

Managing the Pancasila Student Profile to Strengthen Religious Character in Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

The growing influence of globalization and digitalization has intensified moral and religious challenges in elementary education, requiring schools to adopt more systematic approaches to character formation. In Indonesia, the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) has been introduced as a national framework to strengthen students' character, particularly religious values, within the Merdeka Curriculum. However, existing studies indicate that character education initiatives often remain symbolic when they are not supported by effective school management. This study examines how educational management practices shape the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile in strengthening students' religious character in a public elementary school. Employing a qualitative case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis involving school leaders, teachers, and students (50%). The findings reveal that coherent planning, clear organizational structures, consistent implementation through daily routines and project-based learning, and reflective evaluation play a critical role in facilitating the internalization of religious character. Leadership commitment, teacher exemplarity, and parental involvement further support program sustainability. The study concludes that strengthening religious character through the Pancasila Student Profile is not merely a curricular effort but an organizational achievement shaped by school management practices. These findings contribute to educational management and character education literature by demonstrating how national character policy can be operationalized effectively at the school level.

Keywords : *Pancasila Student Profile, religious character, educational management, elementary school, character education.*

INTRODUCTION

Elementary education is increasingly positioned at the frontline of moral and religious challenges arising from globalization, digitalization, and rapid sociocultural transformation. Global interconnectedness introduces young learners to diverse value systems and belief frameworks that often contrast with traditional moral and religious norms transmitted through families and local communities (Nurhayati et al., 2025). These encounters, occurring at an early developmental stage, can generate moral ambiguity when students lack the cognitive and emotional capacity to critically interpret competing values (Barnes, 2021). As a result, elementary schools are increasingly expected to function not only as academic institutions but also as moral communities responsible for guiding students' ethical orientation (Julia et al., 2022).

Alongside globalization, digital exposure has become a decisive factor reshaping children's moral experiences. Access to digital media accelerates the

circulation of ideologies, lifestyles, and ethical narratives that may conflict with locally grounded religious values (Alirahman et al., 2023). Empirical studies indicate that early and unmediated digital engagement intensifies ethical dilemmas related to authority, identity, and moral judgment among school-aged children (Hr et al., 2025). These developments reinforce global concerns that moral and religious education must be rearticulated to address the realities of digitally mediated childhoods (White et al., 2023).

In response to these conditions, character education has emerged as a strategic priority in contemporary education policy. International scholarship increasingly emphasizes that schooling must integrate moral, ethical, and socio-emotional dimensions alongside cognitive development to prepare learners for complex and plural societies (Cohen et al., 2023). Character education is therefore conceptualized as a holistic educational endeavor aimed at cultivating integrity, empathy, and social responsibility rather than as an ancillary or extracurricular activity (Julia et al., 2022). This shift reflects a broader recognition that academic achievement without moral grounding is insufficient to address social fragmentation and ethical erosion among younger generations (Barnes, 2021).

Within Indonesia, these global debates intersect with national concerns regarding social cohesion, religious moderation, and civic identity. The **Pancasila Student Profile** has been formulated as a central framework within the Merdeka Curriculum to strengthen character and citizenship education in a pluralistic society. Grounded in the philosophical foundations of Pancasila, this framework emphasizes faith, piety, noble character, and respect for diversity as core student attributes (Rifki et al., 2024). The Pancasila Student Profile is thus positioned as a normative response to rising concerns about intolerance and moral polarization in educational settings (Murtadlo et al., 2024).

Despite its conceptual coherence, the implementation of character education policies frequently encounters structural and managerial constraints. Comparative studies suggest that when character education is addressed primarily at the policy or curriculum level, its impact on students' lived moral experiences remains limited (Stacey, 2020). In such contexts, character education risks becoming symbolic, emphasizing compliance with formal requirements rather than substantive moral engagement (Mahanani et al., 2022). This phenomenon has been observed across diverse educational systems, indicating a persistent gap between policy intentions and school-level practices (Niang, 2021).

Indonesian empirical studies further reveal that limited teacher preparation, fragmented planning, and weak coordination among school stakeholders undermine the effectiveness of character education initiatives (Hasbiyallah et al., 2023). Without a supportive school culture and adequate managerial support, teachers often struggle to translate abstract character values into consistent pedagogical and relational practices (Fitiradhy et al., 2023). These findings align with international

critiques that emphasize the decisive role of school organization and leadership in shaping the outcomes of value-based education (Chung, 2024).

The vulnerability of character education to symbolic implementation is particularly evident in the domain of religious character development. Scholars argue that religious values conveyed solely through cognitive instruction or ceremonial activities are unlikely to foster deep moral commitment among students (Syafri, 2025). Instead, such approaches may produce surface-level conformity that lacks integration with students' emotional and social development (Abdillah et al., 2025). This critique underscores the need to situate religious character education within the broader ecology of school life, including routines, interpersonal relationships, and institutional culture (Usman et al., 2025).

