



Character Strengthening through Routine School Practices: Design Models from a Systematic Review

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Abstract: This study aims to identify effective models, implementation strategies, and instructional design principles for routine-based character strengthening programs in elementary schools. A qualitative systematic literature review was conducted following PRISMA guidelines. A total of 24 peer-reviewed articles published between 2022 and 2025 were collected primarily from the Scopus database. Data were analyzed using thematic synthesis through a structured extraction matrix encompassing intervention design, routine practices, targeted character values, implementation strategies, and outcomes. The findings reveal that effective character education models integrate four core components: value-based learning through daily routines, teacher exemplarity and collaboration, a conducive school environment and culture, and holistic curriculum integration. Prominent models identified include Lickona's comprehensive approach, the R2SC technique (Routine, Role Model, Spontaneity, Conditioning), the TRECB model (Transformative Reflexive Empowering Character Building), and ethnopedagogical frameworks incorporating local wisdom. Routine activities such as morning prayers, flag ceremonies, classroom duties, 5S culture (Smile, Greet, Polite, Courteous, Honest), and honesty journals were found to be effective in instilling core character values. Challenges remain in teacher training, character assessment systems, model standardization, and cross-cultural adaptation. The review recommends strengthening the educational ecosystem through comprehensive teacher professional development, innovative learning modules, continuous evaluation mechanisms, and school-family-community collaboration. These findings provide practical guidance for educators, policymakers, and researchers in designing sustainable, routine-based character education programs in elementary schools. This review advances the field by synthesizing a framework that supports the transition of character education from isolated classroom instruction to embedded, school-wide cultural practices.

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Introduction

Despite the proliferation of character education initiatives in elementary schools globally, significant questions remain regarding optimal design models and implementation strategies. Educational systems across different cultural contexts have experimented with diverse approaches, ranging from structured programs with specific curricula to holistic models emphasizing school culture transformation (Dirgantari & Cahyani, 2023). However, *fragmentation* refers to the lack of conceptual and empirical integration across research findings. This includes variations in design models (e.g., Lickona, TRECB, R2SC, ethnopedagogical approaches) that are often applied independently without comparative synthesis, inconsistencies between theoretical frameworks and their practical implementation



in schools, and contextual differences in culture, resources, and policy environments that limit cross-study comparability. Together, these factors hinder the development of a coherent and unified framework for routine-based character education in elementary settings.-specific nature of many studies have hindered the development of comprehensive frameworks that can guide practitioners in designing effective routine-based character education programs. Educators face practical challenges in selecting appropriate models, adapting them to local contexts, integrating character education into existing curricula, and assessing character development outcomes (Resnita, 2025). Moreover, the rapid evolution of educational technologies, changing social dynamics, and diverse student populations necessitate continuously updated evidence-based guidance. Questions persist about which routine activities yield the most significant character development outcomes, how teacher roles should be configured to maximize character education effectiveness, what assessment mechanisms can reliably measure character growth, and how schools can sustain character education efforts amid competing curricular demands (Aningsih et al., 2022).

The imperative for systematic synthesis of existing research on routine-based character education models has become increasingly urgent. While individual studies have contributed valuable insights into specific aspects of character education implementation, the field lacks comprehensive reviews that consolidate findings across diverse contexts and methodological approaches (Junaidi & Rohmani, 2024). Systematic literature reviews serve essential functions in evidence-based educational practice by identifying patterns across studies, highlighting effective interventions, revealing research gaps, and providing actionable recommendations for practitioners and policymakers. In the domain of elementary school character education, such synthesis is particularly valuable given the proliferation of implementation models, the diversity of cultural contexts in which character education occurs, and the need for evidence-informed decision-making in educational policy (Hadi et al., 2025). Furthermore, systematic reviews can illuminate the mechanisms through which routine activities foster character development, the contextual factors that moderate effectiveness, and the design principles that distinguish successful programs from less effective initiatives. By synthesizing empirical evidence on routine-based character education models, researchers can provide educators with practical frameworks grounded in robust evidence rather than anecdotal experience or ideological preferences.

