

The Impact of Character Education on High School Students' Social Ethics and Responsibilities: A Systematic Literature Review of Scopus-Indexed Articles

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Abstract

Character education plays a crucial role in shaping students' social ethics and responsibilities, particularly within the context of school education. This systematic literature review analyzes studies from Scopus-indexed journals to assess the impact of character education on the development of moral values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility among high school students. The review highlights various character education models, especially those grounded in religious values like Islam, which have shown positive effects on students' ethical behavior and social responsibility. Research indicates that schools implementing character education programs report significant improvements in students' social behaviors, such as increased pro-social actions and a reduction in negative behaviors. However, the implementation of such programs faces several challenges, including a lack of teacher training, limited relevant instructional materials, and difficulties integrating religious teachings into subjects like science and mathematics. Additionally, cultural diversity and time constraints are significant barriers to effective implementation. Despite these challenges, the empirical evidence suggests that when schools integrate character education effectively, it not only enhances students' academic performance but also fosters responsible, ethical individuals. The review also proposes strategies to overcome these challenges, emphasizing the importance of teacher training, curriculum integration, and the collaboration between schools, families, and communities. This study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how character education influences student ethics and responsibility and offers policy recommendations for enhancing its effectiveness in schools worldwide.

Keywords: character education, social ethics, student responsibility, high school

INTRODUCTION

Character education plays a very important role in shaping students' social ethics and responsibilities, especially within the context of education at school. The concept of character education includes planned and structured efforts to internalize moral values that can guide students in their daily lives (Abdalla et al., 2024; Wang & Chen, 2021). Character education focuses on developing students' attitudes and behaviors, as well as forming individuals who are not only intelligent in cognitive aspects but also behave well, responsibly, and ethically (Walsh, 2025). In recent years, attention to character education has increased in various countries, both in the context of elementary, secondary, and higher education (Kavas et al., 2020; Ramadhani, Widiyanta, Sumayana, Santoso, & Agustin, 2024; Roy, Shah, Ahluwalia, & Harky, 2023).

Research on character education shows that the implementation of character education programs can result in significant improvements in students' social ethics and their level of responsibility. For example, a meta-analysis conducted by Lickona (2013) showed that schools that implemented character education programs experienced a 35% increase in the development of social attitudes and a 20% decrease in negative student behavior (Itani et al., 2025). In addition, research by Narvaez (2019) found that value-based religious character education could strengthen students' moral integrity, with 73% of students involved in religious-based character programs showing significant improvements in pro-social behavior. Research by Battistich et al. (2020) also shows that schools that implement character education successfully increased students' social responsibility by 28%, as reflected in a reduction of disciplinary actions and an increase in students' involvement in social activities (Abdalla et al., 2024; Enrique & Moscoso, 2025).

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However, despite its importance, the implementation of character education is not without challenges. Various challenges, such as a lack of understanding by teachers, a lack of relevant teaching materials, and insufficient teacher training, can become barriers to the success of character education (Ekabu, 2023; Promes et al., 2009). According to a survey by Lickona (2016), 58% of teachers reported a lack of adequate training in teaching character values, which contributes to the low effectiveness of character education programs in many schools (Nagi et al., 2024; Srivastava, 2019; Tt, Hk, Mas, Ta, & Kt, 2020). Another challenge is the limited time available to integrate character education into the already packed curriculum, as reported by the Character Education Partnership (2015), where 63% of schools faced difficulties in allocating sufficient time for character education (Lane, Brauer, Mascaro, & Lane, 2023).

Character education also faces challenges in adjusting materials to diverse cultures and values in society (Rudenko, Polishchuk, Didenko, & Sadova, 2025; Syafika & Marwa, 2024). This often causes tensions between local and global values, as well as between educational policies and day-to-day practices in schools (Cook, Doherty, & Wallace, 2024; Handayani, Prastiwi, & Hidayat, 2024). Therefore, although there is a lot of empirical evidence showing the positive impact of character education, there are still research gaps that need to be addressed, especially related to the challenges of implementing character education, developing social ethics, and student responsibility in a broader context (Aldi & Khairanis, 2025; Mohammad & Garut, 2025; Mukhtar, Selvi, & AH, 2023).