At the elementary level, religious character development is widely regarded as foundational for long-term moral formation. Research in developmental education highlights that early engagement with moral narratives, religious practices, and ethical exemplars contributes to the formation of empathy, self-regulation, and social responsibility (Dodlek, 2024). Studies in religious education further suggest that early habituation of moral conduct strengthens students' resilience and ethical reasoning in later life stages (Kosim et al., 2024). In plural societies, such foundations are increasingly associated with the cultivation of tolerance and peaceful coexistence (Alsuhaymi, 2025).

However, existing literature indicates that these developmental potentials are often unrealized due to insufficient integration between character education goals and school management practices. While prior studies have examined curriculum design and pedagogical strategies, fewer investigations address how management processes structure the enactment of character education at the school level (Mahanani et al., 2022). In particular, research that explicitly applies educational management frameworks to analyze national character education initiatives in elementary schools remains limited.

This gap is especially salient in studies of the Pancasila Student Profile, where discussions tend to emphasize normative ideals and student outcomes without systematically examining the managerial mechanisms that enable or constrain value internalization (Rifki et al., 2024). The absence of such analysis limits understanding of how character education policies are operationalized within everyday school practices.

Addressing this gap, the present study aims to examine how school-level management practices shape the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile in strengthening students' religious character in public elementary schools. By employing an educational management perspective, this study seeks to illuminate how planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation processes contribute to the internalization of religious values within school culture. The novelty of this research lies in its integration of educational management theory with national character education policy, offering empirical insights into how religious character

formation can be systematically institutionalized rather than remaining symbolic or incidental.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Educational Management Theories in Value-Based School Programs

Educational management theory provides a foundational framework for understanding how schools translate policy intentions into sustained educational practices (Bush, 2020; Bush & Glover, 2022). Classical and contemporary management perspectives conceptualize management as a systematic process of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling organizational resources to achieve predetermined goals effectively (Fayol, 1949; Robbins & Coulter, 2021). Within educational settings, these functions are not merely administrative but normative, as they shape the values, culture, and ethical climate of schools (Bush, 2020; Barnes, 2021). The POAC framework has therefore been widely adopted in educational research to analyze how school programs—particularly those related to character and values—are designed, implemented, and evaluated (Ar et al., 2021; Mahanani et al., 2022).

In the context of character education, planning involves articulating clear moral and educational objectives that align curriculum goals with community values and sociocultural contexts (Ar et al., 2021; Saepudin et al., 2023). Effective planning ensures that character education is not treated as an ad hoc initiative but as an integral component of school vision and long-term strategy (Bush & Glover, 2022). Organizing, in turn, refers to the alignment of human resources, teacher competencies, curricular materials, and institutional structures to support these objectives (Robbins & Coulter, 2021; Hasbiyallah et al., 2023). Empirical studies indicate that inadequate organization—such as unclear role distribution or limited teacher preparation—frequently undermines the consistency and sustainability of value-based programs (Mahanani et al., 2022; Basori et al., 2023).

The actuating function emphasizes leadership practices that mobilize teachers and students to engage meaningfully with character education initiatives. Leadership actions, including motivation, supervision, and exemplification, are critical in transforming planned values into lived practices within classrooms and school routines (Hasbiyallah et al., 2023; Santoso et al., 2020). Finally, controlling focuses on monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of character education through reflective practices, feedback mechanisms, and continuous improvement cycles (Ar et al., 2021; Barnes, 2021). Empirical evidence suggests that schools lacking systematic evaluation and feedback mechanisms often struggle to sustain character education outcomes over time (Mahanani et al., 2022; Warwer, 2024).

Leadership Models and School Culture in Character Education

Leadership constitutes a central variable in the success of educational management, particularly in value-based and character-oriented programs (Bush,

2020; Bush & Glover, 2022). Contemporary scholarship consistently highlights transformational leadership as a dominant model associated with effective character education and positive school culture. Transformational leaders foster shared vision, intrinsic motivation, and collaborative school environments that support moral learning beyond formal instruction (Santoso et al., 2020; Barnes, 2021). By encouraging teacher autonomy and professional commitment, transformational leadership enables educators to integrate character values organically into pedagogical and relational practices (Hasbiyallah et al., 2023).

