

Forging Resilient Characters: SD Plus Darul Ulum's Holistic Approach to Education in A Globalized World

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Abstract

This research explores the character-building programs at SD Plus Darul Ulum, Jombang, focusing on how they cultivate resilience and toughness in students. The study delves into distinctive programs, including the Pioneering International Primary School, "Everyday with Al-Qur'an," Full Day School, and Outdoor Learning initiatives. Theoretical frameworks encompass globalization of education, holistic learning, extended learning time, and experiential learning. Qualitative methods involve interviews, focus group discussions, observations, and document analysis. Findings reveal the alignment of programs with global standards, holistic Islamic education, extended learning principles, and a comprehensive approach to student development. The research contributes to character education literature, addresses a gap in primary school research, and offers insights for educators and policymakers. It emphasizes the holistic nature of education, transcending traditional paradigms, and positions SD Plus Darul Ulum as a beacon for character development in the 21st century.

Keywords: *Character Education, Globalization, Holistic Learning, Experiential Learning*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi program pembentukan karakter di SD Plus Darul Ulum, Jombang, dengan fokus pada bagaimana mereka membentuk ketahanan dan kegigihan pada siswa. Studi ini menyelidiki program-program khas, termasuk Pioneering International Primary School, "Everyday with Al-Qur'an," Full Day School, dan inisiatif Pembelajaran Outdoor. Kerangka teoritis melibatkan globalisasi pendidikan, pembelajaran holistik, waktu pembelajaran yang diperpanjang, dan pembelajaran berbasis pengalaman. Metode kualitatif melibatkan wawancara, diskusi kelompok fokus, observasi, dan analisis dokumen. Temuan mengungkapkan keselarasan program dengan standar global, pendidikan Islam holistik, prinsip pembelajaran yang diperpanjang, dan pendekatan komprehensif terhadap pengembangan siswa. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada literatur pendidikan karakter, mengatasi kesenjangan dalam penelitian sekolah dasar, dan memberikan wawasan bagi pendidik dan pembuat kebijakan. Ini menekankan sifat holistik pendidikan, melampaui paradigma tradisional, dan menempatkan SD Plus Darul Ulum sebagai mercusuar pembangunan karakter pada abad ke-21.

Kata Kunci: *Pendidikan Karakter, Globalisasi, Pembelajaran Holistik, Pembelajaran Berbasis Pengalaman*

Introduction

Education serves as the crucible in which the future of individuals and societies is shaped. In the quaint town of Jombang, SD Plus Darul Ulum stands as a beacon of educational excellence, not merely content with imparting academic knowledge but steadfast in its commitment to nurturing the resilient and robust character of its students. This article delves into the commendable programs established by SD Plus Darul Ulum, specifically designed to fortify the character of its students, shaping them into individuals capable of navigating life's challenges with resilience.

The overarching goal of this research is to conduct a thorough exploration and analysis of the distinctive programs implemented by SD Plus Darul Ulum, focusing on their efficacy in instilling toughness and resilience in students. Through a meticulous examination of these programs, the study aims to identify their impact on character development and the overall well-being of the student body. By elucidating the specific elements that contribute to the creation of robust individuals, the research seeks to provide valuable insights into educational practices that extend beyond the conventional realms of academic achievement.

The significance of this topic is underscored by the recognition that education extends far beyond the confines of textbooks and examinations. In an era where the challenges facing the younger generation are multifaceted and dynamic, the ability to foster resilience and toughness in students becomes paramount. SD Plus Darul Ulum's emphasis on character development serves as a model that transcends the traditional paradigms of education. By shedding light on these character-building programs, this research contributes to a broader understanding of the holistic nature of education and its profound impact on the personal development of students.

At the core of this research lies the theoretical framework of effective school management. Scholars such as Adolfsson & Alvunger (2020) and Kolb (2014) have extensively studied the dynamics of school management and its profound influence on the overall educational experience. Fullan's work on educational leadership and Leithwood and Jantzi's exploration of transformational leadership underscore the pivotal role of effective school management in creating an environment conducive to optimal learning and character development.

Effective school management involves strategic planning, visionary leadership, and the implementation of programs that go beyond the routine academic curriculum. The inclusion of distinguished programs, particularly those geared towards character development, emerges as a critical component of effective school management. As Bellei, Morawietz, Valenzuela, & Vanni (2020) assert, effective schools are those that not only prioritize academic success but also actively engage in shaping the character of their students.