Based on the existing research gaps, this study aims to conduct a systematic literature review on the impact of character education on students' social ethics and responsibility (Aprilia, 2025; Cui & Alias, 2024; Fuentes, 2016). This research will also answer four main questions. By addressing these questions, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of character education at the school level, as well as the challenges and opportunities in its implementation (Itani et al., 2025; Janumpally, 2025). Ultimately, this research will present evidence-based recommendations for the development of more effective character education policies in schools worldwide (Review, Waseh, & Dicker, 2019; Samala, Rawas, Criollo-c, Fortuna, & Feng, 2024; Sanford et al., 2019).

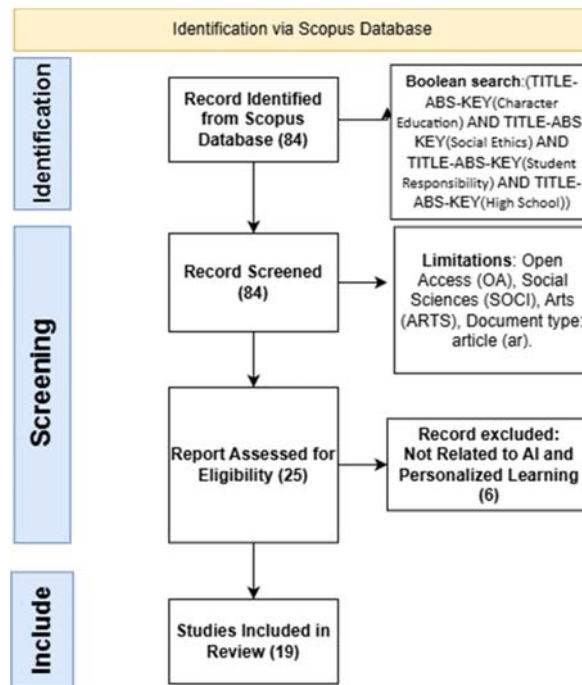
This study aims to examine the influence of character education on students' social ethics and their level of responsibility in everyday life. In addition, this study will explore the challenges faced in implementing character education in schools, particularly concerning the development of social ethics and students' responsibility, which involves aspects such as limited teacher training, time constraints, and the mismatch between values taught in schools and those in society. Moreover, it is important to explore empirical evidence supporting the impact of character education on the development of students' social ethics and responsibility, which can be found in articles indexed in Scopus, to provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of character education in various educational contexts.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative research using a systematic literature review approach to identify and analyze the application of character education in shaping social ethics and student responsibility at the secondary school level. This systematic literature review aims to compile a comprehensive summary of research conducted on the impact of character education on social ethics and student responsibility, as well as the challenges faced in its implementation. The process of selecting relevant articles and studies follows the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines to ensure transparency and clarity in the selection of literature. The inclusion criteria used include articles published between 2021 and 2026, empirical research that is open access, and published in scientific journals indexed in Scopus. The selected articles must be relevant to the topics of character education, social ethics development, and student responsibility at the secondary school level. Article search was conducted using the following boolean search in Scopus: (TITLE-ABS-KEY("Character Education") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY("Social Ethics") AND TITLE-ABS-KEY("Student Responsibility")) AND TITLE-ABS-KEY("High School")) AND (LIMIT-TO(OA, "all")) AND (LIMIT-TO(DOCTYPE, "ar")) AND (LIMIT-TO(SUBJAREA, "SOCI") OR LIMIT-TO(SUBJAREA, "ARTS")). This boolean search was used to restrict the search to articles relevant to the topics of character education and social ethics, which are open access and indexed in Scopus.

The article selection process began with an initial search that resulted in 672 articles relevant to the topics of character education, social ethics, and student responsibility at the secondary school level. After filtering based on inclusion criteria, the number of articles meeting the requirements was reduced to 42. These articles were then further filtered based on title relevance and their alignment with the focus of this study. As a result, only 28 articles were ultimately selected for further analysis. The selection and filtering process was carried out using a PRISMA flow diagram to ensure that each step in the article selection was documented systematically and transparently as shown in the following diagram.