In addition to transformational leadership, servant leadership has gained prominence in studies of character education, particularly in moral and religious contexts. This leadership model prioritizes service, empathy, and responsiveness to the needs of students and the broader school community (Greenleaf, 1977). Recent empirical research demonstrates that servant leadership contributes to a positive moral climate by modeling humility, care, and ethical responsibility, which in turn influences students' character development (Hindaryatiningsih et al., 2025; Romlah et al., 2025; Wasehudin et al., 2024). Such leadership is particularly relevant in contexts where religious and moral education emphasizes example and relational influence.

Adaptive leadership further complements these models by highlighting leaders' capacity to respond flexibly to changing educational demands and student needs. In rapidly evolving sociocultural environments marked by digitalization and diversity, adaptive leadership allows schools to adjust character education strategies to emerging moral challenges (Ardiansyah et al., 2024; Nopas & Ueangchokchai, 2025). Collectively, these leadership models underscore that character education outcomes are closely tied to how leaders shape school culture, distribute responsibilities, and sustain ethical commitments across the organization (Barnes, 2021; Basori et al., 2023).

Religious Character Formation: Habituation, Role Modeling, and School Culture

Religious character formation is widely conceptualized in the literature as a multidimensional process involving habituation, role modeling, and school culture (Lickona, 2012; White et al., 2023). Habituation refers to the consistent and repeated practice of religious and moral behaviors, enabling students to internalize values such as honesty, empathy, and discipline over time. Studies in religious and moral education emphasize that habitual practices—such as daily prayers, moral routines, and reflective activities—play a crucial role in embedding ethical values into students' everyday conduct (Juwaini et al., 2025; Wodon, 2022; Kosim et al., 2024).

Role modeling constitutes a second core mechanism of religious character formation. Teachers, school leaders, and peers function as living exemplars whose attitudes and behaviors provide concrete reference points for students' moral

learning (Bandura, 1986; Lickona, 2012). Empirical research consistently demonstrates that students are more likely to internalize religious and moral values when educators embody the principles they teach (Wasehudin et al., 2024; Rukiyati et al., 2025; Pangastuti et al., 2025). This mechanism is particularly evident in faith-based educational settings, such as pesantren, where close interpersonal relationships between teachers and students amplify the impact of moral exemplarity (Nashuddin, 2020; Abdillah et al., 2025).

School culture represents the broader institutional context within which habituation and role modeling operate. A positive school culture integrates shared values, norms, and expectations that reinforce religious character across academic and non-academic activities (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Barnes, 2021). Research indicates that when religious values are embedded in school rituals, policies, and interpersonal interactions, students are more likely to develop a collective moral identity characterized by social responsibility and mutual respect (Mahanani et al., 2022; Taufik, 2020; White et al., 2023). Conversely, fragmented or inconsistent school cultures weaken the sustainability of religious character education (Basori et al., 2023).

Empirical Evidence on National Character Education Programs

Empirical studies across Southeast Asia and other regions provide growing evidence of the effectiveness of national character education programs when they are systematically managed (Clifton et al., 2020; Basori et al., 2023). Research in Indonesia and Malaysia demonstrates that integrating character education into formal curricula and school routines is associated with reductions in antisocial behaviors, including bullying and vandalism (Mahanani et al., 2022; Safrilsyah et al., 2024). These findings suggest that character education can exert tangible behavioral effects when implemented consistently and supported by strong school leadership.

Action research and longitudinal studies further reveal positive associations between structured character education programs and enhanced prosocial behavior, ethical decision-making, and social cohesion among students (Panev, 2020; Durlak et al., 2011; Safrilsyah et al., 2024). Programs emphasizing religious moderation and tolerance have also been shown to contribute to more harmonious school climates in diverse educational settings (Sutarja et al., 2024; Mukhibat et al., 2024; Abubakar et al., 2023). However, these outcomes are not uniform across contexts, indicating that program effectiveness depends heavily on local management capacity, leadership quality, and school culture (Muhtar et al., 2020; Barnes, 2021).

Despite these encouraging findings, scholars caution that many national character education initiatives remain vulnerable to symbolic implementation. When programs are introduced without adequate managerial support, teacher professional development, and systematic evaluation mechanisms, their impact on students' moral development tends to be limited (Mahanani et al., 2022; Chung,

2024). This concern reinforces calls for research that explicitly examines the managerial processes underlying character education implementation rather than focusing solely on outcomes (Basori et al., 2023).

Positioning and Research Gap

The reviewed literature demonstrates substantial theoretical and empirical support for the role of management, leadership, and school culture in character and religious education (Bush, 2020; Barnes, 2021). Nevertheless, a critical gap persists in the integration of these strands. While numerous studies discuss leadership models, religious character formation mechanisms, or national character education policies independently, fewer investigations adopt a comprehensive educational management perspective that connects planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation within a single analytical framework (Basori et al., 2023; Ar et al., 2021).