This systematic literature review addresses the critical need for comprehensive synthesis of research on character education program design models based on routine activities in elementary schools. The review examines studies published between 2022 and 2025, focusing specifically on interventions that leverage daily school routines, habitual practices, and structured activities as primary vehicles for character development. The significance of this systematic review extends beyond academic scholarship to practical applications in educational settings worldwide. As elementary schools increasingly prioritize character education alongside academic achievement, educators require accessible, evidence-based frameworks that can guide program design and implementation decisions. This review contributes to the field by consolidating scattered research findings into coherent design models, identifying effective practices that transcend cultural boundaries while acknowledging context-specific adaptations, highlighting promising innovative approaches that warrant further investigation, and illuminating persistent challenges that require systemic solutions. The findings hold particular relevance for education systems implementing recent curricular reforms that emphasize character development, such as Indonesia's Kurikulum Merdeka with its Pancasila Student Profile framework (Resnita, 2025). Moreover, by



synthesizing research on routine-based approaches, this review addresses the practical constraint that character education must be integrated into existing school schedules rather than requiring additional instructional time. The resulting knowledge synthesis offers stakeholders at all levels—from classroom teachers to national policymakers—actionable insights for strengthening character education practice and ultimately contributing to the holistic development of elementary school students.

Research Method

This systematic literature review followed the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA 2020) guidelines (Page et al., 2021) to ensure rigorous and transparent methodology. The review focused on empirical studies, theoretical papers, and case studies examining character education program design models based on routine activities in elementary school settings published between 2022 and 2025. Literature searches were conducted using multiple academic databases including Google Scholar, ERIC, Scopus, and specialized education journals to ensure comprehensive coverage of relevant research. Search terms combined variations of key concepts: "character education," "elementary school," "primary school," "routine activities," "daily practices," "habituation," "program design," "instructional model," and related terms in English and Indonesian languages. The search strategy employed Boolean operators to capture studies addressing the intersection of character education and routine-based interventions in elementary contexts. Initial searches yielded approximately 150 potentially relevant articles, which underwent systematic screening based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria to ensure relevance and quality.

The inclusion criteria specified that studies must: (a) focus primarily on character education in elementary school settings (grades 1-6 or equivalent); (b) examine program design models, implementation strategies, or routine activities as mechanisms for character development; (c) be published in peer-reviewed journals or reputable conference proceedings between 2022 and 2025; (d) provide empirical data, systematic analysis, or substantial theoretical contribution; and (e) be available in English or Indonesian languages. Exclusion criteria eliminated studies that: (a) focused exclusively on secondary or higher education contexts; (b) addressed character education only tangentially without substantive analysis of program design or routine activities; (c) lacked methodological transparency or quality indicators; (d) consisted solely of opinion pieces without empirical or theoretical grounding; or (e) were unavailable for full-text review. Following title and abstract screening, 45 articles underwent full-text review, resulting in final selection of 24 studies that met all inclusion criteria and provided substantial insights into routine-based character education models. The selection process prioritized studies offering diverse perspectives on program design, implementation contexts, and methodological approaches to ensure comprehensive synthesis.

Data extraction and analysis followed a structured framework designed to capture key dimensions of each included study. For each article, reviewers documented: (a) bibliographic information and publication details; (b) research objectives and questions addressed; (c) methodological approach and data collection methods; (d) context and participant characteristics; (e) character education models or frameworks examined; (f) routine activities and implementation strategies described; (g) key findings and outcomes related to character development; (h) strengths and innovations highlighted; (i) limitations and challenges identified; and (j) recommendations for practice or future research. Data were organized in structured matrices enabling systematic comparison across studies and identification of



patterns, themes, and gaps in the literature. Analyzed using a thematic synthesis approach appropriate for systematic literature reviews. Following Thomas and Harden (2008), the analysis involved three stages: line-by-line coding of extracted findings, development of descriptive themes, and generation of higher-order analytical themes. This method enabled the identification of cross-study patterns related to design models, routine practices, instructional principles, and systemic challenges in routine-based character education. were applied to synthesize findings across studies, identifying recurring design elements, implementation strategies, effective practices, and persistent challenges. The analysis distinguished between well-established models with substantial empirical support and emerging approaches requiring further validation. Quality assessment considered methodological rigor, clarity of reporting, theoretical grounding, and practical relevance of each study, though formal quality scoring was not employed given the diversity of methodological approaches represented in the included literature.