Figure 1. PRISMA diagram



All selected literature was gathered through searches in the Scopus database, using keywords such as "Character Education", "Social Ethics", "Student Responsibility", and "High School". Only articles indexed in Scopus were selected to ensure the quality and credibility of the sources. The collected data was then analyzed by coding the main themes related to the application of character education, the development of social ethics, and student responsibility. The results of various relevant studies were then synthesized to provide an overview of the effectiveness of character education in shaping social ethics and student responsibility at the secondary school level, as well as the challenges faced in its implementation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Main Information About Data

No	Title	Authors	Year	Journal	Country	Author Affiliation
1	Fostering Character Education through Community-Based Socialpreneurship Initiatives among High School Students in Banda Aceh	Nizariah, Suhendrayatna, Muhammad Aulia, Sulastri	2025	<i>APTISI Transactions on Technopreneurship (ATT)</i>	Indonesia	Syiah Kuala University, Indonesia
2	Exploring Islamic-Oriented Cooperative Learning through Faith-Driven Collaboration in Islamic Education Courses	Usman, Bahraeni, Nurhilalayah	2025	<i>International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research</i>	Indonesia	Universitas Islam Negeri Alauddin Makassar, Universitas Negeri Makassar
3	Construction of Islamic Education Based on Islamic Boarding Schools: A Case Study at Al-Manar Muhammadiyah Modern Islamic	Firmansyah, Muhammad Aupal Minan, Adriansyah. NZ, Afik Fikri Almas, Ivan Riyadi, Thoriq Tri Prabowo	2025	<i>Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam</i>	Indonesia	Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah, Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology

	Boarding School in South Sumatra					
4	Indonesian Teachers' Roles in Designing and Utilizing AI-Powered Animated Videos: A Case Study on Classroom Practices and Character Development	Nafri Yanti, Arono, Fina Hiasa, Febi Junaidi, Noermanzah, Rio Kurniawan	2025	<i>International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research</i>	Indonesia	Universitas Bengkulu, Bimacita Global
5	Spiritual Formation and Character Education: A Module Development for Christian Sunday School Children Based on Galatians 5:22–23	Veronica Fernández Espinosa & Vianney Domingo	2025	<i>Cogent Education</i>	Spain	Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, Madrid, Spain
6	The Virtue and Values Education Centre: Establishing a Research and Transference Centre for Virtue and Character Education in Spain	Veronica Fernández Espinosa & Vianney Domingo	2025	<i>Cogent Education</i>	Spain	Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, Madrid, Spain
7	Perspectives and Attitudes of Teachers on Character Education in Schools in the Community of Madrid	Verónica Fernández-Espinosa, Paloma Redondo-Corcobado, Marta Velázquez Gil	2025	<i>Cogent Social Sciences</i>	Spain	Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, Universidad Internacional de la Rioja, Spain
8	Character Education Empirical Research: A Thematic Review and Comparative Content Analysis	Peter Oldham & Shane McLoughlin	2025	<i>Journal of Moral Education</i>	United Kingdom	Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham
9	Integration of Islamic Values in the Field of General Studies at SMP Unismuh Makassar: Evaluation of the Stake Countenance Model Approach	Ferdinan, Nurhidayah M, Mawardi Pewangi	2025	<i>Educational Process: International Journal</i>	Indonesia	University of Muhammadiyah Makassar, Indonesia
10	VIRT ² UE: A European Train-the-Trainer Programme for Teaching Research Integrity	Natalie Evans, Armin Schmolmueller, Margreet Stolper, Giulia Inguaggiato, Astrid Hooghiemstra, Ruzica Tokalic, Daniel Pizzolato	2024	<i>Research Ethics</i>	Netherlands, Austria, Croatia, Belgium	Amsterdam UMC, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Austrian Agency for Research Integrity, University of Split School of Medicine, University of Leuven
11	Character Strengthening Model of Religious Moderation Praxis Method to Improve and	Sutarja, Harun Jaka Prayitno, Waston, Syamsul Hidayat, Mohamad Ali, Fitrah Sugiarto	2024	<i>Revista de Gestão Social e Ambiental</i>	Indonesia	University of Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Universitas Islam Negeri Mataram