In particular, empirical research applying the POAC framework to examine the implementation of national character education programs at the elementary school level remains limited. Studies addressing the Pancasila Student Profile frequently emphasize normative ideals or student outcomes without systematically analyzing the managerial mechanisms that enable value internalization (Rifki et al., 2024; Mahanani et al., 2022). Addressing this gap, the present study positions itself at the intersection of educational management theory, leadership studies, and religious character education, offering a management-based analysis of how national character policy is operationalized in everyday school practice.

RESEARCH METHODE

Research Design and Approach

This study employs a qualitative research approach using a case study design to examine school-level management practices in the implementation of character education programs, particularly the Pancasila Student Profile (P5). A qualitative case study is considered appropriate because it enables an in-depth exploration of complex, context-dependent phenomena that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement alone. Character education and its management involve values, beliefs, interactions, and institutional cultures that require interpretive understanding rather than statistical generalization (Basori et al., 2023).

The case study design allows the researcher to investigate how educational management functions—planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling—are enacted in real-world school settings. By focusing on a bounded system, namely a public elementary school implementing P5, this approach facilitates a holistic examination of managerial decision-making, leadership practices, and everyday routines that shape religious character formation among students (Romlah et al., 2025). Furthermore, case studies are particularly valuable for analyzing policy

implementation at the micro level, where national frameworks intersect with local contexts, stakeholder interpretations, and institutional capacities (Rifki et al., 2024).
Research Site, Data Sources, and Participants

The research was conducted in a public elementary school in Tangerang, Indonesia, selected purposively due to its active implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile within the Merdeka Curriculum framework. The school represents a typical public education context characterized by sociocultural and religious diversity, making it a relevant site for examining the management of religious character education in plural settings.

Primary data were obtained from clearly defined participant groups who were directly involved in the planning, management, and enactment of P5 activities. The informants consisted of: (1) the school principal, who was responsible for strategic planning, policy interpretation, and overall leadership of the P5 program; (2) vice principals or members of the school management team involved in curriculum coordination and student affairs; (3) classroom teachers responsible for integrating character values into daily instruction and routines; (4) Islamic religious education teachers who played a central role in reinforcing religious values and moral habituation; and (5) students who actively participated in P5 activities and daily religious routines. Student participants were selected to represent different grade levels in order to capture varied learning experiences.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their institutional roles, length of involvement in P5 implementation, and direct engagement with character education activities. This sampling strategy enabled the researcher to obtain information-rich data reflecting multiple perspectives on educational management and religious character formation at the school level (Basori et al., 2023; Romlah et al., 2025).

Secondary data sources consisted of school documents, including curriculum plans, P5 project modules, annual and semester programs, activity reports, and internal evaluation records. These documents provided an institutional context for understanding how character education objectives were formally articulated, managed, and operationalized within school policies and routines (Masturin, 2023).

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted through three complementary methods: in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were employed to elicit detailed accounts of participants' experiences, perceptions, and challenges related to the management of character education. Interviews allowed flexibility for probing emerging themes while maintaining consistency across participant groups (Hindaryatiningsih et al., 2025).

Observations were carried out to capture the enactment of character education practices in natural settings, including classrooms, religious routines, and P5 project activities. Through direct observation, the researcher was able to

document teacher–student interactions, leadership presence, and the integration of religious values into daily school life. Observational data enriched interview findings by providing contextual and behavioral evidence of management practices in action (Alim et al., 2023).

Document analysis complemented interviews and observations by examining the alignment between formal school policies and actual practices. Curriculum documents, lesson plans, and evaluation reports were analyzed to assess how character education objectives were translated into planning instruments and monitored over time. The triangulation of these three methods strengthened the depth and credibility of the data by capturing multiple dimensions of the phenomenon under study (Limbong et al., 2023).

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis followed an iterative and interactive qualitative process conducted concurrently with data collection. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were systematically organized and coded to identify recurring patterns and themes related to educational management functions and religious character development. Initial open coding was used to capture participants' meanings and actions, followed by axial coding to relate categories to the POAC framework.

The analytical process involved data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, allowing the researcher to continuously refine interpretations and verify emerging findings. Matrices and thematic maps were used to compare management practices across data sources and participant groups. This systematic approach enabled the identification of relationships between managerial strategies and observed character education outcomes (Rifki et al., 2024).

Validity, Trustworthiness, and Ethical Considerations

To ensure validity and trustworthiness, several strategies recommended in qualitative research literature were applied. Triangulation across data sources and methods enhanced the credibility of the findings by corroborating evidence from interviews, observations, and documents (Masturin, 2024). Member checking was conducted by sharing preliminary interpretations with selected participants to confirm the accuracy and resonance of the findings with their experiences (Taja et al., 2021).

