

# Implementation of the Character Education Curriculum in Cultivating Students' Morality at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara

Mursal Aziz<sup>1</sup>, Dedi Sahputra Napitupulu<sup>2</sup>, Dari Ayu Lestari<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup> Early Childhood Islamic Education Study Program, STIT Al-Ittihadiyah Labuhanbatu Utara, North Sumatra, Indonesia

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose of the study:** This study aimed to analyze the implementation of the character education curriculum at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara and its effectiveness in cultivating students' morality through early childhood education practices.

**Methodology:** This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were collected through observations, documentation, and interviews with teachers and school administrators. The study focused on how character values were embedded in daily school activities, thematic learning, teacher modeling, and school culture. Supporting literature and relevant documents were also analyzed to validate findings.

**Main Findings:** The findings revealed that character values such as religiosity, honesty, discipline, and social care were effectively instilled through an integrated approach. The main challenges included limited teacher understanding of character-based pedagogy, lack of synergy between school and parents, and inadequate facilities. Nonetheless, the character education practices at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam contributed positively to students' moral development.

**Novelty/Originality of this study:** This study contributes to the field of early childhood education by highlighting the contextual implementation of character education within an Islamic preschool setting. It emphasizes the integration of moral values into routine learning, offering insights into best practices and practical challenges faced by educators in rural Indonesian schools.

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## Corresponding Author:

Mursal Aziz

Early Childhood Islamic Education Program, Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Tarbiyah (STIT) Al-Ittihadiyah Labuhanbatu Utara, Jl. Lintas Sumatera, Gunting Saga, Kualuh Selatan District, Labuhanbatu Utara Regency, North Sumatra, Indonesia

Email: [mursalaziz@stit-al-ittihadiyahlabura.ac.id](mailto:mursalaziz@stit-al-ittihadiyahlabura.ac.id)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Character education is the main foundation in shaping children's morals and personality from an early age. Raudhatul Athfal as an Islamic-based early childhood education institution has a strategic role in instilling moral and character values that are in line with Islamic teachings and national culture [1]. The implementation of the character education curriculum in Raudhatul Athfal not only aims to improve children's cognitive aspects, but also strengthen the spiritual, moral, and social dimensions as provisions in facing global challenges [2].

In the context of early childhood education, character building is a crucial process considering that early childhood is the golden age of child development [3], [4]. Character building and moral cultivation carried out from an early age will have a long-term impact on the child's personal development. , the development of

character education curriculum in Raudhatul Athfal needs to be designed systematically and comprehensively to achieve the expected goals [5], [6].

The phenomenon of moral degradation that occurs in today's young generation is a challenge for the world of education, especially early childhood education. The phenomenon of moral degradation is the decline or deterioration of moral values in the life of a person or society in general [7], [8]. This means that norms that were once considered good, polite, and moral, began to be ignored or abandoned by many people. The character crisis in children can be overcome through value education integrated in the school curriculum [9]. The integration of character and moral values in the Raudhatul Athfal curriculum is a preventive solution to fortify children from the negative influence of the times [10], [11].

The character education curriculum in Raudhatul Athfal should ideally not only focus on theoretical aspects, but also on practical implementation in daily life. Character education should involve aspects of *knowing the good*, *loving the good*, and *acting the good*, which means knowledge of goodness, love of goodness, and actions that reflect goodness [12], [13]. This approach is in line with the concept of moral cultivation in an Islamic perspective that emphasizes knowledge, appreciation, and practice [14], [15].

Character education is one of the important aspects in the education process. Good character can form individuals who are noble and have the ability to apply character values in everyday life. Character education is a learning process that focuses on developing students' character, so that they can become individuals who are noble and have the ability to apply character values in everyday life [16].

In the context of education in Raudhatul Athfal, the implementation of the character education curriculum is very important for instilling student morals. The goal is to form a generation that is intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually intelligent, not just academically good. The concept and definition of character education curriculum must be designed in such a way that it can help students develop good character and have the ability to apply character values in everyday life [17], [18].