Table 1. Overview of Included Studies by Research Focus

Research Focus	Number of Studies	Percentage	Representative Studies
Character Education Design Models	8	33.3%	(Arif et al., 2024; Hadi et al., 2025; Siswanto et al., 2025)
Routine Activities Contribution	8	33.3%	(Armadi et al., 2024; Mufidah et al., 2023; Wardi et al., 2025)
Instructional Design Principles	8	33.3%	(Junaidi & Rohmani, 2024; Maritim et al., 2025)
Total	24	100%	

Results and Discussion

Comprehensive Character Education Design Models

Analysis of the literature revealed several prominent design models for character education programs integrated with routine school activities. The most frequently cited comprehensive model derives from Lickona's holistic approach, which emphasizes three interconnected components: moral knowing through understanding ethical principles, moral feeling through developing emotional connections to values, and moral action through consistent behavioral practice. Studies implementing or analyzing this model demonstrated that routine activities serve as practical vehicles for operationalizing all three dimensions simultaneously when properly structured. The R2SC technique emerged as another significant model specifically designed for routine-based character education, comprising four integrated elements: Routine (establishing regular value-laden practices), Role Model (teacher and peer exemplary behavior), Spontaneity (addressing teachable moments as they arise), and Conditioning (creating environmental supports for character development). Empirical investigations of R2SC implementation indicated effectiveness in instilling Islamic values and general character competencies through structured daily practices combined with flexible responsiveness to situational opportunities.

The TRECB model (Transformative Reflexive Empowering Character Building) represents a more recent framework developed specifically for implementing Pancasila Student Profile competencies in Indonesian elementary schools. This model emphasizes transformative learning experiences that challenge students' existing perspectives, reflexive practices that promote self-awareness and critical thinking about character development, and empowering approaches that position students as active agents in their own character



formation rather than passive recipients of moral instruction. Pilot implementations demonstrated significant improvements in students' understanding and application of Pancasila values when the model guided systematic integration of character education across curricular and co-curricular activities. Ethnopedagogical models incorporating local wisdom and cultural values emerged as particularly relevant for diverse contexts, emphasizing the integration of indigenous knowledge, traditional practices, and community values into character education frameworks. These models demonstrated adaptability to digital era demands while preserving cultural authenticity and relevance to students' lived experiences.

Table 2. Characteristics of Major Character Education Design Models

Model	Core Components	Implementation Focus	Primary Outcomes	Contextual Applications
Lickona's Comprehensive Approach	Moral knowing, moral feeling, moral action	Integration across curriculum and school culture	Holistic character development	Universal applicability with cultural adaptation
R2SC Technique	Routine, Role Model, Spontaneity, Conditioning	Daily practices and exemplary behavior	Values internalization through habit	Islamic schools, adaptable to general contexts
TRECB Model	Transformative, Reflexive, Empowering	Pancasila Student Profile competencies	Critical consciousness and agency	Indonesian national curriculum alignment
Ethnopedagogical Framework	Local wisdom integration, cultural values, contextual learning	Community and traditional practices	Cultural identity and character	Culturally diverse contexts
G-Gold Way	Participatory observation, school-family collaboration	Collaborative character building	Shared responsibility for character	Madrasah and family-oriented settings

Contributions of Specific Routine Activities

The literature documented diverse routine activities that contribute substantively to elementary students' character development. Morning routines emerged as particularly powerful opportunities for character education, with studies examining practices such as morning prayers, Quran recitation, motivational storytelling, and structured greeting ceremonies. Quantitative assessments of religious morning activity programs demonstrated statistically significant improvements in students' religious character indicators including devotional practice, respect for religious teachings, and moral decision-making aligned with religious values. The consistency and regularity of morning routines created predictable patterns that reinforced behavioral expectations and internalized values through repetition and communal participation. Flag ceremonies and national observances constituted another category of impactful routine activities, fostering patriotism, respect for national symbols, discipline in formation and procedure, and collective identity as citizens and school community members.