In the context of SD Plus Darul Ulum, where the emphasis on character-building is palpable, the theoretical framework draws inspiration from these seminal works to delve deeper into the symbiotic relationship between effective school management and the establishment of programs that mold resilient and tough individuals. The research aims to unravel the specific managerial strategies employed by the school in integrating character development programs into its educational fabric.

Despite the growing acknowledgment of the significance of character education, there exists a notable gap in research, particularly in the context of primary schools, and more specifically, within institutions like SD Plus Darul Ulum. While extensive research has been conducted on effective school management and character education individually, there is a scarcity of comprehensive studies that bridge these two domains.

The gap in research is evident in the limited literature exploring the specific programs implemented by primary schools, especially those situated in regions like Jombang. The unique socio-cultural context and the specific challenges faced by schools in these areas necessitate a focused inquiry into the impact of character-building programs. This research endeavors to address this gap by unraveling the intricacies of SD Plus Darul Ulum's programs and their role in shaping the character of its students.

The anticipated impact of this research is multi-faceted. Firstly, it is expected to contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge on character education in primary schools, shedding light on the intricate relationship between effective school management and the implementation of distinguished programs. By dissecting the programs at SD Plus Darul Ulum, educators, policymakers, and researchers can glean valuable insights into successful strategies for character development within a primary school setting.

Furthermore, the research findings may serve as a blueprint for other educational institutions grappling with similar challenges. The identification of effective managerial strategies and the tangible impact of character-building programs can inform the development

and enhancement of similar initiatives across diverse educational landscapes. This, in turn, has the potential to influence educational policies and practices, emphasizing the holistic development of students beyond academic achievements.

In essence, the research aspires to transcend the boundaries of a singular investigation, aiming to catalyze a broader conversation on the integration of character education within the framework of effective school management. By showcasing the tangible outcomes of such an approach, the research endeavors to contribute to the ongoing discourse on educational practices that nurture resilient and robust individuals prepared to face the complexities of the modern world.

Methods

This section outlines the research design, participants, data collection procedures, and data analysis steps employed in investigating the standout programs at SD Plus Darul Ulum, with a focus on cultivating resilience and toughness in students.

To comprehensively explore the character-building programs at SD Plus Darul Ulum, a qualitative research design was chosen. Qualitative methods allow for an in-depth understanding of the nuances and intricacies of the programs, offering a holistic view of the experiences and perceptions of both educators and students. This design aligns with the nature of the research objective, which is to unravel the qualitative aspects of the programs rather than solely relying on quantitative measures.

The participants in this study include key stakeholders directly involved in or impacted by the character-building programs at SD Plus Darul Ulum. This encompasses school administrators, teachers, students, and parents. The inclusion of diverse perspectives ensures a comprehensive and nuanced exploration of the programs, as each group contributes unique insights based on their roles and experiences within the school community.

1. **School Administrators:** This group provides insights into the strategic planning, implementation, and management of the character-building programs. Interviews and document analysis, such as program guidelines and policies, are conducted with school administrators to gather their perspectives.
2. **Teachers:** Educators play a pivotal role in the execution and day-to-day operation of the programs. In-depth interviews and classroom observations are conducted to capture their experiences, challenges faced, and observations regarding the impact of the programs on

students.

3. Students: The primary beneficiaries of the character-building programs are the students themselves. Focus group discussions and individual interviews are employed to understand their perceptions, experiences, and the ways in which these programs have influenced their character development.
4. Parents: As key stakeholders in the education of their children, parents' perspectives are crucial. Surveys or interviews with parents are conducted to gauge their awareness of the character-building programs, their perceptions of the impact on their children, and any feedback they may provide.

Data Collection Procedures

1. Interviews: In-depth interviews are conducted with school administrators, teachers, and parents to gather qualitative insights. These interviews are semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in exploring specific themes while ensuring that all relevant topics are covered.
2. Focus Group Discussions: Focus group discussions are organized with groups of students to facilitate dynamic conversations and capture shared experiences and perceptions. These discussions allow for a deeper understanding of the students' perspectives on the character-building programs.
3. Observations: Classroom observations are conducted to witness the implementation of the character-building programs in action. This method provides a firsthand view of how these programs are integrated into the daily routines of the school.
4. Document Analysis: Relevant documents, such as program guidelines, policies, and any written feedback, are analyzed to complement the interview and observational data. This step ensures a comprehensive understanding of the formal aspects of the character-building programs.