In a broader context, morals can also be defined as "ethics" or "morals" that govern human behavior in interacting with God, oneself, and others. In simple terms, morals are good or bad behavior that is done consciously and becomes a person's habit. In Islam, morals are an important part of faith. Even the Prophet Muhammad SAW was sent one of his goals was to perfect the morals of mankind. Morals are "a system of values and norms that regulate human behavior in interacting with God, self, and others, with the aim of achieving happiness and safety in the world and the hereafter [19], [20].

Morals is a system of values and norms that regulate human behavior, so that they can become individuals with noble character and have the ability to apply moral values in everyday life. In Arabic, morals (أخلاق) comes from the word "*khuluq*" (خلق) which means "behavior" or "character". Morals can be defined as "good behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings, which includes aspects such as faith, sincerity, patience, and concern for others." [21].

However, there are many problems faced in Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara that hinder character education in instilling student morals, such as: lack of religious knowledge taught by teachers, so that children lack understanding of religious knowledge. Lack of teacher training in Raudhatul Athfal about the process of teaching about morals so that teachers cannot implement the moral cultivation program effectively. Lack of effective evaluation and supervision to monitor the progress of the moral cultivation program so that the program is difficult to improve and improve, lack of awareness and strong commitment to implement the moral cultivation program, so that the program cannot run effectively. Limited adequate learning materials and resources, lack of parental participation, limited time and resources so that teachers have difficulty in dividing time to implement the moral cultivation program.

This study aims to examine the implementation of the character education curriculum in cultivating student morals at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara, identify effective strategies, and analyze the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation process. This study is expected to contribute to the development of a more comprehensive and adaptive character education curriculum model in accordance with the needs of early childhood development in the contemporary era. The goal is not only to produce students who are academically smart, but also have noble character and superior personality.

Despite the growing body of literature on character education in early childhood, there remains a significant gap in empirical studies that focus on rural Islamic preschool settings in Indonesia. Previous research has largely concentrated on general early childhood institutions in urban areas, overlooking the contextual realities and constraints experienced by educators in rural regions. This study addresses this gap by exploring the implementation of character education at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam, a rural Islamic preschool. The novelty of this research lies in its contextual analysis, which integrates curriculum practice with moral cultivation rooted in Islamic teachings. The urgency of conducting this study is driven by the pressing need to formulate effective strategies to address moral decline among children through culturally and religiously relevant education practices in underserved areas.

While numerous studies have examined the role of character education in early childhood development, most have focused on general pedagogical strategies or outcomes in primary and secondary schools, with limited

attention given to how character education curricula are implemented in Islamic early childhood institutions such as Raudhatul Athfal. Moreover, existing literature often overlooks the practical challenges and contextual adaptations faced by teachers in instilling moral values within specific cultural and religious settings. This study addresses that gap by exploring how the character education curriculum is concretely applied at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam, Labuhanbatu Utara, and how it contributes to the cultivation of students' morality. It offers an in-depth view of the curriculum's implementation from a localized, faith-based perspective, which remains underrepresented in current scholarship on moral education in early childhood Islamic education.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

### **2.1. Type of Research**

This research uses a qualitative approach to understand social phenomena from the participants' point of view. Qualitative research is research that explores the meaning, views, experiences, and feelings of a person towards something. The qualitative approach was chosen for its ability to explore in depth complex phenomena and gain a holistic understanding of human experience in its natural context [22]. This study adopts a descriptive qualitative method to provide a detailed and contextual description of the implementation of the character education curriculum and its influence on students' moral development.

### **2.2. Research Subjects**

The subjects of this research were teachers, school administrators, and students at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam in Labuhanbatu Utara. These participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their roles and involvement in the implementation of the character education curriculum. Teachers and school principals were chosen because of their direct participation in planning, executing, and evaluating character education within the school.

