

Morning Sermon Culture as a Strategy to Strengthen Character Education at SDN 13 Penarik

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to describe the morning cultum culture as a strategy for strengthening students' character education at SDN 13 Penarik. The focus of this study is the implementation of the morning cultum program in building students' character and the driving and inhibiting factors in its implementation. The research method used is a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis techniques used include data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions, with source triangulation as a data validity technique. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of the morning cultum is carried out through three stages, namely planning, implementation, and evaluation. The cultum activity has a positive impact on the formation of students' character, such as fostering religious values, discipline, responsibility, politeness, and self-confidence. The driving factors for the implementation of the cultum include school support, student enthusiasm, relevant materials, and adequate facilities and infrastructure. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors include the lack of focus of some students, low self-confidence, limited time, and differences in student character. Based on the results of the study, the morning cultum culture is effective as a strategy for strengthening students' character education at SDN 13 Penarik.

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Introduction

Education is a fundamental aspect of human life because it serves as a means to maintain existence, develop oneself, and adapt to changing times. The relationship between humans and education is inseparable, as humans require education to develop their intellectual, moral, social, and spiritual abilities. Education is understood as a conscious effort given to individuals or groups through a process of guidance, teaching, and training to prepare them for future tasks and roles. This shows that education is not merely an activity of transferring knowledge, but rather a planned process to shape specific behaviors, skills, and competencies according to the desired goals (Wahyuni, et al., 2025).

Furthermore, education is also understood as a conscious effort directed at immature individuals to enable them to transform into more mature individuals. Education focuses not only on transforming knowledge, but also on the culture, values, and traditions that exist within a society. In this context, education functions as a medium for intergenerational cultural transmission, developing not only cognitive abilities but also affective and psychomotor skills in students. This process of transmitting values is what makes education a powerful agent in shaping students' character and social identity.

According to Law Number 20 of 2003 Article 1 Paragraph 1 concerning the National Education System, education is a conscious effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process so that students actively develop their potential, both spiritual and religious aspects, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble morals, and skills needed by themselves and society. From this definition it is clear that education has a broad and holistic dimension. Not only does it encourage students to be intellectually intelligent, but it also forms morality and social sensitivity. Education must be able to create people who are not only obedient and polite, but also critical, creative, independent, and able to interpret developments in science, technology, and art responsibly.

Character building is an important goal in Islamic education. Character is understood as a set of traits, habits, and values embedded in a person that influence how they think, act, and interact with others. Character education is an effort to create a school atmosphere that fosters ethics and a sense of responsibility in children through modeling and teaching universal character principles. These universal values are life values recognized and supported by society as standards of behavior and perception. This perspective is consistent with the notion of noble local knowledge values inherited and upheld by a community as a consequence of the process of civilization (Landena & Leobisa, 2026).

Character formation is a complex process that requires the synergistic involvement of various parties, especially families and schools. The family serves as the primary educational environment, where core values are first instilled. Meanwhile, schools play a role as formal institutions that systematically continue and strengthen this character-building process (Pirmansyah et al., 2025).

Character values are often taught as abstract ideas that aren't absorbed through situations relevant to students' daily lives. Students lack a solid understanding of these values. The development of left-brain cognitive skills continues to be prioritized in the current education system, but right-brain skills such as compassion, empathy, and emotional sensitivity haven't received the same attention. In this context, teachers play a crucial role in helping students develop their moral character.

Because of the importance of character in an educational institution, realizing it depends heavily on the institution's own efforts. If the educational institution devotes sufficient attention to character development, it will produce individuals with character. If the school can provide character development to its students, it will also produce students with character. Likewise, as God promises, He will not change the condition of a people unless they make the effort to change themselves.

The current educational process has apparently failed to develop Indonesians with character. Many school graduates are good at answering questions and possessing intelligence, but their behavior is uncomplimentary and they lack concern for others. This is why character-building measures are crucial and urgently needed. Therefore, teachers and schools must be discerning in seeking opportunities to protect their students, such as by integrating religious activities as a catalyst and character-building tool.

One way to develop student character is through role models and continuous, ongoing practices. Students often imitate the behavior or figures they idolize, including their teachers. Furthermore, these practices are crucial. If you want to change for the better, you must cultivate the habit of doing good deeds.