Researcher reflexivity was maintained throughout the study to acknowledge potential biases and positionality that could influence data interpretation. Reflexive notes were used to document analytical decisions and ethical reflections during the research process, contributing to transparency and methodological rigor (Warwer, 2024).

Ethical considerations were central to all stages of the research. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and confidentiality was ensured through

anonymization of names and institutional identifiers. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. These ethical measures align with established standards for responsible qualitative research in educational settings (Sabbath, 2024).

Overall, the methodological design adopted in this study provides a rigorous and context-sensitive framework for examining how educational management practices shape the implementation of national character education programs and the development of students' religious character.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the empirical findings of the study based on qualitative data obtained through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The results are organized in accordance with the educational management framework adopted in this study, namely Planning, Organizing, Actuating (Implementation), and Controlling (Monitoring and Evaluation), followed by an analysis of supporting and inhibiting factors. The presentation emphasizes objective description of findings rather than interpretation, in line with qualitative reporting standards.

Figure 1. Management Cycle of the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) Implementation

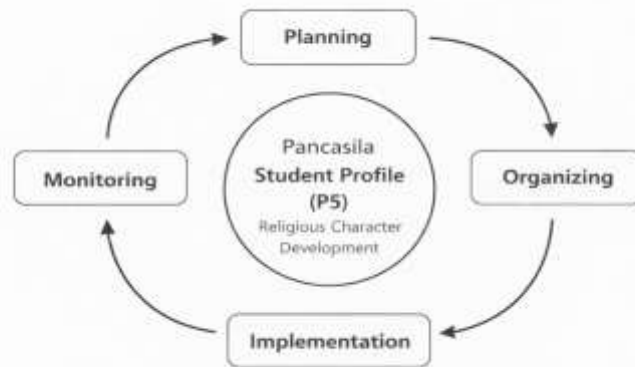


Figure 1. Management Cycle of the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) Implementation

This figure illustrates the cyclical relationship between planning, organizing, implementation, and monitoring in the management of the P5 program. It visualizes how managerial functions interact continuously to support religious character development.

Planning of the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) Program

The findings indicate that planning for the Pancasila Student Profile program at the school level is conducted through a structured and participatory process. School leaders begin the planning stage by assessing students' needs and the sociocultural and religious context of the school community. This assessment involves informal consultations with teachers, school committees, and parents to identify priority values considered essential for students' moral and religious

development. The values identified are subsequently aligned with national education standards and the core dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile.

Planning documents reveal that character education objectives are explicitly articulated in the school's vision and mission statements, annual work plans, and semester programs. Religious character values—such as faith, piety, discipline, honesty, and respect—are embedded within these planning instruments. Objectives are formulated not only as cognitive targets but also as expected behavioral outcomes observable in students' daily conduct. This alignment ensures coherence between character education goals and broader institutional objectives.

Curriculum integration constitutes a central component of the planning process. Analysis of lesson plans and P5 project modules shows that character education themes are systematically incorporated across subjects rather than confined to religious education classes. Teachers integrate moral discussions, ethical reflection, and value clarification activities into language, social studies, and project-based learning contexts. In addition, the school allocates specific resources, including learning materials and time allocation, to support character-based projects. Professional development activities are also planned to enhance teachers' capacity to deliver character education and model appropriate values.

Table 1. Key Components of the P5 Planning Process

| Planning Component | Description |
|------------------------|--|
| Needs assessment | Identification of student needs and community values through stakeholder consultation |
| Goal setting | Formulation of religious character objectives aligned with school vision and P5 dimensions |
| Curriculum integration | Embedding character values across subjects and project-based learning |
| Resource allocation | Provision of materials, time, and training to support implementation |
| Teacher development | Planning of professional development related to character education |

4.2 Organizing the Implementation of the P5 Program

Findings show that the organizing function is operationalized through the establishment of a clear organizational structure for P5 implementation. The principal assumes a central coordinating role, supported by a designated P5 coordination team. This team consists of classroom teachers, religious education teachers, and representatives responsible for extracurricular and project-based activities. Each role is defined formally to avoid overlap and ensure accountability.

Task distribution is based on teachers' expertise and experience. Classroom teachers are responsible for integrating character values into daily instruction, while religious education teachers focus on reinforcing doctrinal understanding and

religious practices. Coordination meetings are held regularly to synchronize activities and address emerging challenges. Documentation indicates that collaboration with the school committee and parents is institutionalized through periodic meetings and joint activities, strengthening shared responsibility for character education.

