or school routines. The practical task of the teacher is therefore to design situations in which values must be enacted rather than merely recited.

The second implication is that reflective habituation should be situated in developmental progression. Younger students require concrete examples, direct modelling, and short reflective prompts. Older students can be invited to analyse cases, negotiate group agreements, and evaluate competing moral claims. A developmental approach prevents character education from becoming either too abstract for children or too simplistic for adolescents. It also helps teachers formulate indicators that are realistic for the learner age and the social complexity of the learning task.

The third implication concerns the language of assessment. Schools often hesitate to assess character because they fear subjectivity or moral labelling. This concern is valid, but it does not mean that character cannot be evaluated. Assessment should focus on evidence of behaviour and reflection, not on permanent judgement of student personality. For example, teachers can document whether students complete agreed roles, repair harm after conflict, respect digital privacy, listen to others, or explain the reasons behind a decision. Such evidence makes religious values expressed as faith, gratitude, honesty, empathy, tolerance, and responsible conduct toward others more observable while avoiding excessive moral judgement.

The fourth implication is the need for student voice. Character education is more likely to be internalized when students participate in defining class agreements, identifying problems, proposing solutions, and evaluating their own growth. Student voice does not remove teacher authority; rather, it changes authority from command into guided moral participation. In multicultural Indonesian primary schools, this is especially relevant because students are not only recipients of cultural and religious values but also active interpreters of those values in everyday situations.

The fifth implication relates to cultural translation. Values such as responsibility, discipline, religious commitment, digital ethics, and gotong royong have broad normative meaning, but students understand them through local stories, family expectations, peer norms, school traditions, and media experiences. Effective character education therefore translates general values into situated examples. This translation should be careful: it should preserve local meaning while still opening space for inclusive dialogue and respect for difference. When translation is successful, students perceive character education as relevant rather than imposed.

The sixth implication is that school programs must address contradiction. Students quickly notice when official values conflict with adult practice, school policy, or peer culture. For instance, a school may promote respect but tolerate humiliating discipline; it may teach responsibility but assign group tasks without monitoring unequal participation; it may teach digital ethics but communicate through uncontrolled online groups. Such contradictions reduce credibility. The model developed in this article therefore requires schools to audit their routines and communication patterns before expecting students to internalize the desired value.

The seventh implication is the importance of restorative response. Character education does not assume that students will always behave correctly. Mistakes,

conflict, negligence, and harmful communication are part of moral learning. A restorative approach asks what happened, who was affected, what responsibility must be taken, and how relationships can be repaired. This approach is more educational than purely punitive response because it connects consequence with moral reasoning. It is particularly useful when the target outcome is religious values expressed as faith, gratitude, honesty, empathy, tolerance, and responsible conduct toward others.

The eighth implication concerns teacher collaboration. A single enthusiastic teacher can create a strong classroom program, but schoolwide character formation requires shared standards among teachers. Collaboration can take the form of common rubrics, weekly reflection themes, shared observation notes, or joint planning of projects and routines. Teacher collaboration also protects the program from inconsistency when students move across subjects and grade levels. This is important because internalization depends on repeated and coherent experience across contexts.

The ninth implication concerns family engagement. Families do not need to reproduce school programs exactly, but they should understand the value focus, the expected behaviour, and the language of reflection used by the school. Simple communication tools can help: a short parent note, student reflection portfolio, home discussion prompt, or digital agreement. When families are involved, students receive reinforcement beyond school hours. When families are ignored, school values may remain confined to the classroom and fail to influence daily conduct.

The tenth implication is that character education must remain flexible during digital transformation. Digital platforms can support documentation, collaboration, feedback, and access to learning resources. However, technology can also create distraction, anonymity, speed of harmful communication, and superficial engagement. The educational question is not whether technology should be used, but under what ethical and pedagogical conditions it strengthens student character. Schools need explicit norms for digital participation, not only technical instructions.

The eleventh implication is related to equity. Character programs may unintentionally privilege students who already possess confidence, language skills, supportive families, or high academic performance. Teachers must ensure that quieter students, students from less advantaged backgrounds, and students with different cultural experiences can participate meaningfully. Equitable participation requires structured roles, accessible reflection formats, and sensitive feedback. Without this attention, character education may reward visible performance rather than genuine moral growth.

The twelfth implication is sustainability. Programs often begin strongly but weaken when there is no monitoring, teacher rotation, leadership change, or evidence system. Sustainability requires simple routines that can be maintained, clear documentation, teacher ownership, and periodic review. The model proposed in this article is therefore not a one-time project. It is a cyclical approach in which schools plan, practise, observe, reflect, and revise character education continuously.