Kultum (oral sermon) is a short da'wah method long known in Indonesian Islamic tradition, particularly when delivered in mosques before congregational prayers. In an educational context, kultum can serve as an effective spiritual learning medium due to its concise, focused, and easily digestible characteristics. Its short duration yet rich meaning make kultum an alternative learning method that is not boring and can attract the attention of students with limited attention spans, especially in the current digital era (Ghofar et al., 2025).

Kultum (or short lectures) are a form of education that plays a strategic role in shaping students' religious and spiritual character. Kultums are generally held in schools during the first hour of class, aiming to provide a religious atmosphere, build student character, and prepare them mentally for the learning process. These activities provide students with the opportunity to perform, convey messages, and practice public speaking skills. Furthermore, kultums provide spiritual and social experiences that enable students to develop self-confidence, communication skills, and discipline in preparing material for presentation (Nuryana, 2021).

From an Islamic perspective, da'wah is an activity that invites people to goodness and prevents evil, whether through speech, writing, or behavior. Da'wah aims to shape pious Muslims with noble morals and benefits for society. Ahmad Gharwasi stated that da'wah is the science that teaches how to convey Islamic teachings, encompassing aspects of faith, sharia, and morals. Da'wah is not only the task of religious scholars, but an obligation for all Muslims, according to their respective abilities. Therefore, religious lectures in schools are part of the implementation of da'wah in education (Wahyuni et al., 2025).

Islam also teaches its followers to always be self-confident. The Quran explains that humans were created by Allah SWT in the best form and have the highest status compared to other creatures (Paputungan, et al., 2024). This is explained in Surah Ali-Imran verse 139 and Surah Fushilat verse 30 regarding self-confidence.

مُؤْمِنِينَ كُنْتُمْ إِنِ الْأَعْلَوْنَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَحْزَنُونَ وَلَا تَهِنُوا وَلَا

Meaning: "Do not feel weak and do not grieve, even though you are the highest (in rank) if you are believers" (QS Ali-Imran: 139).

وَأَبَشِرُوا تَحْزَنُوا وَلَا تَخَافُوا إِلَّا الْمَلَائِكَةُ عَلَيْهِمْ تَنْزِيلُ اسْتَاقَمُوا ثُمَّ اللَّهُ رَبُّنَا قَالُوا الَّذِينَ إِنَّ
تُوعَدُونَ كُنْتُمْ الَّتِي بِالْجَنَّةِ

Meaning: "Indeed, those who say, 'Our Lord is Allah,' then remain (in their stance), angels will come down to them (saying), 'Do not be afraid or sad and rejoice in (obtaining) paradise which has been promised to you.'" (QS Fushilat: 30).

The verse above explains that a believer who has a positive opinion of himself will not feel afraid or sad, but will have strong confidence in himself.

A kultum (religious lecture) is a method of delivering a lecture or good advice to others in a short but meaningful manner. Kultums conducted in schools involve providing advice or spiritual guidance to students so that when they enter the classroom, they can distinguish between good and bad, and what is permissible and what is not. Kultums are held weekly on Friday mornings before the start of the learning process.

This sermon is also delivered directly by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and other subject teachers. Although it is called "Kultum (seven-minute lecture)," it sometimes lasts longer than seven minutes, even up to 30 minutes. This sermon is expected to be a means of fostering students' morals. Because the implementation of this sermon is primarily oriented towards students' morals. Among the materials delivered by the teacher are prayers, morals towards teachers and parents, good manners, how to be grateful, how to respect elders, charity, cleanliness, as well as reading short surahs and reciting blessings together, guided by one student on a rotating basis each week. This sermon is also combined with the muraja'ah method, which is repeating memorized short surahs simultaneously with other students (Hanapi, 2022).

Previous research relevant to this study includes research conducted by Muhamad Hanapi (2022). The article discusses the practice of Friday religious lectures as a character-building effort for students at Nanggela 1 Public Elementary School. The results showed that the religious lecture program fostered creativity, independence, curiosity, communication skills, a love of reading, and responsibility. Furthermore, the program also produced high-

achieving students in speech and young preacher competitions.

Further research was conducted by Asyraf Suryadin et al. (2025) on the cultum activities at SD 52 Pangkal Pinang. The results showed that the cultum activities effectively strengthened students' moral and spiritual education, with an active participation rate of 90%. This activity also increased religious awareness and tolerance among students, although challenges such as age differences and time constraints persisted.

