

Encouragement And Dialogue in Developing EFL Students' Characters: A Case of Indonesian Islamic Schools

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Abstract

This study aims to reveal how teachers incorporate character education in an Islamic private school in Bandung. The study examines two teachers from different levels of education: elementary school and senior high school. This research uses a qualitative method, and its design is a case study. For the framework of analysis, the study draws on Shaaban's character education framework (2005), which comprises seven elements: language, messages, methods, activities, outcomes, resources, and assessment. These elements are divided into three categories based on the roles of the teachers, the students, and the evaluation process. The study reveals that the elementary school teacher primarily uses explanations to encourage students to behave well, while senior high school teacher mostly uses dialogue to improve students' behavior. Furthermore, the activities in senior high school include many messages related to *Profil Pelajar Pancasila*, which cover different dimensions. Thus, the study aims to highlight the differences in how character education is delivered in the elementary and senior high school and to establish a framework for incorporating character education into EFL classrooms using Shaaban's theory (2005).

Keyword: character, character education, Emancipated Curriculum, *Profil Pelajar Pancasila* Shaaban's character education framework.

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INTRODUCTION

Studying character education is intriguing because it allows for the observation of students' behavior in the classroom, which can reveal whether they have embraced the principles of character education (Mansyur, Natsir, & Hasana, 2021; Watts & Kristjanssen, 2022; Supaat & Muslim, 2023). An illustrative case is that of Aditya Hasibuan, the son of a high-ranking policeman in Medan, who was reported to have mistreated a man named Ken Admiral on television (detik.news.com, 2023). This incident exemplifies the issue of character education, suggesting that some Indonesian youth may exhibit arrogance due to their parents' status, regardless of their education. It highlights the incomplete implementation of character education in our country. This research aims to examine students' behavior in the classroom and how teachers establish rules to foster discipline for character education.

The government must take serious action regarding teenagers' attitudes because, in the future, they will manage and lead the nation (; Ruswandi, Firdaus, Ruswandi, & Supriatna, 2023; Arif, Nurdin, & Elya, 2023). Youngsters need to develop both their skills and personalities, and education provides the opportunity to do so through various teaching methods (Saniati & Othman, 2019; Rahman & Aliman, 2020; Kejora, Sittika, & Syahid, 2021; Marshaka, Hariri, & Sowiyah, 2021; As'aril, 2022; Iksal, Hayani, & Aslan, 2024). An example taken from the other researcher is from Farwati, Iskak, Mahnun (2023) about the Emancipated Curriculum and the implementation of P5 (Proyek Penguatan Profil Pelajar

Pancasila) aim to support the development. In addition, some Islamic schools combine Islamic values with an archipelago perspective to nurture their students, along with other concepts such as moderation and Pancasila (Subaidi, 2020; Syarnubi, Mansir, Purnomo, Harto, & Hawi, 2021; Yumnah, 2021). Although students still make mistakes, sometimes even serious ones, teachers can guide their attitudes and help prevent moral degradation. Students' mistakes are caused by several factors, such as lifestyle, peer influence, social media, and the internet (Rohaeni, Wasliman, Rostini, & Iriantara, 2021; Mukhlisin, Yuniawati, & Atsalawi, 2023). Negative content from the media is absorbed by students, and many mass media outlets report on students' delinquency.

This study was driven by the many concern voiced by teachers regrading moral degradation among Indonesian teenagers and children. Character education appears to have especially became a major issue after the COVID-19 pandemic in 2023 (Pranajaya, Syamsul, Silahudin, & Husna, 2023). Teaching in the post-COVID-19 period at the beginning of 2023 was hybrid, with 50% online and 50% offline learning. However, by the middle of 2023, the learning mode shifted entirely to offline. In hybrid learning, several problems arose, such as uncontrolled student behavior, especially among elementary school students (da Silva Vieira & Barbosa, 2023). The way they talk has caused concern among their teachers. In the post-pandemic period, as students returned to offline learning, it became evident that they were speaking in a manner more typical of adults. However, families also play a critical role in teaching character to their children. Parents can utilize various resources, such as stories of the Prophet, reading the Quran, and engaging in discussions. Parents should act as teachers themselves, building strong communication with their children and instilling values that they can carry forward.