	Develop Student Morale					
12	Developing a Religious Moderation-Based Curriculum Module for Laboratory Madrasah Tsanawiyah in Islamic Higher Education	Muhammad Kosim, Martin Kustati, Wahida Raihan Sirait, Suryadi Fajri, Suci Ramadhanti Febriani, Mufti, David D. Perrodin	2024	<i>Jurnal Pendidikan Islam</i>	Indonesia, Thailand	Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol Padang, Mahidol University
13	Perspectives and Attitudes of Teachers on Character Education in Schools in the Community of Madrid	Verónica Fernández-Espinosa, Paloma Redondo-Corcobado, Marta Velázquez Gil	2024	<i>Cogent Social Sciences</i>	Spain	Universidad Francisco de Vitoria, Universidad Internacional de la Rioja
14	Character Education Empirical Research: A Thematic Review and Comparative Content Analysis	Peter Oldham, Shane McLoughlin	2024	<i>Journal of Moral Education</i>	United Kingdom	Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtues, University of Birmingham
15	Using a Virtue Ethics Lens to Develop a Socially Accountable Community Placement Programme for Medical Students	Mpho S. Mogodi, Masego B. Kebaetse, Mmoloki C. Molwantwa, Detlef R. Prozesky, Dominic Griffiths	2019	<i>BMC Medical Education</i>	Botswana	University of Botswana, University of the Witwatersrand
16	Character Education in the Pandemic Era: A Religious Ethical Learning Model through Islamic Education	Nadri Taja, Encep Syarief Nurdin, Aceng Kosasih, Edi Suresman, Tedi Supriyadi	2023	<i>International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research</i>	Indonesia	Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia
17	The Implementation of an Ethical Education Curriculum in Secondary Schools in Ireland	Maria Bourke, William Kinsella, Paula Prendeville	2019	<i>Educ. Sci.</i>	Ireland	University College Dublin
18	The Development of Islamic Religious Education and Character Materials Online Based in Elementary Schools	Agus Dian Alirahman, Mohamad Syarif Sumantri, Muhammad Japar	2023	<i>Journal of Law and Sustainable Development</i>	Indonesia	Universitas Islam Bunga Bangsa Cirebon, Universitas Negeri Jakarta
19	Religious Character-Based Inclusive Education in General Course for Difabel Students at University	Hilman Taufiq Abdillah, Endis Firdaus, Makhmud Syafe'i, Nurti Budiyanti, Yusuf Ali Tantowi	2025	<i>Jurnal Pendidikan Islam</i>	Indonesia	Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

As reflected in the table above, Indonesia is the leading country in terms of publications on this topic, with a total of nine publications. This highlights Indonesia's strong academic focus on character education and moral development in various educational contexts, ranging from Islamic education (PAI) in elementary schools to community-based education and character education in higher education. The diversity of the studies suggests a broad interest in how character education influences social ethics and student responsibility at different educational levels.

Spain follows with five publications, which explore various facets of character education from a religious and virtue ethics perspective, contributing significantly to the global discourse on character development in education. The United Kingdom contributes three publications, focusing on empirical research related to character education and its effectiveness in various educational settings, particularly emphasizing moral education and its impact on school culture and student behavior.

Other countries such as Botswana, Ireland, and Russia each contribute one publication, showcasing the global nature of the discussion on character education. These contributions reflect the growing interest in how educational systems worldwide can promote social ethics and responsibility through character development programs.

This distribution of publications underscores that Asia, especially Indonesia and Taiwan, plays a leading role in advancing the scholarly conversation around character education. The studies highlight how cultural values and educational contexts influence character education programs, with a focus on social ethics and student responsibility. The findings suggest that character education is not only a means of academic development but also a way to cultivate responsible citizens who are equipped to engage with diverse societal challenges.

Tabel 2. Summary of Contributions by Country

Country	Number of Publications
Indonesia	9
Spain	5
United Kingdom	3
Botswana	1
Ireland	1
Russia	1

The metadata presented in Table 1 highlights the geographical distribution of contributions related to character education and sustainability. Indonesia emerges as the dominant contributor, emphasizing its strong academic focus on character education and moral development, particularly in Islamic education and community-based programs. Other countries, including Spain, United Kingdom, and Botswana, contribute valuable perspectives, enriching the global conversation about the role of character education in shaping social ethics and student responsibility.

This analysis highlights the global reach and diverse applications of character education, indicating the critical role of international collaboration and knowledge-sharing to improve educational practices across various cultures and educational systems.