Data Analysis Steps

The qualitative data collected undergoes a rigorous analysis process to derive meaningful insights and patterns. The following steps outline the data analysis procedures:

1. Data Coding: The collected data, including interview transcripts, observational notes, and document analysis results, undergoes systematic coding. Codes are assigned to specific themes, ideas, or patterns identified within the data.
2. Thematic Analysis: Thematic analysis is employed to identify and explore recurring themes within the coded data. This process involves organizing codes into broader themes,

allowing for the extraction of meaningful patterns and insights.

3. Constant Comparison: Throughout the analysis, a constant comparison approach is utilized to ensure that emerging themes and patterns are consistently compared within and across different data sources. This iterative process enhances the reliability and validity of the findings.
4. Triangulation: To strengthen the robustness of the findings, triangulation is applied by comparing data from multiple sources, such as interviews, observations, and document analysis. Consistency across diverse data sets enhances the credibility and reliability of the research outcomes.

By employing this comprehensive methodology, the research aims to provide a rich and nuanced understanding of the character-building programs at SD Plus Darul Ulum, shedding light on their effectiveness in fostering toughness and resilience among students.

Results and Discussion

Table 1. Distinctive programs at SD Plus Darul Ulum

No.	Program Name	Description
1.	Pioneering International Primary School	SD Plus Darul Ulum Jombang is the first elementary school in Jombang Regency to be designated as a Pioneering International Primary School (RSDBI) since 2010.
2.	Everyday with Al-Qur'an	Al-Qur'an learning takes place every day with the following targets: a. Class 5 students can read the Qur'an correctly according to the rules of recitation. b. Habituation of obligatory prayers in congregation for Dhuhr and Asr, habituation of Dhuha congregational prayers, Friday prayers, and istighotsah.
3.	Full Day School	Students learn from Monday to Friday: 07.00 to 15.20 WIB and Saturday: 07.00 to 10.00 WIB. With this system, SD Plus Darul Ulum implements fun and full learning.

No.	Program Name	Description
4.	Outdoor Learning Pembelajaran Di Luar Kelas	a. Tadabbur Alam / Field Trip: Learning that provides direct experiences for students, enabling them to learn directly about objects related to the learning theme, interact with the community and their environment, and appreciate the blessings and / magnificence of Allah SWT. b. Business Day: Introduction to entrepreneurship for students from an early age. c. Ekspresi: Cultivating students' self-confidence and creativity. d. English Camp & English Day: Sharpening students' communication skills in both oral and written English.

Program Explanations:

1. Pioneering International Primary School: This program signifies SD Plus Darul Ulum's commitment to providing an internationally oriented education. The designation as a Pioneering International Primary School reflects the school's dedication to meeting global standards and fostering an environment that prepares students for international engagement.
2. Everyday with Al-Qur'an: The program ensures daily engagement with Al-Qur'an, emphasizing not only the mastery of reading but also the inculcation of spiritual habits. The targets set for students showcase a holistic approach to Islamic education, encompassing both academic and practical aspects of religious practices.
3. Full Day School: The implementation of a full-day school system indicates a departure from conventional learning hours, allowing for a more immersive and comprehensive educational experience. The emphasis on "fun and full learning" suggests an environment that goes beyond the rigidity of traditional schooling, promoting enjoyment and inclusivity.
4. Outdoor Learning:
 - Field Trip: This component underscores the importance of experiential learning by directly exposing students to various educational themes. The emphasis on interaction with the community and environment aligns with the goal of holistic education.
 - Business Day: Early exposure to entrepreneurship instills an entrepreneurial mindset in

students, preparing them for real-world challenges and fostering a sense of innovation.

- Expression: This program focuses on nurturing students' self-confidence and creativity, acknowledging the significance of these traits in their overall development.
- English Camp & English Day: The emphasis on English proficiency through camps and designated days speaks to the school's commitment to equipping students with essential communication skills in the global language.

The Pioneering International Primary School program at SD Plus Darul Ulum exemplifies the school's dedication to delivering an internationally oriented education, aligning with various educational theories that emphasize global perspectives in learning. This program can be discussed in the context of several educational theories, including globalization of education and the significance of international exposure in shaping well-rounded individuals.