Taken together, these implications show that reflective habituation should be understood as a school improvement agenda. It affects curriculum planning, teacher modelling, classroom management, assessment, family communication, and institutional culture. This broad scope may appear demanding, but it also explains why character education matters. Values become real when they organize how a school teaches, communicates, resolves conflict, uses technology, and relates to the surrounding community.

The thirteenth implication concerns the relationship between moral knowledge and moral habit. Students need to know what a value means, but knowledge becomes

character only when it is practised until it shapes attention, emotion, and decision. Teachers should therefore combine explanation with repetition, but repetition must remain meaningful. This is why the model places reflection after practice: students are asked not only to do the right action but also to understand how the action affects themselves, others, and the community.

The fourteenth implication is the importance of narrative. Stories, cases, local histories, religious examples, and student experiences help transform values into memorable moral images. Narrative is powerful because students can imagine consequences, identify motives, and discuss alternatives before they face similar situations directly. In multicultural Indonesian primary schools, narrative can connect curriculum values with cultural memory and contemporary student life, especially when the teacher invites comparison between tradition and present challenges.

The fifteenth implication is the need to avoid tokenism. A school may hold a character day, a project exhibition, or a digital campaign, yet these events do not automatically produce character. Tokenism occurs when the visible product becomes more important than the learning process. To avoid this problem, teachers should examine whether students actually planned responsibly, cooperated fairly, reflected honestly, and changed behaviour. This process evidence is more educationally meaningful than decorative outputs alone.

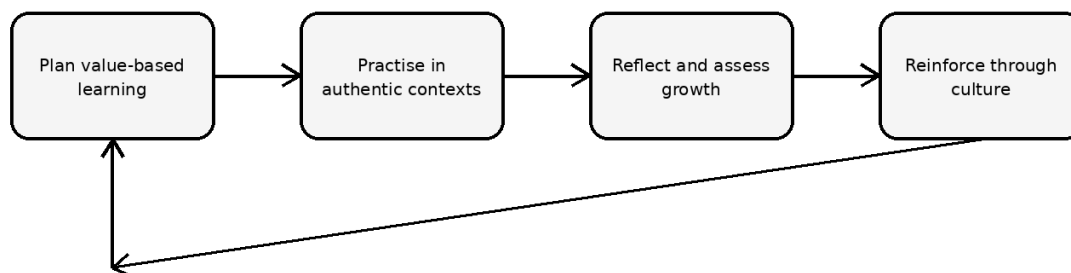
The sixteenth implication is that character education should be documented in a manageable way. Documentation does not need to be excessive; it can consist of brief observation notes, selected student reflections, peer feedback sheets, and teacher summaries. Such documentation helps teachers identify patterns, provide specific feedback, and communicate progress to parents. It also supports future research because it creates evidence that can be analysed systematically rather than relying only on general impressions.

The proposed framework can be used by different stakeholders. Teachers can use it to design lessons and reflection tasks. School leaders can use it to evaluate consistency between policy and practice. Parents can use it to understand how home reinforcement supports school values. Researchers can use it to build instruments for observing religious values expressed as faith, gratitude, honesty, empathy, tolerance, and responsible conduct toward others. In this way, the article provides not only conceptual argument but also a practical bridge to future empirical work.

Figure 2

Implementation Cycle for School-Based Character Education

Implementation Cycle for School-Based Character Education



CONCLUSION

This article concludes that reflective habituation can strengthen religious values expressed as faith, gratitude, honesty, empathy, tolerance, and responsible conduct toward others when it is designed as an integrated process of value orientation, guided practice, modelling, reflection, assessment, and institutional reinforcement. Character education should not be reduced to slogans, ceremonies, or administrative compliance. It should be organized as a learning ecology in which students repeatedly encounter values, practise them in meaningful situations, and interpret their moral significance.

The main finding is that internalization requires coherence. Students are more likely to develop stable character when teacher behaviour, classroom activities, school culture, family communication, and community experiences communicate the same moral direction. In multicultural Indonesian primary schools, this coherence is essential because students learn from diverse sources and often face moral situations that are complex, plural, and mediated by digital life.

The article contributes a practical model that schools can adapt for planning and evaluation. The model emphasizes authentic context, teacher exemplarity, reflective dialogue, observable indicators, and whole-school alignment. These elements make character education more empirical and accountable because teachers can connect program activities with evidence of student growth.

Further research should validate the model in real classrooms through observation, interviews, student reflection analysis, and longitudinal assessment. Such research is necessary to determine which components are most influential, what barriers schools encounter, and how character education can remain culturally relevant while supporting inclusive civic values.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author acknowledges the contribution of recent scholarship on character education, Indonesian curriculum policy, and school-based moral development that informed the conceptual synthesis of this manuscript. No external funding was received for the preparation of this article.

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