The Impact of Character Education on Students' Social Ethics

Character education plays a very important role in shaping students' social ethics, particularly at the secondary school level. Based on various studies, the application of character education based on religious values, especially Islamic values, has been proven to have a positive impact on the development of students' moral and social ethics. For example, at SMP UNISMUH Makassar, the implementation of character education based on Islamic values successfully improved students' character in aspects such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility. The instillation of values like honesty is reflected in very good results, with an average score of 4.76, indicating that students are able to internalize the value of honesty in their daily lives, both at school and outside of school. In addition, character education also has a positive impact on students' discipline with an average score of 4.23, showing that character education plays an important role in teaching students to value time and complete tasks on time (Alirahman, Sumantri, & Japar, 2023; Evans et al., 2024; Hidayat, Ali, & Sugiarto, 2024; Kosim et al., 2024; Mogodi, Kebaetse, Molwantwa, Prozesky, & Griffiths, 2019; Nurhidayah & Pewangi, 2025; Redondo-corcobado, 2024).

Another significant impact is the development of students' social responsibility (Aulia et al., 2025; Bourke, Kinsella, & Prendeville, 2020; Chung, 2023; Islam et al., 2025; Minan, Nz, Almas, & Riyadi, 2025; Mogodi et al., 2019; Taja, Nurdin, Kosasih, Suresman, & Supriyadi, 2021; Yanti & Hiasa, 2025). According to the research results, students involved in this character education program showed a higher level of responsibility, with an average score of 4.26. They demonstrated better abilities in completing both individual and group tasks and were more responsible for the cleanliness and orderliness of the school environment. Furthermore, character education

also encourages students to be more sensitive to the needs of others and to show empathy and social responsibility. This shows that character education plays a role not only in academic development but also in shaping students' more positive social character.

However, despite the positive results achieved, the implementation of character education still faces several challenges. One of the biggest challenges is the limitation in integrating references from the Qur'an and Hadith into certain subjects, such as Natural Science (IPA) and Mathematics, which are not always relevant to the context of those subjects (Abdillah, Firdaus, Budiyan, Ali, & Indonesia, 2025; Anggelia, Agustin, & Suparti, 2025; Espinosa & Domingo, 2025). This challenge highlights the importance of further teacher training so that they can connect religious values with broader and more diverse subject matter. Additionally, closer collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community is needed to create an environment that supports the overall development of students' character. This study also emphasizes the importance of collaboration between teachers and parents in implementing character education effectively, which not only influences students' academic attitudes and behaviors but also shapes them into responsible and ethical individuals in social life.

Overall, character education based on Islamic values has proven to have a positive impact on the development of students' social ethics and responsibility. Although there are several challenges that need to be addressed, particularly regarding strengthening the use of religious references in teaching and teacher training, the implementation of this character education has shown that students' character can be formed through the values taught, both in the classroom and in their daily lives (Fernández-espinoza & Redondo-corcobado, 2025; Oldham, McLoughlin, Oldham, & McLoughlin, 2025).

The Impact of Character Education on Students' Level of Responsibility in Daily Life

Character education has a significant impact on students' level of responsibility in daily life, especially when it is based on Islamic values. Based on findings from various studies, character education plays an important role in developing students' moral qualities, such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility (Evans et al., 2024; Fernández-espinoza & Redondo-corcobado, 2025; Hidayat et al., 2024; Kosim et al., 2024; Nurhidayah & Pewangi, 2025; Redondo-corcobado, 2024). For example, at SMP Unismuh Makassar, the implementation of character education based on Islamic values showed very positive results, with honesty recording the highest score (4.76), followed by discipline (4.23) and responsibility (4.26), indicating that this program successfully internalized these values in students' lives both at school and outside of school.

The application of Islamic values in the interaction between teachers and students also has a very positive impact, with high evaluations of the relationships built in the classroom, where mutual respect, empathy, and guidance become essential elements in the learning process. Teachers reported that their interactions with students helped build relationships based on Islamic values, which significantly contributed to the students' moral development. Thus, this character education not only influences students' academic behavior but also shapes them into more responsible and ethical individuals in their social lives (Alirahman et al., 2023; Bourke et al., 2020; Chung, 2023; Fernández-espinoza & Redondo-corcobado, 2025; Mogodi et al., 2019; Taja et al., 2021).