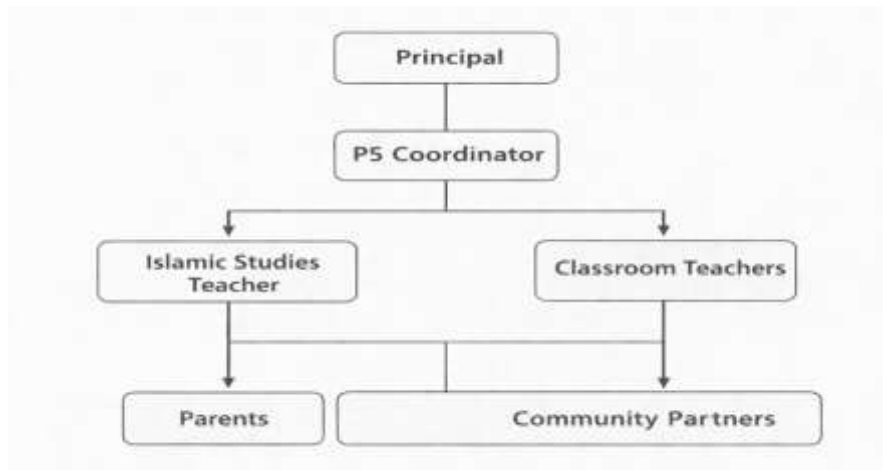


Figure 2. Organizational Structure for P5 Program Implementation

This figure depicts the organizational arrangement of actors involved in P5 implementation, highlighting coordination between school leaders, teachers, and supporting stakeholders.

Organizational culture also plays a significant role in supporting implementation. Observational data suggest that open communication, collegial relationships, and mutual support among staff facilitate coordination and consistency in character education practices. Conversely, when scheduling constraints arise, teachers negotiate responsibilities collectively to maintain program continuity.

Implementation of Religious Character Development

The implementation phase reveals that religious character development is carried out through a combination of daily routines, project-based learning, and teacher exemplarity. Daily routines include collective prayers, short reflections before lessons, and habitual moral reminders embedded in classroom management practices. These routines are consistently applied across grade levels, creating a shared rhythm of religious practice within the school.

Project-based learning serves as a key strategy for contextualizing religious values. Students participate in projects that integrate academic learning with moral objectives, such as community service activities, environmental care initiatives, and collaborative tasks emphasizing responsibility and cooperation. These projects provide opportunities for students to apply religious principles in real-life contexts, fostering experiential learning.

Teacher exemplarity emerges as a salient feature of implementation. Observations indicate that teachers consciously model behaviors such as fairness,

patience, and respect in their interactions with students. Students frequently reference teachers' actions as examples of appropriate moral conduct, suggesting that role modeling significantly influences character internalization.

Table 2. Forms of Religious Character Implementation

| Implementation Strategy | Examples |
|-------------------------|---|
| Daily routines | Collective prayers, reflections, moral reminders |
| Project-based learning | Community service projects, collaborative ethical tasks |
| Teacher exemplarity | Modeling discipline, empathy, and integrity |

Monitoring and Evaluation of the P5 Program

Monitoring and evaluation are conducted primarily through qualitative and formative approaches. Teachers engage in reflective discussions to assess students' behavioral changes and participation in character-related activities. Observation records and anecdotal notes are used to document progress, focusing on consistency, engagement, and observable moral behavior rather than numerical indicators.

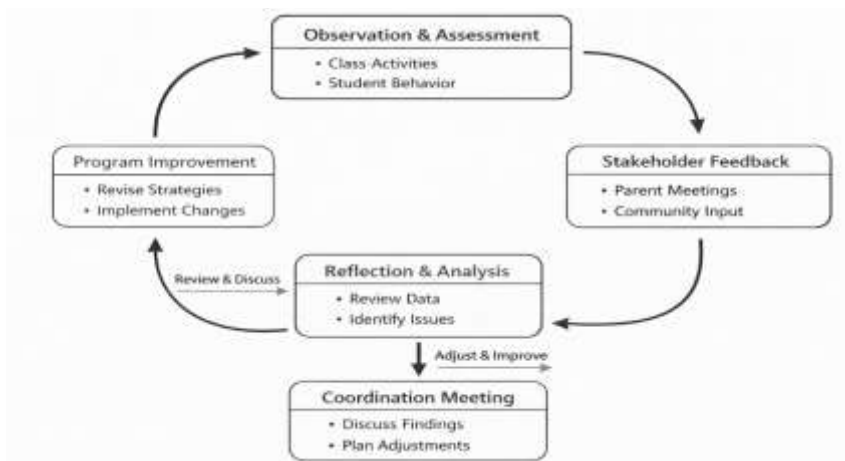


Figure 3. Monitoring and Evaluation Flow of the P5 Program

This figure outlines the feedback loop between observation, reflection, stakeholder input, and program refinement in the evaluation of character education implementation.

