

IMPLEMENTATION OF DEMOCRATIC CHARACTER VALUES THROUGH INTEGRATIVE LEARNING FOR MADRASAH IBTIDAIYAH STUDENTS

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Abstract

Education plays a crucial role in shaping democratic character in students, especially within madrasahs. Democratic character, which encompasses values such as freedom of expression, deliberation, equality, and social responsibility, is essential for developing individuals capable of active participation in community life. Madrasahs, as institutions integrating religious and general education, hold a strategic role in instilling these characteristics. An integrative learning approach, particularly in science subjects, proves effective in internalizing democratic values. Instruction involving discussion, collaboration, and problem-solving enables students to think critically, appreciate differing opinions, and collaborate in decision-making. Additionally, extracurricular activities serve as an important means for students to practice democratic values. However, implementing democratic character in madrasahs faces challenges, such as students' diverse backgrounds and limited facilities. Therefore, there is a need for continuous improvement in teacher training and facility enhancement to ensure more effective democratic education.

Keywords: Democracy, IPA, Integrative learning, MTs

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping students' character (Dewi and Alam 2020), with one of the key characteristics being democratic character. Democracy in the context of education encompasses values such as freedom of speech, equality, responsibility, and respect for

diversity (Apple 2018). Implementing these values is essential for creating an inclusive and conducive educational environment, particularly in institutions like madrasahs, which focus not only on academic achievement but also on moral and spiritual development (Mappaenre et al. 2022; Tharaba et al. 2021). This

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democratic character will help students grow into individuals who can contribute wisely and responsibly to society.

Madrasahs, as educational institutions that integrate religious and general values, play a dual role in developing students who are not only intellectually competent but also possess good moral attitudes, including respect for democratic values (Chowdhury 2018; Darlan, Pettalongi, and Rustina 2021; Sahin 2018). Madrasahs teach the importance of combining religious teachings with social life in a broader context (Aziz 2018; Mansir 2021; Pu'ad, Ruswandi, and Arifin 2022), where Islamic values are applied not only in worship but also in social interactions that respect differences and diversity. Thus, madrasahs provide a fitting environment for developing democratic character in line with religious teachings.

One approach used in madrasahs to integrate democratic values is integrative learning (Fuadi and Suyatno 2020; Mansir 2021). Integrative learning allows students to study various subjects simultaneously, emphasizing the connections between different fields of study. In this context, democratic values can be instilled through various subjects, both religious and general. For example, in science lessons on temperature and heat, students not only learn physics concepts such as energy transfer and

the effect of heat on objects but also practice discussing, respecting their peers' opinions, and working collaboratively to understand natural phenomena, thereby instilling democratic values such as deliberation and social responsibility.

This integrative approach not only teaches academic skills but also encourages students to think critically and be open to various viewpoints (Bezanilla et al. 2019). Students are trained to appreciate others' opinions, discuss differences healthily, and make decisions collectively based on deliberation (Merizawati et al. 2023; Nisak 2021) (Merizawati et al. 2023). This aligns with democratic principles that encourage active participation from each individual in decision-making and respect for pluralism (Cáceres, Nussbaum, and Ortiz 2020). Thus, integrative learning creates a balance between academic competence and moral values while reinforcing democratic character in students.

Additionally, madrasahs aim to create an environment that fosters the application of democratic values in daily life. This process occurs not only in the classroom but also outside through extracurricular activities, such as student organizations and deliberations for decision-making related to madrasah programs. Students are given opportunities to express their opinions, engage in

healthy debates, and practice responsibility in carrying out assigned tasks(Wulandari and Hafizotun 2022). In this situation, teachers act as facilitators guiding students to apply democratic principles in their interactions(Bergmark and Westman 2018; Kohlmeier and Saye 2019; Luguetti and Oliver 2020; Warouw et al. 2019).

However, despite madrasahs' efforts to integrate democratic values, there are challenges to be faced(Puspitasari, Wulandari, and Pitri 2023). One challenge is the diversity in students' social and cultural backgrounds, which sometimes makes them less accustomed to concepts like freedom of speech or respect for differences. Some students may still be accustomed to authoritarian values that emphasize obedience without critique. Another challenge is the limitation of resources, both in terms of facilities and teaching materials that support a deeper application of democratic values.

Therefore, continuous efforts are needed to strengthen the implementation of democratic character in madrasahs through integrative learning. Teachers need further training in using methods that encourage active student participation and the development of critical thinking skills. Additionally, improving facilities and access to learning resources that support the development of democratic values is also crucial(Kurniawan et al.

2023). By doing so, madrasahs can continue to play a role in shaping a generation that is not only academically successful but also possesses a strong democratic character, ready to contribute to a more inclusive and just society. The goal of this research is to understand how democratic character is implemented in integrative learning in madrasahs, particularly in science lessons on temperature and heat, and to identify the challenges and solutions faced by teachers in instilling democratic values in students.