Classroom management routines including honesty journals, classroom responsibilities, turn-taking systems, and collaborative procedures demonstrated effectiveness in developing social-emotional competencies. Studies examining honesty journal



implementations where students recorded their honest behaviors and reflections showed improvements in both honest conduct and metacognitive awareness of ethical decision-making processes. The 5S culture (Senyum, Salam, Sapa, Sopan, Santun - Smile, Greet, Greet, Polite, Courteous) emerged prominently across multiple studies as a comprehensive routine encompassing interpersonal interactions throughout the school day. Schools implementing systematic 5S practices reported enhanced positive social climate, reduced interpersonal conflicts, increased student-teacher rapport, and strengthened community orientation among students. Habituation methods focusing on practical life skills such as organizing belongings, returning items to proper places, maintaining personal hygiene, and caring for shared spaces demonstrated particular effectiveness in developing autonomy, responsibility, and self-regulation competencies among younger elementary students.

Table 3. Routine Activities and Associated Character Outcomes

Routine Activity Category	Specific Practices	Character Values Developed	Frequency in Literature	Implementation Level
Morning Rituals	Prayers, recitation, storytelling, greetings	Religious character, devotion, respect	12 studies	Daily
Ceremonial Practices	Flag ceremonies, commemorations	Patriotism, discipline, collective identity	8 studies	Weekly/Monthly
Classroom Management	Honesty journals, responsibilities, procedures	Honesty, responsibility, cooperation	15 studies	Daily
Social Interaction Norms	5S culture, positive communication	Politeness, respect, empathy	10 studies	Continuous
Practical Life Skills	Organization, hygiene, care routines	Autonomy, self-regulation, responsibility	6 studies	Daily
Extracurricular Routines	Club procedures, service activities	Teamwork, leadership, community service	7 studies	Regular intervals

Instructional Design Principles

Analysis of effective character education programs revealed several critical instructional design principles that distinguish successful implementations from less effective initiatives. Comprehensive integration across all educational activities emerged as a fundamental principle, with studies consistently demonstrating that character education achieves greatest impact when values are explicitly addressed in academic lessons, co-curricular activities, informal interactions, school policies and procedures, and environmental design rather than confined to dedicated character education sessions. The integration principle requires that teachers identify natural connections between character values and learning content across all subject areas, employ pedagogical approaches that inherently promote character development such as collaborative learning and service projects, and maintain consistent value messaging across all school contexts. Active and experiential learning approaches proved essential for translating intellectual understanding of character values into behavioral competencies and emotional commitments.

Teacher role configuration constituted another critical design dimension, with effective programs positioning educators as facilitators rather than didactic instructors, role



models whose behaviors students observe and emulate, mentors providing individualized guidance and support, and collaborators working alongside students in character development journeys. Studies highlighted that teachers' authentic embodiment of character values influenced students more powerfully than explicit instruction alone, necessitating professional development that addresses educators' own character development alongside pedagogical skills. Collaborative structures involving school-family-community partnerships emerged as essential design elements, with successful programs establishing regular communication channels between teachers and families, creating opportunities for family involvement in character education activities, engaging community members as guest speakers and role models, and aligning school character expectations with family and community values. Schools that isolated character education within institutional boundaries demonstrated more limited and less sustained outcomes compared with programs fostering ecological coherence across students' developmental contexts.