As a concept of character refers to how someone thinks, perceives, and behaves, or it can be understood as the positive qualities of a person, which typically include moral values, emotional capacity, honesty, and fairness (Birhan, Shiferaw, Amsalu, Tamiru, & Tiruye, 2021; McGrath, Han, Brown, & Miendl, 2021; Watts, Fullard, & Peterson, 2021). All aspects related to ethical values and virtues are inherently connected to character. Although character can be linked to affective and other aspects, it ultimately reflects an individual's personality. Several scholars have defined character, including Lickona (1993), Lee (2001), Berkowitz (2002), Berkowitz and Bier (2005), Lapsley and Narvaez (2005), and Mudana (2019). The definition of character should begin with the earliest one, from Lickona (1993), but Lapsley and Narvaez (2005) offer a more relevant definition because it ties character to Greek history, where the concept is viewed as ancient. Lapsley and Narvaez (2005) define character as a word derived from the Greek term *charakter*, meaning "to mark," similar to creating a sculpture. Just as an artist requires skill to shape a sculpture perfectly, individuals need both theory and practice to shape their personalities and develop good character.

Character education is a program designed to incorporate values that shape students' character into the school curriculum. Its primary aim is to educate the younger generation to develop good character as a foundation for their future. There are several definitions of character education provided by experts, one of which is Professor Larry P. Nucci, who earned his PhD in the Psychology Department at the University of California. He is the author of *Handbook of Moral and Character Education*. According to Nucci (2008), character education is defined as any school program, created by teachers and school principals, aimed at shaping the behavior of students directly and systematically. This is achieved by promoting non-relativistic values that bring about positive changes in students' behavior. This definition suggests that character education is a structured program within the education system, designed with specific plans and goals, to shape character and integrate educational values into students' lives.

In line with this, Shabaan's character education framework (2005) consists of seven elements namely language skills, messages, methods, activities, outcomes, resources, and assessment. The seven elements are divided into three parts based on what the teachers are doing in the classroom, what the

students are doing in the classroom, and assessment. Language skills refer to the type of English material used in the classroom. Messages are the values expected to be imparted to students in the context of Pancasila dimensions. Methods describe how teachers deliver character education. Outcomes are similar to messages but are expressed in adjectives such as disciplined, independent, and obedient. Activities involve student interactions that incorporate character education in the classroom. Resources pertain to materials that contain character education. Finally, evaluation focuses on how character education is assessed in schools.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative research method, which encompasses various data collection techniques such as interview, observation, and document gathering in the form of lesson plans and student's summative reports. The design most suitable for this study is a case study (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). This research is a case study because it focuses on a specific case to be observed and analyzed until it reaches a conclusion. Additionally, this study uses a "How" research question, which can be effectively addressed through a case study design. A case study is a research approach that involves in-depth investigation of activities and processes, with a focus on a particular time period and project. This research design collects detailed information using various instruments over an extended period.

Research Site and Participants

The selection of the research site and participants is based on the following criteria: 1) the school must be an Islamic school, 2) the elementary and secondary level is EFL classroom, 3) the school uses Emancipated Curriculum. For this research, the school gave concern to conduct research at the fourth and tenth grade. The fourth grade comprised of 25 students and tenth grade comprised 30 to 35 students. The school is given pseudonym Alphabet school.

Data Collection and Data Analysis

The data for this research was obtained using three instruments: interviews, observations, and document analysis. Data collection took place over approximately three months. The data collected included interview transcripts, observation sheets, and document analysis. According to Cresswell (2012), data analysis with these three instruments follows a set of procedures. First, the observation data is analyzed in three steps: transcription, coding, and categorization. The transcripts were triangulated to other data sources such as observation sheets and the document. Every word was transcribed to ensure accuracy and avoid bias. After that, the data were coded and sorted into descriptive categories.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

FINDINGS

The Implementation of Character Education in Primary School

Methods, Language Skills, and Messages

In this section, three elements of Shabaan's theory were combined: methods, language skills, and messages. The methods included cooperative learning, active involvement, explanation, and dialogue. Dialogue and explanation were the most commonly used in the classroom. "Introduction" refers to the language skill. The key messages were taken from the Profil Pelajar Pancasila, with a focus on the dimensions of independence, faith, devotion to God Almighty, and having noble character.

Dialogue between the teacher and students occurred when the students misbehaved, especially when they offered too many excuses. In this context, the key message from the Pancasila dimensions was independence. In elementary school, teachers would correct students' behavior by reminding them

of the rules. Additionally, the other key message in this context, to prevent repeating mistakes, was responsibility. Besides learning introductions, the students also learned how to ask for permission politely and how to respect their teacher and fellow students. The Profil Pelajar Pancasila that reflects this activity is mutual cooperation.