METHOD OG RESEARCH

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to explore the implementation of integrative learning in shaping democratic character in madrasahs, specifically focusing on science lessons about temperature and heat. The study is conducted at a Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) in Tanjung Jabung Timur, involving science teachers and students as research subjects. The instruments used in this research include interview sheets and classroom observations. Interviews are conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies employed by teachers in implementing integrative science learning, as well as how efforts to instill democratic values such as freedom of speech, deliberation, and social responsibility are integrated into the learning activities. In addition to interviews, classroom observations are carried out to directly observe the

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practices occurring in the classroom, particularly in the application of democratic values during student discussions, respect for differing opinions, and collective decision-making.

The data obtained from interviews and observations are then analyzed descriptively using content analysis techniques (Assarroudi et al. 2018). The analysis process involves data reduction, which is the filtering of relevant data from interviews and observations, followed by the presentation of data in the form of descriptive narratives that illustrate how learning takes place and how democratic values are instilled. Subsequently, conclusions are drawn to gain a deeper understanding of the application of integrative learning and democratic character in madrasahs (Assarroudi et al. 2018; Sunhaji and Nurfuadi 2021). To ensure data validity, cross-checking of collected data is performed, comparing findings from various information sources to ensure consistency and accuracy. This allows the researcher to provide a comprehensive picture of how democratic values are integrated into science learning in madrasahs.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Integrative learning is a process of creating a conducive environment for establishing communication between educators and students, as well as other components. It involves merging

various subjects into a unified whole and presenting them as a single unit. The goal of this integration is to foster a coherent development of the child's personality in alignment with the surrounding community. Zaky explains that integrative learning in science subjects has instilled democratic character education. This process occurs throughout the classroom learning sessions (Interview with Science Teacher, MTs Raudatul Hasanah).

The implementation of science lessons in shaping democratic character for eighth-grade students at MTs Raudatul Hasanah uses an integrative learning model, meaning the combination of various teaching methods with a common goal and specific topic. Integrative learning aims to provide meaningful experiences for students.

Based on observation results, the implementation of integrative science learning to develop democratic character in eighth-grade students at MTs Raudatul Hasanah involves the following stages:

Preliminary Activities In this phase, the teacher begins the lesson by greeting the students and leading a group prayer. The teacher then checks homework and attendance and motivates students, especially those assigned to duties, to cooperate in maintaining cleanliness and order both in the school environment and the classroom (Abdullah 2019; Nurlailah

and Ardiansyah 2022). Next, the teacher explains the topics to be learned, the competencies to be achieved, and the learning methods to be used.

Core Activities In the core activities, there are 5 stages implemented in the integrative learning process: literacy, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity.

a. **Literacy:** Students are motivated and guided to observe, read, and write about the topic. They are provided with readings and materials related to temperature and heat. The teacher presents the lesson using illustrations related to Raudatul Hasanah through a video shown on a projector in the classroom.

b. **Critical Thinking:** The teacher provides opportunities for students to identify as many unknowns as possible, from factual to hypothetical questions, all related to the material of Raudatul Hasanah. This process involves brainstorming, a discussion method to gather ideas, opinions, information, knowledge, and experiences from all participants.

c. **Collaboration:** Students are grouped to discuss, gather information, present findings, and exchange information about Temperature and Heat. Learning resources include educational modules and science books borrowed from the madrasah library. The teacher uses discussion as a method, where students face problems to solve, answer questions, enhance their knowledge,

and make decisions.

d. **Communication:** Students present group or individual work in a classical format, express opinions on the presentations, and receive feedback from the presenting group or individual. During discussions, the teacher observes and guides groups facing difficulties. After discussions, a designated group member presents their findings to the class, with feedback from other groups. The teacher acts as a motivator, facilitator, and resource person.

e. **Creativity:** The teacher and students summarize what has been learned about the text related to Temperature and Heat. Students are given the opportunity to ask questions about things they haven't understood.

Closing Activities At the end of the lesson, the teacher provides reflection on the learning material, focusing on Temperature and Heat and demonstrating scientific thinking in decision-making based on data. One principle of democracy is decision-making based on clear evidence or data. In the lesson on temperature and heat, students can be trained to make conclusions based on collected experimental data. The teacher can demonstrate that good decisions, both in experiments and daily life, should be based on facts and data, not assumptions or personal beliefs.

Based on classroom observations, it was found that the implementation of integrative science learning for eighth-grade students at MTs Raudatul Hasanah has successfully

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instilled democratic character through positive practices in the learning process. This includes starting the lesson with group prayer and ending with reflection on collective problem-solving. In understanding temperature and heat concepts, students can be encouraged to solve problems together, such as finding the best solution to reduce heat loss in a system (e.g., in a thermos or an insulated house). Through problem-solving, students learn the importance of working together, listening to various ideas, and reaching consensus, reflecting deliberation, an important democratic value.