Furthermore, research by Rizka Triana Paputungan et al. (2024) on the implementation of cultum (religious service) in building self-confidence in students at MAN 1, Gorontalo Regency, showed that cultum is an effective method in increasing student self-confidence. Through cultum, students learn to speak in public, reduce shyness and nervousness, and increase their insight.

Based on previous research, it can be seen that most studies have focused on the implementation of morning cultum as a means of developing students' religious, spiritual, and self-confidence character. However, these studies still have limitations because not many have specifically examined the culture of morning cultum as a strategy for strengthening character education at certain elementary school levels within the context of everyday school life.

Therefore, the novelty of this research lies in its focus on examining the morning cultum culture as a strategy for strengthening character education at SDN 13 Penarik. This research not only examines the implementation of the cultum as a routine religious activity but also examines how this culture becomes an effective strategy in shaping religious character, discipline, responsibility, self-confidence, and noble morals in students.

Based on initial observations conducted by researchers at SDN 13 Penarik, morning cultum activities have become a school culture, held routinely every Friday before classes begin. This activity actively involves teachers and students. Through morning cultum, students are accustomed to listening to advice, reciting prayers, memorizing short surahs, and learning to speak in front of their peers. However, there are still some students who lack self-confidence, lack discipline, and have not demonstrated optimal character responsibility, so strengthening character education through a consistent school culture is necessary.

Based on these issues, this study aims to describe the culture of morning cultum (sermon) as a strategy for strengthening character education at SDN 13 Penarik. This research is expected to provide a clear picture of the implementation of morning cultum and its contribution to shaping students' character, thus serving as a reference for schools in developing effective character-building programs.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with field research, which aims to describe the culture of morning cultum as a strategy to strengthen character education at SDN 13 Penarik. The data used in this study are qualitative data consisting of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from the principal, teachers, and students through observation and interviews. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained from school documents, activity archives, and various supporting sources relevant to the research. The data collection procedure in this study was carried out through observation techniques, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly observe the implementation of morning cultum activities and student behavior during the activity. Interviews were conducted with research informants to obtain more in-depth information about the implementation of morning cultum and its role in strengthening character education. Documentation was used to complement the research data in the form of activity photos, implementation schedules, and other supporting documents. Data analysis in this study used the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and focusing on data relevant to the research objectives. Data presentation was done in the form of descriptive descriptions to make the data easier to understand. Furthermore, conclusions are drawn in

stages through a verification process of the data obtained in the field to produce valid, systematic, and accountable research findings.

Results and Discussion

A. Implementation of the Kultum Program in Building Student Character at SDN 13 Penarik

The implementation of the Kultum program at SDN 13 Penarik is a form of habituation activity designed by the school as a strategy to strengthen students' character education. This program is carried out routinely with the aim of instilling religious values, discipline, responsibility, courtesy, and self-confidence in students. Through the morning Kultum activities, the school strives to create an educational environment that focuses not only on academic development but also on the formation of students' character and morals.

The morning cultum program is one of the school's efforts to instill moral and spiritual values through continuous practice. This practice is expected to shape positive behavior in students so that the character values taught are not only understood theoretically but also applied in everyday life. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, the implementation of the cultum program in building student character at SDN 13 Penarik can be seen through three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation.

1. Planning Stages of the Morning Kultum Program as a Strategy to Strengthen Students' Character Education

Planning is a crucial initial step in implementing the Kultum program at SDN 13 Penarik. Good planning will determine the success of the program in achieving its intended goals, particularly in building student character. Based on observations and interviews, the morning Kultum program was designed as a routine school activity aimed at instilling religious values, discipline, responsibility, and self-confidence in students.

During the planning stage, the school first coordinates with the principal, class teachers, and Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers regarding the concept and technical aspects of the cultum (religious service) program. This coordination ensures that all parties have a shared understanding of the program's objectives and their respective roles in supporting the program's success. (Yanas, 2022) During this process, the school also establishes a schedule for the cultum (religious service) program, which is held routinely every Friday morning before classes begin.

In addition to determining the schedule, planning also includes developing sermon materials tailored to the students' needs and the character values they wish to develop. The material generally covers morality toward teachers and parents, the importance of prayer, honesty, discipline, responsibility, courtesy, cleanliness, and mutual respect for peers. The material is selected to ensure the message is easy to understand and relevant to the students' daily lives.