Mr. Andri : Okay. Can I have your attention, please? First of all, prepare your English notebooks...
Boys, also prepare your English notebooks.

Student 1 : Mister, I want to go to the toilet.

Mr. Andri : In English, it's 'May I...?'. May I go to the toilet? Please repeat after me.

Student 1 : May I go to the toilet, please?

Mr. Andri : Okay, students, I will take my phone to play the audio. Hold on. I will give you an example on page 10. Has everybody finished? Have you finished page 10? If you are ready, I am going to give you some information...

In the excerpt above, the language skill focused on polite expressions used to ask for permission to go to the toilet, similar to the previous section. The method employed was dialogue, which is important for English teachers to incorporate with their students. Repetition helped students become accustomed to respectful communication.

In the same learning session, the teacher reflected on some messages in the classroom, particularly the dimension of faith. During this session, the students learned to recognize Islamic greetings, such as "Bismillahirrahmanirrahim. Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh." The teacher then emphasized to the students the importance of performing the dzuhur prayer. The method used in this part was explanation, to highlight the dimension of faith.

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim. Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh. Today, we are going to learn about introductions. Open your book to page 25 and pay attention to the dialogue. You'll see that introducing yourself is very simple. Just say a greeting and your name. For example, 'Hi, good morning. My name is Made. I spell my name M-A-D-E.' Is that clear? I'll give you another example: 'My name is Ryan, R-Y-A-N.' Do you understand? Please take out your notes, and don't forget to write Bismillah in your English notebook. I will spell other names, and you need to write them down.

After the English lesson, all of you need to perform ablution and then go upstairs for the Dzuhur prayer. Remember, I will be monitoring your activity.

In this excerpt, Mr. Andri encouraged the students to develop good communication skills and critical thinking, as they began learning how to spell the names of other students properly. Additionally, he reminded his students not to forget to perform ablution and the dzuhur prayer. This activity conveyed messages related to the dimensions of independence and responsibility. By encouraging the students to follow his instructions, he aimed to nurture their respect for norms.

In the second meeting, Mr. Andri gave a quiz to the class. He used Google Forms and a projector to display the questions. The students viewed the screen and completed the quiz. The language skills covered in this session focused on "Shapes and Colors." The method used was explanation. As usual, the girls were disciplined and sat properly, while the boys moved around and found it challenging to sit still. The key message from this activity was the dimension of independence. The quiz consisted of only 10 items, and the teacher managed the classroom effectively.

Mr. Andri : I will give you 10 minutes to review shapes and colors. Please put away any other items. Put all your books in your bag except your English notebook and English textbook. The Bahasa Indonesia lesson is over; now it's time for English, not Bahasa Indonesia. Okay, let's start with shapes.

Circle—what is a circle? Next, what is a rectangle? The translation is persegi panjang. And oval? What is an oval? What's the translation for oval? Also, do you say triangle or tryangle? Which one is correct? Please study this lesson.

Student 1 : Mister, the translation for circle is lingkaran.

Student 2 : The translation for triangle is segitiga.

In this excerpt, the language skills and methods remained the same, focusing on shapes and colors, and were delivered through explanation. Mr. Andri managed the students, who were still engaged in the previous lesson, by reminding them that the Bahasa Indonesia lesson was over. He instructed the students to put away their materials and guided them to open their English textbooks and notebooks. The key messages conveyed the dimensions of "honesty" and "authority," promoting values of compliance and self-control. The students were expected to respect their English teacher and follow the English lesson. Another key message was related to the dimension of "independence." The students began to focus and show enthusiasm, which reflected the message of the "affection" dimension. Through this lesson, they not only learned vocabulary but also developed responsibility and respect for their teacher and the learning process.

Activities, Outcomes, and Resources

The second group of elements in Shaaban's theory includes activities, outcomes, and resources, all of which were carried out by the students, who engaged in numerous activities in the classroom from the first meeting to the eighth. But, here only some meetings would be explained. From first meeting to the third meeting. In the first meeting, the students learned about politeness and respect. They focused on introductions and practiced how to introduce themselves politely. The teacher gave the example and the students follow what the teacher said. It needed time and habituation to make the students imitate the politeness.