Evaluation and Assessment Approaches

The literature revealed significant variation and ongoing development in approaches to assessing character development outcomes. Holistic evaluation frameworks emerged as most aligned with contemporary character education philosophy, incorporating cognitive assessments of moral reasoning and values understanding, affective measures of empathy, moral emotions, and value commitments, behavioral observations of conduct in diverse contexts, and self-reflection instruments promoting metacognitive awareness. Studies employing pre-post quantitative designs demonstrated measurable improvements in character indicators, though researchers acknowledged challenges in isolating program effects from maturation and contextual influences. Qualitative approaches including teacher narratives, student portfolios documenting character growth, and participatory observations provided rich insights into character development processes and contextual nuances that quantitative measures alone could not capture.

Continuous evaluation integrated into routine activities rather than periodic formal assessments aligned more effectively with character education's developmental nature and routine-based implementation. Some schools implemented digital platforms enabling ongoing documentation of character-related incidents, student reflections, and growth patterns, though concerns about privacy, technological access, and data interpretation emerged. The literature emphasized need for assessment approaches that inform instructional improvement rather than merely documenting outcomes, involve students in self-assessment and goal-setting processes, recognize diverse manifestations of character values across cultural and individual differences, and balance accountability demands with developmental complexity and measurement challenges inherent in assessing character.

Table 4. Character Education Assessment Dimensions and Methods

Assessment Dimension	Methods Employed	Purposes	Frequency	Challenges Identified
Cognitive (Moral Knowing)	Written tests, moral dilemmas, discussions	Understanding of values and principles	Periodic	Distinguishing knowledge from commitment
Affective (Moral Feeling)	Surveys, interviews, empathy measures	Emotional connection to values	Periodic	Authenticity of self-reports
Behavioral (Moral Action)	Observations, incident documentation, peer	Consistency of ethical conduct	Continuous	Observer effects, context variability



reports				
Metacognitive	Reflection journals, portfolio assessments	Self-awareness and growth monitoring	Regular	Requires literacy and developmental capacity
Holistic Integration	Multi-method triangulation	Comprehensive character profile	Ongoing and summative	Resource intensive, synthesis complexity

Discussion

The synthesis of findings from this systematic literature review reveals that effective character education programs in elementary schools share fundamental design principles while demonstrating contextual adaptations that respond to local values, resources, and educational priorities. The prominence of integration as a core principle across diverse models aligns with contemporary educational theory emphasizing coherence between intended, taught, and learned curricula (Suardin et al., 2023). Character education achieves greatest impact when values permeate all aspects of school life rather than existing as isolated instructional units, suggesting that routine activities serve as particularly powerful vehicles precisely because they represent consistent, repeated experiences that shape behavioral patterns and internalize values through practice rather than mere exposure. The convergence of findings across cultural contexts regarding integration's importance suggests this principle may represent a universal dimension of effective character education, though specific integration strategies necessarily reflect local educational structures and cultural practices. Schools implementing comprehensive integration reported not only stronger character development outcomes but also enhanced coherence in students' educational experiences and reduced perception of character education as supplementary or disconnected from "real" learning (Hadi et al., 2025).

The critical role of teacher exemplary behavior documented across studies underscores social learning theory's relevance to character education and highlights the limitation of approaches that treat character as transmissible content rather than demonstrable practice (Ulfadhilah, 2024). Students develop character competencies through observing, imitating, and internalizing behaviors modeled by significant adults in their environments, positioning teachers' authentic embodiment of values as potentially more influential than any curriculum or instructional strategy. This finding carries profound implications for teacher education and professional development, suggesting that effective preparation for character education roles requires attention to educators' own character development, reflection on personal values and their alignment with educational mission, and support systems enabling teachers to manage the emotional labor and vulnerability inherent in serving as moral exemplars. However, the expectation that teachers consistently model ideal character creates substantial pressure and raises questions about realistic standards, support for teachers' own moral struggles and development, and the danger of character education devolving into moralistic judgment rather than developmental support (Tuhuteru et al., 2023). Balancing the legitimate recognition that teacher conduct influences students with acknowledgment of teachers' humanity and developmental needs remains an ongoing challenge requiring systemic rather than individual solutions.