Feedback is also obtained from parents during meetings and informal communication, providing external perspectives on students' character development. Evaluation findings are discussed in coordination meetings and used to refine subsequent planning and implementation cycles.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The study identifies several internal and external factors influencing program implementation. Supporting factors include strong leadership commitment, teachers' readiness and motivation, and a supportive school culture

emphasizing moral values. Parental involvement and community support further reinforce program sustainability.

Inhibiting factors include limited instructional time, varying levels of teacher understanding of P5 principles, and students' diverse backgrounds. External pressures related to academic performance expectations occasionally reduce attention to character education. To address these challenges, the school adopts adaptive strategies such as flexible scheduling, targeted teacher training, and enhanced communication with parents.

Table 3. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in P5 Implementation

| Category | Supporting Factors | Inhibiting Factors |
|----------|--|--|
| Internal | Leadership commitment, teacher motivation, positive school culture | Limited time, uneven teacher understanding |
| External | Parental and community support | Academic performance pressures, social diversity |

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile in strengthening students' religious character is shaped by coherent management practices, consistent routines, and collaborative stakeholder engagement. The results provide a detailed empirical account of how character education is operationalized within everyday school practices.

Discussion

Interpretation of Findings in Relation to Existing Literature

The findings of this study demonstrate that the effectiveness of the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) in strengthening students' religious character is closely associated with coherent school-level management practices. This result supports educational management theories asserting that value-based programs require systematic governance rather than fragmented instructional efforts (Ar et al., 2021; Mahanani et al., 2022). In particular, the integration of planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation functions confirms that character education outcomes are shaped by organizational coherence and leadership consistency (Chung, 2024).

The prominence of daily routines and teacher exemplarity observed in this study aligns with prior research emphasizing that consistent reinforcement of values within everyday school practices leads to stronger character internalization among students (Usman et al., 2025; Masturin, 2023; Juwaini et al., 2025). These findings reinforce arguments that character education is most effective when embedded in daily institutional life rather than treated as an isolated curricular subject (Abubakar et al., 2023; Abdillah et al., 2025). Moreover, the findings corroborate studies suggesting that habituation and role modeling function as primary mechanisms through which moral values are transformed into stable behavioral dispositions (Rukiyati et al., 2025; Wasehudin et al., 2024).

At the same time, the findings extend existing character education theories by illustrating how management practices operationalize abstract theoretical constructs. While much of the literature discusses habituation and role modeling conceptually, this study provides empirical evidence of how these mechanisms are structured through managerial decisions, such as scheduling routines, allocating responsibilities, and supervising teacher conduct (Hasbiyallah et al., 2023; Limbong et al., 2023). In this sense, the results refine character education theory by situating moral formation within organizational processes, supporting claims that educational outcomes are shaped not only by pedagogy but also by institutional design and governance (Basori et al., 2023; Abdillah et al., 2025).

Contextualization and Comparative Perspectives

When compared with character education practices in other cultural and national contexts, the findings reveal both convergence and contextual specificity. Consistent with international literature, this study confirms that foundational values such as discipline, empathy, responsibility, and respect underpin character education across diverse educational systems (Hudson et al., 2020; Mahanani et al., 2022; White et al., 2023). These shared values indicate a degree of universality in the moral aims of education, regardless of cultural setting.

However, the manner in which these values are articulated and enacted varies considerably depending on cultural and religious contexts. In the Indonesian setting examined in this study, religious teachings and communal practices play a central role in character formation, reflecting broader patterns observed in Islamic education contexts where moral education is closely intertwined with religious life and community engagement (Ratnasari et al., 2022; Nashuddin, 2020; Abdillah et al., 2025). By contrast, studies from more secular educational systems tend to frame character education in psychological, civic, or citizenship-oriented terms, emphasizing autonomy, social competence, and democratic participation rather than explicit religious grounding (Vu et al., 2023; Hudson et al., 2020).

This comparison suggests that while the objectives of character education may be globally shared, the strategies employed must be contextually responsive. The findings thus support arguments that educational management frameworks must remain flexible and adaptive to local cultural values and policy environments to ensure relevance and effectiveness (Alirahman et al., 2023; Nopas & Ueangchokchai, 2025; Ardiansyah et al., 2024).

Theoretical Implications for Educational Management and Character Education

Theoretically, this study contributes to educational management literature by reaffirming the relevance of the POAC framework in contemporary value-based education. The findings demonstrate that planning clarifies moral objectives, organizing ensures role clarity and coordination, actuating mobilizes teacher

commitment and exemplarity, and controlling sustains consistency through reflective evaluation (Ar et al., 2021; Mahanani et al., 2022). Together, these functions create an institutional ecosystem conducive to religious character formation.