### **2.3. Data Collection Instruments and Techniques**

Data were collected through three primary techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to examine how character values were embedded in daily activities and learning processes. Semi-structured interviews were held with teachers and administrators to explore their understanding, experiences, and challenges in implementing the character education curriculum. Documentation included lesson plans, school policies, and teaching materials to support data triangulation and enrich the contextual understanding. All instruments were designed to be flexible and open-ended, allowing the researcher to gain in-depth insights and capture the complexity of contextual phenomena.

### **2.4. Data Analysis Techniques**

The data analysis technique employed in this study was Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which consists of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data reduction was carried out by selecting, simplifying, and focusing on the raw data obtained from the field to identify the most relevant information. Data display involved organizing the data into descriptive narratives, enabling the researcher to interpret the findings more effectively. Conclusion drawing and verification were conducted by interpreting the meaning of the data and validating it through triangulation with multiple sources to ensure accuracy and consistency.

The research was conducted through several procedural stages. The preparation stage involved reviewing relevant literature, designing research instruments, and obtaining the necessary permits to conduct the study. The data collection stage consisted of conducting observations, interviews, and collecting documentation over a designated period. In the data processing stage, the researcher transcribed interviews, coded observational notes, and compiled all relevant documentation. The data analysis stage applied Miles and Huberman's framework to identify patterns and derive meaningful interpretations. Finally, in the reporting stage, the findings were organized into a coherent narrative, and conclusions were drawn in alignment with the research objectives.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1. Vision and Mission of Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara Labuhanbatu Utara**

Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara is a school that focuses on early childhood education with an Islamic religious base in the village of kuala beringin. The beginning of the establishment of this school because it wants to help the community to improve the quality of early childhood education in reflecting a good personality and instilling noble morals in early childhood. Students are taught good behavior according to Islamic values and national culture. Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara is a religious school that will help children to instill polite and courteous nature.

Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara has a vision to become an educational institution that excels in developing students' noble character. Our mission is to develop an effective and efficient character education curriculum in cultivating students' morals. Our priority in developing a character education curriculum

based on Islamic values and ensuring that students have the ability to apply these values in daily life. The school instills akhlakul karimah (noble morals) in daily life. The process of developing a character education curriculum at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara involves several stages, namely needs analysis, curriculum development, curriculum testing and curriculum evaluation [23].

Character education curriculum at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara. Integrated with other subjects through the use of learning methods based on character values. We ensure that the cultivation of student morals at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara is very effective and sustainable by conducting regular evaluations and monitoring, and involving teachers, parents, and students in the process of cultivating morals [24].

Strategies used by our school to increase students' awareness and commitment to moral values include the use of learning methods based on character values. We ensure that teachers at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara have adequate abilities and competencies to teach character education by conducting regular teacher training and development. The roles and responsibilities of parents in supporting the cultivation of student morals at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara include monitoring and evaluating the development of student morals, providing good examples in daily behavior [25].

The character education curriculum at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara includes the development of noble morals, development of social skills, development of emotional skills, and development of intellectual skills. We monitor and evaluate the moral development of students at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara through the use of evaluation instruments based on character values. Our school is committed to developing an effective and efficient character education curriculum in cultivating student morals in Raudhatul Athfal.

1. The Purpose of Character Education in Cultivating Morals at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara

The purpose of character education in cultivating morals in Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara is to form students who are noble and have the ability to apply character values in everyday life. This goal can be achieved through the implementation of an effective and efficient character education curriculum. The purpose of character education in moral cultivation at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara is to form students who are noble, disciplined, and responsible from an early age. Through various habituation activities, exemplary teachers, and integration of moral values in learning, this institution seeks to instill the values of honesty, courtesy, and respect for others. With this approach, Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam hopes to create a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent, but also strong in character and morals.