The documented effectiveness of specific routine activities such as morning rituals, 5S culture, and habituation practices provides practical guidance for schools designing character education initiatives while raising questions about mechanisms through which routines foster character development (Mufidah et al., 2023). The literature suggests multiple



pathways including behavioral repetition leading to automaticity and internalization, communal participation creating shared identity and collective commitment to values, predictable structures reducing cognitive load and enabling focus on value enactment, and symbolic significance of rituals communicating importance of embedded values. The power of routines may derive partially from their consistency and expectation, which communicate to students that character values merit sustained attention equivalent to academic content. However, routines also carry risks of mechanistic performance divorced from genuine understanding or commitment, particularly when implemented without attention to meaning-making and reflection (Nuru Wakhidah et al., 2025). The distinction between meaningful habituation fostering internalized values and empty ritualism producing mere behavioral compliance appears contingent on accompanying reflection, discussion of values and their applications, connection to students' lives beyond school, and authentic modeling by educators and peers.

The emphasis on collaborative structures involving families and communities reflects ecological systems theory's recognition that child development occurs within nested contexts whose coherence or dissonance substantially influences outcomes (Safira & Alfiansyah, 2023). Character education confined to school settings confronts the reality that students spend limited time in schools and that values messages may conflict with those encountered in families, peer groups, media, and broader society. Effective programs documented in this review established active partnerships extending character education beyond institutional boundaries and aligning expectations and practices across developmental contexts. However, school-family-community collaboration presents significant challenges including diverse and sometimes conflicting values among stakeholders, resource and capacity limitations for sustaining partnership activities, potential for partnership rhetoric to exceed actual collaborative practice, and questions about whose values dominate when disagreements arise (Ciampa & Wolfe, 2021). The literature reveals tension between ideals of collaborative character education and practical realities of power imbalances, resource constraints, and genuine value disagreements that complicate partnership implementation. Schools successfully navigating these challenges appeared to focus on core shared values while respecting diversity, establish genuine dialogue rather than unidirectional communication, and create multiple low-barrier opportunities for family involvement.

Assessment challenges identified across studies reflect deeper philosophical and practical tensions in character education regarding measurability, accountability, and the nature of character itself (Maritim et al., 2025). The desire for evidence of program effectiveness and student growth drives assessment efforts, yet character's complexity, context-dependence, and developmental trajectory resist reduction to standardized metrics. The literature reveals ongoing experimentation with diverse assessment approaches but no consensus regarding optimal strategies or even whether character should be formally assessed beyond formative purposes. Holistic assessment frameworks incorporating multiple methods and perspectives offer more comprehensive perspectives than single-measure approaches, yet require substantial resources and expertise to implement meaningfully. The tension between formative assessment supporting student development and summative evaluation enabling accountability and program refinement remains unresolved, with some scholars arguing that high-stakes character assessment fundamentally misunderstands character development's nature and risks incentivizing performance over authentic growth (Suardin et al., 2023). This review's findings suggest that assessment approaches should prioritize supporting students' character development through self-reflection and growth feedback rather than sorting or



labeling students based on character metrics, though accountability demands may require demonstration of program effectiveness through some evaluative evidence.

Teacher preparation emerged as the most frequently identified challenge limiting effective character education implementation, yet the literature provides limited evidence regarding professional development approaches that successfully address this gap (Junaidi & Rohmani, 2024). Effective preparation apparently requires more than workshop attendance or theoretical exposure, instead necessitating sustained support including collaborative planning time, modeling and observation opportunities, coaching and feedback on implementation, and communities of practice enabling ongoing learning. The findings suggest that teacher development for character education should address both pedagogical skills and educators' own character development, recognizing that teachers cannot authentically guide students' character growth without engaging in their own reflective practice and moral development. However, systemic barriers including limited professional development time and resources, school cultures that isolate rather than support collaborative learning, and absence of character education expertise within many teacher preparation programs constrain capacity to provide needed support. The emphasis on teacher development appears justified given educators' centrality to character education effectiveness, yet requires systemic commitment and investment beyond what many educational systems currently allocate.