In the second meeting, Mr. Andri explained to the students that they needed to open their English textbooks and notebooks. They were to close the previous lesson, which had been Bahasa Indonesia. Some male students were still preoccupied with the prior lesson until Mr. Andri warned all the students to be disciplined and follow his instructions to begin the English lesson. All the female students complied with Mr. Andri's instructions, but the male students, as usual, required more time. The expected outcome of this meeting was obedience.

In the third meeting, the students learned about the days of the week, months of the year, and schedules. The next activity provided exposure to these topics. In the future, when they became teenagers, they would likely use messaging applications on their mobile phones to connect with foreign friends. To communicate effectively, they would need to speak English and know how to express days and times in English

Most of the teaching resources for English in the 4th-grade class came from the book *Grow with English*, published by Erlangga. Throughout the observation period, this was the primary resource used by the English teacher. The book includes eight chapters covering topics such as introductions, shapes and colors, days of the week and months of the year, school subjects, time, rooms in the house, antonyms, prepositions, and objects in the living room. It also features audio content for listening exercises, accessible by scanning a QR code with a mobile phone, which plays recordings by both Indonesian and foreign speakers. Although the textbook aligns with the Merdeka curriculum, the lessons were primarily teacher-centered.

Assessment

The English teacher conducted four formative assessments on topics such as Shapes and Colors, Schedules, Subjects and Time, Rooms and Houses, Prepositions, and Things in the Living Room. These assessments included both written and spoken components. Some parts of the test were multiple-choice, while others were fill-in-the-blank. The formative assessments primarily focused on vocabulary memorization, making them more aligned with cognitive assessments. In addition to assessing students' cognitive skills, the teacher also evaluated their attitudes. He kept track of students who exhibited good behavior, and as the summative assessment approached, he used a report format that included options for describing the students' behavior.

The Implementation of Character Education in Senior High School

Character education in senior high school differed from that in elementary school. Senior high school students were required to develop both cognitive and psychomotor skills. They were also expected to work in groups, unlike in elementary school, where students tended to work individually.

Methods, Language skills, and Messages

Mrs. Diana taught language skills related to the presentation and discussion about “Mengenal Potensi Daerah” or “Getting to Know Regional Potential,” using dialogue as the method for this part of the lesson. In the middle of the class, two male students were eating, which was considered a violation. Mrs. Diana issued a warning at that moment and asked some students to recall the 38 provinces of Indonesia. The key messages from this part were critical reflecting on thoughts and thought processes. Furthermore, Mrs. Diana asked the students to brainstorm about five cities in West Java. This activity developed cooperation and interpersonal skills, when the students involved in discussion and shared their experiences with their peers. By discussing the cities, the students also developed social consciousness.

Mrs Diana : What else?

All students : North Sumatra

Mrs Diana : What else?

All students : West Sumatra

Mrs Diana : What else?

All students : East Sumatra

Mrs Diana : There is no East Sumatra... eh, don't eat in the classroom! I will take the food now what else?

All students : West Jawa

Mrs Diana : Hendrik stop eating

In this excerpt, Mrs. Diana emphasized critical thinking as the students recalled and identified the provinces of Indonesia. By encouraging them to think critically about their responses, she fostered active participation and collaboration. Additionally, she reminded those who were still eating in the classroom about the importance of discipline and responsibility. By enforcing classroom rules, she instilled respect for shared spaces and norms.

In the next meeting, the students learned language skills related to using appropriate vocabulary to explain ideas and concepts, especially on the topic “Menggali dan Mengembangkan Ide” or “Explore and Develop Ideas.” The method used in this part was dialogue. Mrs. Diana distributed worksheets to all the students, who then sat in groups. As a facilitator, Mrs. Diana promoted collaboration among the students and monitored each group. She asked about the progress each group had made. This kind of interaction conveyed the message of independence and helped develop the students' character through their responses.

Mrs. Diana : Akmal, you have finished drawing the first part. Let me take a look at your pictures. There are 11 pictures. Can you name all of them?

Akmal : Yes, Miss... the first is... the second is... the third is...
Mrs. Diana : Okay, you have finished that. Now, continue to the second part. Do you see the conversation bubbles in the box?

Akmal : Yes.

Mrs. Diana : You need to greet your friends first and then continue with the other dialogues.

Mrs. Diana : Hendrik and Anton should be separated. I asked you to sit in different corners, but you're sitting next to Anton. He was reading the passage, and you teased him. Hendrik, it's your turn to read the passage.

Hendrik : Uh... white for the answer...