These results support recent calls for educational management theories to move beyond efficiency-oriented perspectives toward frameworks that explicitly incorporate moral, ethical, and cultural dimensions of schooling (Chung, 2024; Barnes, 2021). Furthermore, by linking character education outcomes to managerial practices, the study challenges approaches that conceptualize moral development primarily as an individual or classroom-level process. Instead, the findings align with organizational theories that position schools as moral institutions whose structures and cultures significantly influence student development (Basori et al., 2023; White et al., 2023).

Practical and Policy Implications

From a practical standpoint, the findings underscore the importance of value-based leadership in managing national character education initiatives. School leaders are encouraged to integrate character education into strategic planning, professional development, and evaluation systems rather than delegating it solely to religious or moral education teachers (Santoso et al., 2020; Hasbiyallah et al., 2023). Leadership practices that emphasize collaboration, reflection, and exemplarity are particularly critical for sustaining character education outcomes over time (Romlah et al., 2025; Hindaryatiningsih et al., 2025).

At the policy level, the findings suggest that national character education frameworks such as the Pancasila Student Profile require complementary guidance on school management practices. Policymakers may consider providing clearer implementation guidelines, leadership training, and monitoring mechanisms to bridge the gap between policy aspirations and school-level realities (Paisun et al., 2025; Saepudin et al., 2023). Strengthening partnerships with parents and community organizations may further enhance the sustainability and social relevance of character education initiatives, particularly in plural societies (Limbong et al., 2023; Kosim et al., 2024).

Contributions to Scholarship

This study makes several contributions to the field of educational research. Empirically, it provides an in-depth account of how religious character education is operationalized through management practices in a public elementary school context, complementing prior studies that focus primarily on outcomes or pedagogical strategies (Panev, 2020; Safrilsyah et al., 2024). Conceptually, it advances an integrated perspective that connects educational management theory with character education and national curriculum policy, addressing a gap identified

in recent reviews of character education research (Basori et al., 2023; Mahanani et al., 2022).

Methodologically, the study demonstrates the value of qualitative case studies in uncovering organizational and cultural dynamics that are often overlooked in large-scale quantitative research (Warwer, 2024; Barnes, 2021). By foregrounding managerial processes, this research contributes to a more nuanced understanding of how values are institutionalized within schools.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Despite these contributions, the study has limitations that should be acknowledged. The focus on a single school limits the generalizability of the findings, as management practices and cultural contexts may vary across institutions (Yin, 2018). In addition, the absence of quantitative indicators restricts the ability to assess the magnitude of character development outcomes, a limitation also noted in prior character education research (Santoso et al., 2020; Warwer, 2024).

Future research may adopt mixed-methods designs to triangulate qualitative insights with quantitative measures of character development. Comparative studies across multiple schools or regions would further enhance understanding of how different management contexts influence character education outcomes (Hasbiyallah et al., 2023; Basori et al., 2023). Additionally, further inquiry is needed into the implications of digital learning environments for character education, particularly in addressing challenges such as online ethics, digital citizenship, and moral formation in virtual spaces (Rifki et al., 2024; Fitiradhy et al., 2023).

Transition to Conclusion

Overall, the discussion highlights that strengthening students' religious character through the Pancasila Student Profile is not merely a curricular endeavor but an organizational achievement shaped by management practices, leadership, and school culture. These insights provide a critical foundation for articulating the study's concluding arguments regarding the role of educational management in sustaining value-based education within plural and rapidly changing societies.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the successful implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile in strengthening students' religious character is closely linked to effective school-level management practices. The findings indicate that character education outcomes are not incidental results of curriculum reform but are shaped by deliberate planning, organized role distribution, consistent implementation, and continuous evaluation. Through the integration of daily routines, project-based learning, and teacher exemplarity, religious values are embedded into students' everyday school experiences, supporting deeper internalization rather than surface-level compliance.

From a theoretical perspective, the study reinforces the relevance of educational management frameworks—particularly the Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling (POAC) model—in analyzing value-based education programs. By positioning character education within an organizational and managerial context, this research extends existing character education theories that often focus primarily on pedagogical or individual dimensions of moral development. The findings highlight schools as moral organizations whose culture, leadership, and governance structures play a decisive role in shaping students' character.

Practically, the study offers insights for school leaders and policymakers by emphasizing the need for value-based leadership, teacher capacity building, and stakeholder collaboration in sustaining character education initiatives. While the study is limited to a single school context, it provides a foundation for future research employing comparative or mixed-methods approaches to further examine the relationship between educational management and character education outcomes. Overall, this research underscores the importance of aligning national character education policy with effective school management to ensure sustainable and meaningful character development in elementary education.

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