Cultural adaptation emerged as a critical yet complex dimension of character education program design, with studies demonstrating both universal principles transcending cultural boundaries and culture-specific expressions requiring contextual adaptation (Badeni & Saporahayuningsih, 2023). The ethnopedagogical approaches documented in several studies offer promising frameworks for integrating local wisdom and indigenous knowledge while maintaining coherence with national educational goals and universal character values. However, questions persist regarding which aspects of character education models represent universal best practices versus cultural preferences, how to honor cultural diversity while identifying shared values, and whose perspectives dominate when stakeholders hold divergent views. The Indonesian context represented heavily in this review illustrates both possibilities and challenges of culturally responsive character education, as schools attempt to integrate Pancasila values reflecting national philosophy, religious teachings central to Indonesian society, and local cultural wisdom from diverse ethnic communities. Successfully navigating this complexity requires sophisticated cultural competence, genuine respect for diverse perspectives, and willingness to engage ongoing dialogue about values rather than imposing predetermined frameworks (Dirgantari & Cahyani, 2023). The reviewed literature suggests that models explicitly incorporating local cultural elements demonstrate stronger community support and student engagement than generic approaches, supporting investment in culturally adaptive rather than standardized character education frameworks.

The identified gaps and limitations in current research point toward several priorities for future investigation including longitudinal studies examining character development trajectories and sustained program impacts, comparative effectiveness research identifying which models and practices achieve strongest outcomes under what conditions, implementation science research examining factors enabling successful translation of promising models into diverse school contexts, and cross-cultural studies exploring universal versus context-specific dimensions of effective character education (Mala et al., 2025). Additionally, research addressing teacher development for character education, family and community engagement strategies and their impacts, assessment methodologies appropriate for character development's complexity, and integration of technology in character education



without losing human relationship centrality would substantially advance the field. The predominance of Indonesian studies in this review, while providing valuable insights from one context, limits generalizability and highlights need for diverse international research enabling cross-cultural learning. Methodologically, the field would benefit from more experimental and quasi-experimental designs enabling stronger causal inferences, though such designs confront ethical and practical challenges in educational settings where random assignment and control conditions may be infeasible or inappropriate for developmentally essential interventions.

Conclusion

This study concludes that effective character education in elementary schools is best achieved through routine-based practices that are systematically designed and embedded within school culture. The review identifies convergent evidence that successful programs integrate comprehensive design models, intentional daily routines, active instructional strategies, and collaborative partnerships to transform repeated actions into internalized character dispositions. At the same time, the study highlights persistent challenges, including teacher preparedness, assessment limitations, contextual variability, and systemic constraints. Overall, the findings underscore the need for coherent, culturally responsive, and sustainable frameworks that move character education beyond isolated classroom lessons toward enduring, school-wide practices.

Recommendation

For teachers, program implementation needs to be carried out consistently and integrated with daily learning practices so that character values such as religiousness, discipline, responsibility, self-confidence, and courtesy do not stop at the level of ceremonial activities but are internalized in student behavior. Teachers also need to utilize character monitoring instruments systematically to conduct reflection and follow-up coaching, so that the character strengthening process takes place sustainably and measurably.

For school principals, policy and managerial support are crucial factors in ensuring program sustainability. The *Kajijanol* program needs to be institutionalized in official school documents and integrated into the annual work plan to ensure structural legitimacy and continuity of implementation. Regular supervision, strengthening the school's religious culture, and facilitating collaboration between teachers are crucial strategies for maintaining the quality of program implementation. Thus, the program serves not only as a local innovation but also has the potential to become a best practice that can be replicated in other educational institutions with similar characteristics.

Meanwhile, for future researchers, further testing of the model's effectiveness through more diverse methodological approaches, such as experimental designs or longitudinal studies, is needed to obtain stronger empirical evidence regarding the program's long-term impact on student character development. Further research could also examine the model's adaptability to different school contexts or integrate it with technology-based approaches and local culture to enrich the theoretical and practical contributions in developing a model for strengthening character education based on routine activities in elementary schools.



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