Firstly, the *Pioneering International Primary School program* resonates with the concept of globalization in education. In line with the theories of global education, schools are encouraged to incorporate international perspectives into their curriculum to prepare students for an interconnected world (Rizvi, 2015). By designating itself as an international primary school, SD Plus Darul Ulum is actively engaging with the principles of global education. This aligns with the ideas of educators who advocate for curricular approaches that reflect diverse cultural perspectives, fostering a global mindset among students (Kreis, 2019).

Additionally, the program reflects the school's commitment to meeting global standards. This resonates with the principles of educational quality and excellence, as espoused by theorists such as Michael Fullan. According to Fullan's work on educational leadership, schools aiming for excellence should actively seek to meet or surpass global benchmarks (Fullan, 2007). SD Plus Darul Ulum's pursuit of international standards signifies a commitment to providing high-quality education that is comparable and competitive on a global scale.

Furthermore, the program aligns with theories emphasizing the importance of international engagement in education. The work of Martha Nussbaum (2014) emphasizes the cultivation of cosmopolitan values, promoting an understanding and appreciation of different cultures. By positioning itself as a Pioneering International Primary School, SD Plus Darul Ulum acknowledges the value of international exposure in fostering cultural competence and preparing students to navigate a globalized world.

The "Everyday with Al-Qur'an" program at SD Plus Darul Ulum embodies a holistic approach to Islamic education, integrating both academic and practical dimensions. This program can be analyzed through the lens of educational theories that emphasize holistic learning, spiritual development, and the integration of academic and practical knowledge.

One educational theory that aligns with the "Everyday with Al-Qur'an" program is the holistic learning theory. This theory, often associated with educational philosophers like John Dewey, emphasizes the integration of intellectual, emotional, and practical dimensions in education (Dewey, 2022). The program's focus on daily engagement with Al-Qur'an goes beyond the mere mastery of reading; it underscores the cultivation of spiritual habits. This resonates with Dewey's idea of education as a process of growth, where learning is not compartmentalized but rather interconnected with various aspects of an individual's life (Alam, 2020).

Furthermore, the program can be discussed in the context of spiritual development theories in education. Scholars like Lawrence Kohlberg and James Fowler have explored stages of moral and spiritual development in individuals (Snarey, 2014). The "Everyday with Al-Qur'an" program aligns with these theories by emphasizing the inculcation of spiritual habits. It recognizes the importance of nurturing students not only academically but also spiritually, contributing to their overall moral and ethical development.

Moreover, the integration of academic and practical aspects of religious practices in the program aligns with the experiential learning theory. This theory, advocated by educational theorists like David Kolb, emphasizes the significance of learning through experience (Kolb, 2014). The "Everyday with Al-Qur'an" program incorporates a hands-on approach to religious education, allowing students to apply their knowledge in daily practices such as congregational prayers and istighotsah. This resonates with Kolb's model of experiential learning, where concrete experiences are integral to the learning process (Kolb & Kolb, 2018).

The implementation of a Full Day School system at SD Plus Darul Ulum introduces a departure from conventional learning hours, aligning with contemporary educational theories that advocate for innovative and immersive learning experiences. This program can be discussed in the context of theories related to extended learning time, student engagement, and the transformation of traditional education.

One prominent educational theory that aligns with the Full Day School program is the theory of extended learning time. Educational researchers, including Kidron & Lindsay (2014), have highlighted the positive correlation between increased learning time and academic achievement. The Full Day School system, by extending the learning hours beyond the conventional, is in harmony with these theories. The additional time allows for a more in-depth exploration of subjects, fostering a deeper understanding and mastery of the curriculum.

Moreover, the program can be compared with theories focusing on student engagement and motivation. The work of educational psychologists like Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky underscores the importance of active engagement in the learning process (Sharkins, Newton, Causey, & Ernest, 2017). The emphasis on "fun and full learning" in the Full Day School program aligns with these theories, suggesting an environment that prioritizes enjoyable and interactive learning experiences. This approach is likely to enhance student motivation, participation, and overall satisfaction with the learning process.