However, despite the very positive results, challenges remain in the implementation of this character education, particularly related to integrating religious values such as the Qur'an and Hadith into more scientific subjects, such as Natural Science (IPA) and Mathematics. These values are not always relevant to the context of these subjects, which creates gaps in more holistic teaching. This indicates the need for further teacher training so that they can more effectively and comprehensively connect religious values with the subject matter (Abdillah et al., 2025; Aulia et al., 2025; Islam et al., 2025; Minan et al., 2025; Yanti & Hiasa, 2025). Nevertheless, overall, the integration of Islamic values in learning activities, such as group work, social events, and classroom discipline, received high evaluations (4.1) and shows the effectiveness of character education in shaping students' social responsibility.

Overall, the implementation of character education based on Islamic values has been proven to have a positive impact on students' level of responsibility, both in academic and social contexts. This character education not only improves students' academic performance but also strengthens their roles as responsible and ethical individuals in daily life. Therefore, the integration of character education based on strong religious values can serve as an effective foundation for developing responsible students in various aspects of their lives (Anggelia et al., 2025; Espinosa & Domingo, 2025; Fernández-espinoza & Redondo-corcobado, 2025; Oldham et al., 2025).

Challenges in Implementing Character Education in Schools, Especially Related to the Development of Social Ethics and Student Responsibility

The implementation of character education in schools faces several significant challenges, particularly in the development of social ethics and student responsibility. Based on research conducted in Banda Aceh, the

application of the Busi model (which combines Islamic School Culture with social entrepreneurship initiatives) successfully improved students' discipline, empathy, and social skills. This program demonstrates the importance of community involvement in helping students connect with social issues and strengthen their responsibility as active citizens. However, the primary challenge identified is students' readiness, where some students require guidance to adapt to activities focused on character education (Abdillah et al., 2025; Anggelia et al., 2025; Espinosa & Domingo, 2025; Fernández-espinosa & Redondo-corcobado, 2025; Oldham et al., 2025; Yanti & Hiasa, 2025). Gradual guidance and continuous support are needed to ensure that students can fully engage in activities that emphasize ethical values.

The Busi model demonstrates that teacher involvement, proactive school leadership, and community collaboration are crucial in shaping responsible behavior among students. However, cultural diversity among students and limited resources present significant challenges in some areas. The success of this model lies in its ability to integrate religious and social values into the curriculum, thereby increasing students' responsibility not only in the academic context but also in their social interactions and contributions to the wider community (Aulia et al., 2025; Bourke et al., 2020; Islam et al., 2025; Minan et al., 2025; Mogodi et al., 2019).

Furthermore, research on character education consistently highlights the important role of teachers as role models, where their ability to demonstrate honesty, patience, and responsibility directly influences the development of students' character. This research also emphasizes that effective teacher training and family involvement are key to the success of character education programs in shaping students into responsible individuals (Alirahman et al., 2023; Chung, 2023; Redondo-corcobado, 2024; Taja et al., 2021).

Overall, despite the challenges in terms of cultural diversity, students' readiness, limited resources, and lack of pedagogical training for teachers, a holistic approach that involves various school stakeholders, families, and communities has proven effective in encouraging students to become responsible and ethical individuals (Evans et al., 2024; Hidayat et al., 2024; Kosim et al., 2024; Nurhidayah & Pewangi, 2025). A model that integrates religious values with social education and entrepreneurship activities, such as the Busi model, can create an environment that supports comprehensive character development.

Empirical Evidence Supporting the Impact of Character Education on the Development of Social Ethics and Student Responsibility

Based on studies conducted, there is empirical evidence supporting the positive impact of character education on students' social ethics and responsibility. One key finding from this research is that character education can enhance students' moral development, particularly by instilling core Islamic values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility (Alirahman et al., 2023; Evans et al., 2024; Hidayat et al., 2024; Kosim et al., 2024; Nurhidayah & Pewangi, 2025; Redondo-corcobado, 2024). For example, a study conducted at SMP Unismuh Makassar showed that after participating in the character education program, students' scores on ethical attributes such as honesty (4.76), discipline (4.23), and responsibility (4.26) significantly increased, indicating that the program successfully internalized these values into students' daily lives, both at school and outside of school.