Mrs. Diana : That's wrong. Something that is white is a headscarf. You need to correct your pronunciation; it's 'wait,' not 'white.'

In this excerpt, even though the students were in senior high school, some struggled to pronounce words with similar sounds. This had happened many times in Mrs. Diana's class, and some classmates laughed at the mispronunciations. The laughter spread, but Mrs. Diana took the time to regain control of the situation so that the students could improve their pronunciation

In the fourth meeting, it was time to make scrapbooks, and the language skills learned in this part focused on understanding instructions and researching themes. The method used to encourage discipline and independence among the students was dialogue. The key messages emphasized respecting differences, global diversity, mutual cooperation, and critical and creative thinking. Mrs. Diana supervised the students' preparations by moving around the classroom and asking each group about their progress. The more prepared they were, the higher their scores would be. I noticed two boys in one group who were not accustomed to decorating, while the girls were busy planning the scrapbook's decorations. They managed the layout to ensure that the scrapbook looked beautiful. However, Mrs. Diana warned the students not to use their mobile phones for other purposes, such as playing games or updating their status on social media. This excerpt illustrates the dialogue and explanations regarding the activity in the classroom.

Mrs. Diana : Boys, what are you doing?

Girls : They were cutting the pictures, ma'am.

Mrs. Diana : Where are the scissors? You need to cut the pictures. Boys, help the girls finish the scrapbook. You have to work together.

Student 1 : I have the scissors. I'll cut the pictures and then stick them in the scrapbook

Mrs. Diana : Okay, I'm giving you a score of 90. I saw your good work, and I'm giving you 90.

Mrs. Diana : Anyone who brought a mobile phone can only use it for studying. You are not allowed to use your phones for anything else. Do your best, and I will give you a good score.

In this excerpt, Mrs. Diana supervised several groups of students, which were named after cities in West Java. She checked the preparations of each group, paying attention to the most detailed work. She also wanted to ensure that the students did not use their mobile phones for unimportant things.

Activities, Outcomes and Resources

Because the activities reflected much of what the students were doing in the classroom, the researcher selected two activities to focus on. One activity aimed at developing 'menggali potensi diri' (self-potential exploration) involved drawing comic strips and creating shoe advertisements. The students were encouraged to be creative. For the comic strip, there were four panels that the students had to fill. The human figures in the comic strip were not clearly defined, but Mrs. Diana instructed the students to

create two characters of different genders. The first phase of the entrepreneurship project involved long meetings and a significant amount of time

The other activity was making a scrapbook. The students had general knowledge about the city they had chosen and knew what kind of information needed to be collected. By understanding the characteristics of a city in West Java, they were able to find, gather, organize, and use the information for their scrapbook. The other activity involved completing various parts of the project, including finishing the scrapbook, editing the entrepreneurial proposal, designing the logo, preparing food for the exhibition, and making the promotional video.

The resources used throughout the project included the internet and Pinterest. The students relied on the internet to search for information about their assigned regions. For example, one group was assigned Sukabumi, and they had to gather information on various aspects of the region, such as natural resources, human resources, customs, occupations, and special foods. The students then summarized the information and organized it according to specific criteria. The internet proved to be a valuable tool for collecting data about the region. Additionally, most of the students admitted that they used Pinterest to design their scrapbook.

Assessment

The teacher used observation to assess students' behavior in the classroom, with specific criteria in place for the assessment. As an observer, I did not have access to the observation sheet, as it was considered confidential. From the first to the eighth meeting, there was only one formative test, which took place during the third meeting. However, the teacher did not announce in advance that there would be a formative test. Instead, the students received papers that assessed their strengths and weaknesses, but these did not include scores. The teacher also did not use an English textbook for evaluation purposes. At the time of my research, class X was working on a project, and this project did not include a formal formative test.

DISCUSSION

The implementation of character education in elementary and senior high schools were different. Various factors influence how character education is implemented, particularly the teachers. In elementary schools, the teacher come from non-education backgrounds and has only two years of experience. In contrast, senior high school teachers typically have formal education training, which allows their instruction to operate more independently, with students taking more initiative. According to Shabaan (2005), character education can be implemented through seven methods: methods, language skills, messages, activities, outcomes, resources, and assessment. Not all of these aspects are emphasized equally when teaching character education. In elementary schools, the most dominant element is the methods. This dominance is due to the young age of the students, who often struggle to differentiate between right and wrong. As such, the instruction tends to be more teacher-centered, requiring significant support from other teachers. Research observations in the classroom indicate that students can be quite chaotic. Consequently, there is a need for teachers with educational backgrounds, or for school administrators to provide more attention and assistance to those teachers.