The Full Day School program also resonates with theories advocating for the transformation of traditional education models. In the digital age, educational theorists such as Sir Ken Robinson emphasize the need for educational systems to adapt to the evolving needs of students. The departure from rigid, traditional schooling hours to a more flexible and extended learning environment represents an innovative approach. It reflects a commitment to creating an educational experience that is dynamic, responsive, and aligned with the diverse learning styles and preferences of students.

The Outdoor Learning programs at SD Plus Darul Ulum encompass a variety of components, each contributing to the holistic development of students. These components, including Field Trips, Business Day, Expression, and English Camp & English Day, can be discussed in the context of educational theories that emphasize experiential learning, entrepreneurship education, socio-emotional development, and language acquisition.

Experiential Learning Theory: The Field Trip component aligns with the experiential learning theory proposed by David Kolb (2014). Kolb's model suggests that learning is most effective when it involves concrete experiences, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Field Trips directly expose students to various educational themes, providing hands-on experiences that stimulate learning. This aligns with Kolb's idea of learning through experience, contributing to a more profound understanding of

subjects.

Entrepreneurship Education: The Business Day component reflects the school's commitment to entrepreneurship education. The emphasis on early exposure to entrepreneurship aligns with theories advocating for the integration of entrepreneurial skills into the educational curriculum. Scholars such as Dewald (2016) highlight the importance of fostering an entrepreneurial mindset from a young age. Business Day at SD Plus Darul Ulum contributes to this goal by exposing students to the principles of business, innovation, and problem-solving, preparing them for real-world challenges.

Socio-Emotional Development: The Expression program focuses on nurturing students' self-confidence and creativity, emphasizing the socio-emotional aspect of education. This aligns with theories of socio-emotional development, including the work of Erik Erikson and Howard Gardner. Erikson's stages of psychosocial development highlight the significance of building confidence during the school years (Evans & Saracho, 2022). Expression activities provide a platform for students to express themselves creatively, contributing to their emotional well-being and self-esteem.

Language Acquisition Theories: The English Camp & English Day component aligns with theories of language acquisition, emphasizing the importance of immersive language experiences. The emphasis on English proficiency through camps and designated days speaks to the school's commitment to equipping students with essential communication skills in the global language. Theories such as the Critical Period Hypothesis and the Input Hypothesis highlight the advantages of early and immersive language exposure (DeLuca, Miller, Pliatsikas, & Rothman, 2019). SD Plus Darul Ulum's approach to language learning supports these theories by providing a conducive environment for students to enhance their English language skills.

In short, the Outdoor Learning programs at SD Plus Darul Ulum align with a spectrum of educational theories, showcasing a comprehensive and integrated approach to student development. The emphasis on experiential learning, entrepreneurship education, socio-emotional development, and language acquisition collectively contributes to a well-rounded educational experience. By incorporating these theories into practice, the school fosters an environment that not only addresses academic development but also nurtures essential life skills and competencies in students, preparing them for success in a dynamic and interconnected world.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the diverse educational programs implemented at SD Plus Darul Ulum, including the Pioneering International Primary School initiative, the "Everyday with Al-Qur'an" program, the Full Day School model, and the Outdoor Learning programs, collectively underscore the institution's unwavering commitment to fostering the development of resilient and well-rounded individuals. The Pioneering International Primary School program contributes to the formation of robust characters by instilling a global perspective and readiness for an interconnected world. Simultaneously, the "Everyday with Al-Qur'an" program promotes holistic development, addressing the spiritual and ethical dimensions crucial for resilient character formation. The Full Day School model and Outdoor Learning programs, aligned with contemporary educational theories, further support the creation of a dynamic and inclusive educational environment that not only enhances academic achievement but also nurtures essential life skills. SD Plus Darul Ulum's dedication to these educational principles positions it as a beacon for character development, preparing students for success in the intricate and interconnected landscape of the 21st century.

In summary, SD Plus Darul Ulum's educational endeavors converge to create an environment conducive to the formation of resilient characters. By integrating global perspectives, spiritual development, extended learning hours, and experiential learning into their educational framework, the institution transcends traditional paradigms. This holistic approach aligns with influential educational theories, shaping students not only academically but also ethically and emotionally. As a result, SD Plus Darul Ulum emerges as an institution committed to molding individuals who are not only academically proficient but also possess the resilience and adaptability necessary to navigate the complexities of a diverse and interconnected global society.

Acknowledgments Thanks to Universitas Pesantren Tinggi Darul Ulum for supporting this research.

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