2. Subjects and Materials of Character Education in Cultivating Morals at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu

The subjects and materials of character education in moral cultivation in Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara include religious education, moral education, social education, and cultural education. This character education material can be delivered through various methods, such as lectures, discussions, and practices. Subjects at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara are designed to integrate character education values in every learning activity, especially in efforts to instill noble morals in students. The materials taught, such as Aqidah Akhlak, Al-Qur'an Hadis, and Arabic Language, explicitly teach honesty, discipline, respect for parents, and compassion for others. Through a thematic approach and habituation in daily activities, this institution is committed to shaping children's character from an early age in accordance with the values of Islamic teachings [26].

3. Character Education Media in Cultivating Morals at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu

Character education media in cultivating morals in Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara include books, movies and the internet. This media can be used to convey character education material and improve students' ability to apply character values. Character education media has an important role in instilling noble morals in early childhood at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara. Through the use of creative and contextual media, values such as honesty, responsibility, and courtesy can be effectively instilled in daily learning activities. The results showed that character education media was able to increase the understanding and application of positive morals in students gradually and continuously [27].

4. Evaluation of Character Education Curriculum in Cultivating Morals in Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara

Evaluation of the character education curriculum in cultivating morals in Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara is carried out through various methods, such as tests, quizzes and observations. This evaluation can assist teachers in knowing students' ability to apply character values and improve the quality of character education. The evaluation of character education in Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara shows that the cultivation of morals in students has been carried out through the

approach of habituation, exemplary, and strengthening religious values in daily life. Although most programs are effective, the evaluation found that there is still a need to increase consistency in the application of positive discipline and parental involvement in supporting children's character education. Overall, the efforts made by Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam have made a significant contribution to the formation of noble character of students from an early age [28].

### 3.2. Learning Methods in Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara

Good, correct, and clear learning in the character education curriculum at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara can be achieved through several learning methods, such as the lecture method to introduce the concepts of morals and character education for children. In the lecture method children can hear and remember about the importance of having good morals [29], [30]. And the teacher will also conduct a discussion method to deepen understanding and develop critical thinking skills whether the child still remembers the learning or not. And at the end of the lesson the teacher will conduct a practical method to apply the concepts of morals and character education in everyday life here we will find out whether the child is able to practice. The reflection method is to deepen understanding and develop critical thinking skills in early childhood. And after that the teacher conducts an assessment method to assess students' progress in understanding and applying the concepts of morals and character education [31], [32].

The steps in learning that can be taken by students are through the introduction of educational development in critical thinking skills and the ability to apply moral concepts and character education. Students are prevented from negative influences such as promiscuity, violence, and moral degradation. Application of the concepts of morals and character education in everyday life [33], [34]. Assessment of student progress in understanding the importance of instilling morals. The learning objectives that can be achieved by students are through stages in improving students' understanding of moral concepts, character education, developing critical thinking skills, and application skills. The concepts of morals and character education improve student behavior in accordance with the concepts of morals and character education. The formation of students to behave well according to Islamic values and national culture by instilling akhlakul karimah in everyday life.

#### 1. Concept and Curriculum Design of Character Education in Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara

Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara developed a character education curriculum concept called "Panca Akhlak Mulia Curriculum" which is the basic framework in instilling student morals. Five main character values are developed through Religious Values (*Ta'abbud*): Focuses on instilling faith and worship through the habituation of duha prayer in congregation, memorization of short surahs, and daily prayer practices. Discipline Value (*Intidzam*): Instilled through routine activities such as arriving on time, lining up for activities, and completing tasks according to the specified time. Value of Independence (*Istiqal*): Developed through *self-help skills* activities such as wearing one's own shoes, eating without assistance, and organizing learning equipment. Social Care Value (*Ta'awun*): Implemented through lunch sharing activities, helping friends, and weekly alms program. Value of Love for the Environment (*Ri'ayatul Bi'ah*): Instilled through gardening activities, waste recycling, and habituation to maintain cleanliness. The curriculum design uses a thematic-integrative approach that combines national standards with pesantren-based local content. The curriculum is developed collaboratively by a development team consisting of the principal, teachers, supervisors and school committee representatives.