Zaki explains that the implementation of integrative science learning for eighth-grade students at MTs Raudatul Hasanah is carried out through consistent practices in the learning process (Interview with Science Teacher). Mirza, an eighth-grade student, mentioned that during the learning process, we are encouraged to actively discuss the material (Interview with Mirza, 2023). Similarly, Qohar added that the learning is enjoyable because we get to observe temperature changes in everyday life through the projector (Interview with Qohar, 2023).

Regarding the teacher's ability to implement integrative science learning, the observations conclude that: (1) The learning process is systematically conducted from start to finish according to the lesson plan

(RPP), (2) Media and learning resources are used effectively, (3) The learning atmosphere is enthusiastic and enjoyable, (4) There is excellent cooperation and exchange of ideas among students in groups and between groups, (5) The teacher consistently provides reflection at the end of each lesson. Contextual learning strategies and life values should be integrated into learning so that students can internalize them in daily life with the developed character concepts.

From the implementation of integrative science learning for eighth-grade students at MTs Raudatul Hasanah, it can be concluded that the process aligns with the planned lesson plan by combining discovery learning with discussion. Integrative learning in this process occurs at the strategic level, involving various models and methods of teaching. The integration of learning is aimed at achieving the set educational goals, with methods serving as tools to reach these goals. Moreover, the implementation of integrative science learning has supported the development of democratic character in students, such as engaging in discussions and respecting others' opinions. This aligns with the character value development concept by the National Education Ministry. Character education involves instilling good habits in life, where good character requires good knowledge (moral knowing), good feelings (moral feeling), and good behavior (moral

action) to form a cohesive pattern of behavior and attitude.

The implementation of integrative science learning in shaping democratic character in eighth-grade students at MTs Raudatul Hasanah has been well-executed, according to the lesson plan. Teachers guide students through the process and encourage active participation. At the start of lessons, students are encouraged to pray together, and teachers motivate students to complete assigned tasks, reflecting democratic character education in the process and aligning with the learning objectives.

Supporting and Hindering Factors for Democratic Character Values

The internalization of democratic character values through integrative science learning at MTs Raudatul Hasanah requires supporting factors to achieve the goal of students being democratic, honest, accustomed to deliberation with peers, respecting others' opinions, and courageously proposing ideas (Interview with KH, 2023). Supporting factors facilitate the development of students as excellent individuals through integrative learning.

Supporting factors for the internalization of democratic character values at MTs Raudatul Hasanah include:

Well-Planned Program A well-prepared educational program by the institution and teachers, considering

evaluations from previous years, is essential. This plan is realized through both classroom and extracurricular activities aimed at instilling democratic values in eighth-grade students at MTs Raudatul Hasanah (Interview with Istiqomah, 2023). The learning activities begin with setting goals, preparing resources, and evaluating the success of the activities. The researcher views that all stages of planning at MTs Raudatul Hasanah have been well-prepared, which is a supporting factor in internalizing democratic values through integrative science learning. However, teachers must carefully utilize available resources, including human and other resources.

Adequate Facilities The smooth implementation of integrative learning at MTs Raudatul Hasanah is supported by adequate facilities provided by the school. These include LCD projectors with Wi-Fi in each classroom, comfortable learning spaces, complete textbooks, a school laboratory, and various other learning media. The school also allocates a budget specifically to support teachers' activities according to their work programs (Interview with Janah, 2023). Adequate facilities are crucial for successful learning activities, with school facilities tailored to students' needs for learning.

Despite efforts to internalize democratic character values at MTs Raudatul Hasanah, there are obstacles. Factors hindering the implementation

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of integrative learning require evaluation to enhance democratic character development in eighth-grade students. Evaluation is carried out as needed through assessments of students' knowledge, attitudes, and skills (Interview with Zaky, 2023). Hindering factors include:

Internal Factors Internal factors include teachers' low professional competency regarding integrative learning, due to minimal training and workshops on this topic. This leads to differing understandings and opinions among subject teachers during integration discussions, affecting the integration of themes in lesson plans. Effective discussion among teachers is crucial, especially when preparing lesson plans before teaching.

Limited Time Allocation The large number of activities, both from the school and other factors, results in limited time for learning, affecting almost all subject teachers at MTs Raudatul Hasanah (Interview with Istiqomah, 2023). Therefore, teachers are required to manage the allocated time efficiently to achieve the planned learning objectives.

CONCLUSION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping democratic character in students, particularly within madrasahs. Democratic character, which encompasses values such as freedom of expression, deliberation, equality, and social responsibility, is

essential for creating individuals who can contribute meaningfully to society. Madrasahs, as institutions integrating religious and general education, have a dual role in instilling these values. Integrative learning, especially in science subjects, serves as an effective approach for internalizing democratic values. Through a learning process that involves discussion, collaboration, and problem-solving, students are encouraged to think critically, value differing opinions, and work together in decision-making. This process is also reinforced by extracurricular activities that provide students with opportunities to practice democratic values outside the classroom. However, the implementation of democratic character faces challenges such as students' diverse backgrounds and limited facilities. Therefore, continuous efforts are needed to train teachers and improve facilities to make democratic education more effective.

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