In the secondary school, the character education framework developed by Shabaan (2005) emphasizes seven elements, one of which is activity and resource. The teacher effectively planned the lesson by collaborating with a group of teachers involved in the project and completed the lesson plan before the semester began. With over ten years of teaching experience and a strong educational background, the teacher facilitated various activities for the students. During the observations in her class, the students engaged in a dialogue about the provinces of Indonesia. The teacher utilized elicitation

techniques, prompting her students to complete the assigned tasks successfully. The students approached the activities seriously and remained focused on their work.

According to Abuzar, Riazul, Rahman, & Abdulrohim (2024), discipline can be developed in four main ways: through formal structural methods, formal non-structural methods, the application of habituation, and *amaliyah ubudiyah*. In an Islamic context, discipline can be reinforced through a formal structure, which includes allocating time for children to perform the Dhuha prayer. Non-structural activities occur outside the classroom, such as visiting places embodying Islamic values—like Islamic museums, mosques, and historical Islamic sites. Students can also engage in the Dhuhr or Asr prayers during these outings. Habituation plays a significant role in non-formal structures. When incorporating Indonesian concepts, this relates to the 5S principles; however, in this context, we focus on the 3S principles, which include smiling and greeting. These activities are designed to emulate the Prophet and create a disciplined environment. The aforementioned points are similar to the practices at SD and SMA Alphabet. Both schools implement similar structures, including formal and non-formal methods, habituation, and *amaliyah ubudiyah*. Students at these schools recite *Asmaul Husna* and read the Quran in the mornings. However, a notable difference is that SD and SMA Alphabet do not require students to perform the Dhuha prayer. Both schools also organize outings to Islamic locations around Bandung. Furthermore, the concepts of 5S (*senyum, salam, sapa, sopan, santun*) and 3S (*senyum, salam, sapa*) are implemented at SD and SMA Alphabet. However, these concepts are not explicitly posted as school rules or posters.

The novelty of this research lies in implementing character education in elementary schools. This is particularly noteworthy because, despite the school's prestigious reputation, there are significant disadvantages related to its teaching staff. While the school largely determines the quality of education, the headmaster seemed to neglect the importance of teacher quality and the methods used for teaching English. Although an English teacher was selected before entering the classroom, after two years, the teacher struggled to adapt to the classroom environment. The headmaster needs to address this issue, especially since the school was chosen as the site for this research.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to address the research question: How do English teachers in a private Islamic school incorporate character education into the EFL (English as a Foreign Language) classroom? Based on the findings and discussions presented earlier, this chapter provides conclusions and suggestions for stakeholders on effectively integrating character education into the EFL classroom. Additionally, it offers recommendations for future research.

This study examines how English teachers in a private Islamic school integrate character education into the EFL classroom. The purpose of the research was to identify the elements used by English teachers to incorporate character education. The findings reveal that character education is analyzed through seven elements. These seven elements are divided into three categories: what teachers do in the classroom, what students do in the classroom, and the evaluation process.

Since the school follows the Emancipated Curriculum, it has implications for English teaching. Character education must be aligned with this curriculum. The Emancipated Curriculum consists of six dimensions, some of which should be incorporated into the lesson plan. This requirement poses no significant challenges at the senior high school level. However, for elementary school teachers, particularly those with a non-educational background, it can be more difficult to implement effectively. Another implication of the current curriculum for character education is that the six dimensions are tailored to different educational levels. For example, the lower levels are designed for elementary school, while the higher levels are intended for senior high school.

This study has several limitations related to its scale, scope, data collection and analysis. First, the study only investigated two English teachers from the same school foundation: one from elementary school and one from senior high school. Another limitation of this study is related to the teachers' experience, which varies significantly between the elementary school and senior high school teachers. Another limitation of this study is the use of interviews as a data collection method. The researcher conducted two separate interviews, using different types of interview formats, but the data collected were limited. Additionally, future research could explore the same topic with a larger sample size. It would be particularly interesting to investigate how rural teachers across various provinces in Indonesia incorporate character education. Each province may have rural schools with distinct cultures, challenges, and conditions, which could lead to a broader and more diverse dataset. This approach would allow for findings that are more generalizable and reflective of the wider context.

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