#### 2. Curriculum Implementation Strategies in Cultivating Morals

The implementation of the character education curriculum at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara is carried out in the Development of Exemplary Based Religious Environment Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara in developing a religious environment through habituation and exemplary. Teachers act as "*uswatun hasanah*" who demonstrate noble moral values in daily interactions. The "One Day One Example" program is a leading activity where teachers tell exemplary stories from the Prophet, companions, or other Islamic figures relevant to the learning theme [35]. The uniqueness of the implementation lies in the development of an "Akhlak Corner" in each class that contains visualizations of character values in the form of pictures, hadith quotations, and documentation of students' good behavior

Assessment of students' moral development is carried out through videos of Islamic activities while at home which serve as a link between teachers and parents in monitoring children's character development. Implementation of Thematic-Contextual Learning with Local Content Learning carried out through a thematic-contextual approach that integrates moral values in each theme. For example, in the theme "Me and My Family", students not only learn about family members but also manners towards parents and relatives which are strengthened by memorizing hadith and direct practice. Islamic-based local content is a specialty of Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara which includes tahfidz learning, ablution, and worship practices [36]. This program can help children to continue learning in instilling good morals in everyday life. Parent Involvement through the Islamic Parenting Program at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara in developing an Islamic activity program that is held regularly to ensure consistency in instilling morals at school

and at home. This program includes parenting studies, Islamic parenting workshops, and home visits to evaluate the moral development of students in the family environment [37].

The "Family Day" activity held at the end of each semester is a forum for students, teachers, and parents to interact in activities that strengthen character values, this activity is also a moment of joint evaluation regarding the moral development of students [38]. The Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for Curriculum Implementation at Schools such as the Principal's commitment and leadership in developing a culture to advance the school by instilling Islamic morals in early childhood, Schools must also have adequate teacher qualifications with 85% of teachers having a SI Education background to meet school requirements, with the support of the school committee and the School in providing supporting infrastructure for curriculum implementation. active participation of parents in parenting programs and other supporting activities. Collaboration with local religious institutions in the development of religious programs [39].

The factors that can hinder the cultivation of curriculum implementation are differences in parenting in the family environment which are sometimes not in line with the values developed at school so that there are barriers in the limitations of technology-based learning media that support the cultivation of morals [40]. The influence of the external environment including social media and television that sometimes contradicts the values instilled. Limited learning time at school to strengthen moral values so that there are difficulties in developing valid and reliable assessment instruments to measure students' moral development [41].

Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara needs to continuously monitor and evaluate students' moral development to ensure that the character education curriculum developed is effective and efficient. Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara needs to improve teacher training and development to ensure that all teachers have adequate abilities and competencies to teach character education. Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara needs to increase parental involvement in the process of cultivating student morals, for example through regular meetings with parents and involving parents in school activities.

Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara needs to consider developing a character education curriculum that is more comprehensive and based on the needs of students and the community to Develop an ongoing training program for teachers in integrating moral values in learning. Strengthening the parenting program with intensive assistance to parents in implementing parenting in line with school values. Develop a comprehensive assessment instrument to measure students' moral development. Expanding collaboration with other educational institutions to share good practices in implementing character education. Documenting good practices in implementing the character education curriculum as a model that can be adapted by other PAUD institutions. Cultivating noble morals in children can be done in several ways, namely:

- 1) Direct teaching: Parents and teachers can teach noble morals to children through direct teaching, such as reading books about morals, listening to lectures about morals, and conducting discussions about morals [42].
- 2) Skill development: Parents and teachers can help children develop their abilities in instilling noble morals, such as the ability to empathize, the ability to control emotions, and the ability to make the right decisions [43].
- 3) Real experience: Parents and teachers can provide real experiences to children about noble morals, such as doing charity activities, doing social activities, and doing community service activities [44].
- 4) Supervision and evaluation: Parents and teachers can supervise and evaluate children in instilling noble morals, such as monitoring children's behavior, evaluating children's progress, and providing constructive feedback [45].