Additionally, this study highlights the importance of teacher-student interactions based on Islamic ethical values in students' character development. Teachers in this study played an important role as role models in ethical behavior and reinforced students' responsibility through consistent engagement and the integration of Islamic values in every lesson. The high rating for teacher involvement (4.7) further supports the idea that effective teacher role modeling and consistent guidance positively impact students' understanding of their social responsibility (Bourke et al., 2020; Chung, 2023; Mogodi et al., 2019; Taja et al., 2021).

However, this research also identified challenges in integrating Islamic texts (such as the Qur'an and Hadith) into various subjects, particularly in Natural Science (IPA) and Mathematics, which are not always relevant to the scientific context of those subjects. This gap in curriculum integration highlights the need for better teacher training and more adequate teaching resources to improve the application of Islamic ethical principles across all subjects (Aulia et al., 2025; Islam et al., 2025; Minan et al., 2025). Nevertheless, the integration of Islamic values into learning activities, such as group work, social events, and classroom discipline, received high ratings (4.1), demonstrating the effectiveness of character education in shaping students' social responsibility.

Overall, empirical evidence shows that character education based on Islamic values has a measurable positive impact on changes in students' behavior, both in terms of social responsibility and the development of their social ethics. This character education program not only improves students' academic performance but also strengthens their role as responsible individuals in social life, contributing to the development of a more ethical and harmonious society (Abdillah et al., 2025; Anggelia et al., 2025; Espinosa & Domingo, 2025; Fernández-espinosa & Redondo-corcobado, 2025; Oldham et al., 2025; Yanti & Hiasa, 2025).

DISCUSSION

The empirical evidence supporting the impact of character education on students' social ethics and responsibility can be observed in several key findings. One significant example comes from the study conducted at SMP UNISMUH Makassar, where the integration of Islamic values into character education programs resulted in substantial improvements in students' ethical behavior. Specifically, the study showed that after engaging in the program, students' scores in honesty (4.76), discipline (4.23), and responsibility (4.26) significantly increased, demonstrating the success of the program in instilling these values into the students' daily lives, both inside and outside of school.

Additionally, the study highlighted the importance of teacher-student interactions based on Islamic ethical values. Teachers played a crucial role in modeling ethical behavior and reinforcing students' sense of responsibility through consistent engagement and the integration of these values in the classroom. High ratings (4.7) for teacher involvement further supported the idea that effective teacher role modeling and guidance positively impacted students' understanding of their social responsibility.

However, the research also identified challenges in integrating Islamic religious texts (such as the Qur'an and Hadith) into subjects like Natural Sciences and Mathematics, where such references are not always directly relevant. This gap in curriculum integration highlights the need for better teacher training and more appropriate teaching resources to fully integrate Islamic ethical principles across all subjects. Despite these challenges, the overall integration of Islamic values in activities such as group work, social events, and classroom discipline received a high rating (4.1), showing the effectiveness of character education in fostering students' social responsibility.

In conclusion, the empirical evidence shows that character education based on Islamic values has a measurable positive impact on students' social ethics and responsibility. The program not only improves academic performance but also strengthens students' roles as responsible and ethical individuals in society.

CONCLUSION

Character education has a significant impact on the development of social ethics and the level of student responsibility, as demonstrated by various studies focused on its implementation in secondary schools. Based on the results of the literature analysis, it can be concluded that the application of character education based on religious values, particularly Islam, has successfully enhanced moral values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility in students. Character education programs not only focus on academic achievement but also play a major role in shaping students into more responsible individuals in their social context.

However, despite the very positive results, challenges in the implementation of character education still exist, particularly related to the integration of religious values into subjects that are not always directly relevant to the topics being taught, such as in Natural Science (IPA) and Mathematics. Additionally, the lack of adequate teacher training is a significant barrier in ensuring the effectiveness of this program. Therefore, there is a need to improve the quality of teacher training, as well as to develop more relevant and holistic teaching materials that can connect religious values with all aspects of learning.

Overall, empirical evidence supports that character education based on religious values can strengthen students' moral development, enhance social ethics, and encourage greater social responsibility. To improve the effectiveness of character education programs, closer collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community is needed to create an environment that supports the comprehensive development of students' character. Evidence-based policy recommendations are crucial to support the implementation of more effective character education in schools, in order to create a generation of youth who are not only academically intelligent but also responsible and ethical in their social lives.

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