The cultivation of noble morals to children must be based on several principles, namely: The principle of consistency, the cultivation of noble morals must be carried out consistently and continuously. The principle of clarity and the cultivation of noble morals must be done in a way that is clear and easy to understand. The principle of patience and the cultivation of noble morals must be done with patience and not in a hurry. The principle of justice and the cultivation of noble morals must be done in a fair and non-discriminatory manner.

Several previous studies have shown the importance of implementing character education from an early age and its effectiveness when rooted in cultural and religious values. For example, research by Lickona [46] emphasized that a comprehensive character education curriculum must include moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action. This aligns with the approach adopted by Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam, which emphasizes integrated moral development through habituation, teacher modeling, and family involvement. Similarly, a study conducted by Wahyuni et al., [47] on character education in Islamic kindergartens in rural areas of Central Java found that consistent implementation of religious-based character values can significantly shape students' moral behaviors despite limited resources. These findings reinforce the relevance and validity of this study's conclusions, especially in emphasizing the contextualization of curriculum to local socio-religious realities.

The findings of this study have meaningful implications for the improvement of early childhood education institutions in similar rural settings. The strategies implemented at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam,

such as thematic-contextual learning and parent-school collaboration, offer a replicable model for character education in Islamic preschool institutions. This study provides practical insight for educators and policymakers in designing culturally responsive character education models that can strengthen moral values from early childhood.

However, this study is not without its limitations. One of the main limitations lies in the scope of data collection, which was restricted to one institution in a specific rural setting, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings to other contexts. Furthermore, the evaluation of student moral development was primarily qualitative and observational, which may lack standardized measurement accuracy. Additionally, technological limitations and varying levels of parental involvement present ongoing challenges that need to be addressed in future research. These limitations highlight the need for broader and more comparative studies involving multiple institutions and quantitative instruments to enrich the empirical base on Islamic character education at the early childhood level.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The implementation of the character education curriculum in moral cultivation is the process of instilling moral values and noble character to students through learning activities, either directly or indirectly, in order to form a person with noble character. The implementation of the character education curriculum in cultivating student morals at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara shows significant success in shaping student behavior and personality, supported by three implementation strategies that have created an educational ecosystem conducive to student character building. The main supporting factor is the commitment of all stakeholders, while the main challenge is the consistency of value cultivation between school and home.

Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara has a clear goal to develop student character through the development of an effective and efficient character education curriculum. This curriculum development process involves several stages, and the character education curriculum is integrated with other subjects. The institution ensures that teachers have adequate abilities and competencies to teach character education and actively involves parents in the process of cultivating student morals.

The implementation of the character education curriculum in cultivating student morals at Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara is one example of success in cultivating student morals. The purpose of character education in this context is to form students who are noble and have the ability to apply character values in everyday life. Subjects and materials of character education in moral cultivation include religious education, moral education, social education, and cultural education. Media for character education includes books, movies, and the internet. The evaluation of the character education curriculum is carried out through various methods, such as tests, quizzes, and observations.

In accordance with the objectives of this study, the findings demonstrate that Raudhatul Athfal At Taufiq Salam Labuhanbatu Utara has successfully implemented a character education curriculum that is not only integrative and thematic but also contextualized within Islamic values. The strategies used—such as teacher modelling, parental involvement, and thematic learning—have proven effective in cultivating key moral values like discipline, social care, and religious commitment. The supporting and inhibiting factors identified also provide valuable insight into the practical realities of curriculum implementation in rural Islamic preschool settings.

For future research, it is recommended to expand the study to include multiple Raudhatul Athfal institutions across different regions to allow for comparative analysis and broader generalization of findings. Further studies could also adopt a mixed-methods approach to quantitatively assess the impact of character education on students' behavioral outcomes. Additionally, the development of standardized and culturally responsive assessment instruments for measuring moral development in early childhood is highly encouraged to support more rigorous evaluation and monitoring processes.

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