Schools also prepare supporting facilities and infrastructure to support the implementation of the cultum program. These preparations include a venue, loudspeakers, and student conditioning to ensure the event proceeds in an orderly and conducive manner. With careful planning, the cultum program is expected to run effectively and make a significant contribution to the development of student character. (Eriyanto, 2022)

2. Stages of Implementing the Morning Kultum Program in Building Student Character

The community service program at SDN 13 Penarik is held routinely every Friday morning before the start of classes. All students, teachers, and other educational staff participate in this activity. The community service begins with students being organized and ready to participate. Once all students have gathered, the activity begins with a prayer followed by the recitation of verses from the Quran or short surahs.

During the implementation phase, the religious education (kultum) material is delivered by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, subject teachers, and students,

taking turns according to a predetermined schedule. This provides students with the opportunity to practice public speaking and develop their speaking skills. Kultum sessions typically last between 10 and 30 minutes, depending on the material presented and the day's circumstances.

The material presented in the cultum (sermon) focuses on character building for students. Teachers not only provide verbal advice but also relate the material to students' daily lives to make it easier to understand and apply. For example, when discussing honesty, teachers provide examples of honest behavior at school, such as not cheating on exams and being honest with teachers. When discussing discipline, students are directed to arrive on time, obey school rules, and complete assignments well.

The implementation of religious lectures also serves as a means of cultivating religious habits among students. Through these activities, students are accustomed to reciting prayers, memorizing short surahs (chapters), reciting salawat (prayer), and regularly listening to religious advice. These habits gradually instill religious values in students. Furthermore, these lectures also train students' communication skills, self-confidence, and courage to express their opinions in front of a large audience. (Saputri , 2025)

Based on observations, the implementation of the cultum program has had a positive impact on the development of student character. This is evident in increased student discipline, politeness in speaking to teachers, and a growing sense of responsibility in carrying out schoolwork. Students also began to demonstrate mutual respect, care for their peers, and increased confidence when speaking in front of the class.

3. Evaluation Stage of the Morning Kultum Program on Strengthening Students' Character Education

Evaluation is a crucial step in determining the success of the cultum program in building student character at SDN 13 Penarik. The evaluation is conducted by the principal and teachers through direct observation of changes in student attitudes and behavior in their daily lives within the school environment. This evaluation focuses not only on the implementation of activities but also on the visible results of student character development.

Based on the evaluation results, the cultum program has had a positive impact on student character development. This is evident in the students' increased awareness of maintaining good manners, respecting teachers, and practicing religious behavior in their daily lives. Students have also begun to demonstrate more discipline, such as arriving on time, following school rules, and taking greater responsibility for assigned tasks.

However, several obstacles were encountered during the evaluation process. Not all students demonstrated the same character changes. Some students still lacked focus during activities, talked to friends, or lacked confidence when asked to perform in front of others. This demonstrates that character development is not an instant process but requires time, practice, and consistent guidance.

The evaluation results also showed that the success of the cultum program is greatly influenced by the teacher's role as a role model for students. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering the cultum material but also for providing concrete examples in everyday behavior. Teacher role models are crucial because students tend to imitate the behavior they observe directly.

Overall, the evaluation of the cultum program showed that it was effective as a strategy for strengthening character education at SDN 13 Penarik. The program's success depended not only on the implementation of the cultum itself, but also on the school's consistency in maintaining the program's sustainability, the support of all teaching staff, and the active participation of students in each activity.

B. Driving and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Kultum at SDN 13 Penarik

The implementation of the Kultum program at SDN 13 Penarik is certainly inseparable from various factors that influence its sustainability. These factors can

originate from both the internal and external school environment. The success of Kultum in building student character is greatly influenced by supporting factors that strengthen the program's implementation, as well as inhibiting factors that can reduce its effectiveness. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, several driving and inhibiting factors were identified in the implementation of Kultum at SDN 13 Penarik.

1. Driving Factors for the Implementation of Kultum at SDN 13 Penarik

One of the main driving factors in the implementation of the cultum at SDN 13 Penarik is the full support of the school, particularly the principal and teachers. This support is evident in the school's commitment to making the cultum a regular weekly activity. The principal plays a role in establishing policy and providing direction, while teachers actively guide, supervise, and ensure the activities run smoothly.

Another driving factor was the students' enthusiasm for participating in the cultum activities. While not all students initially had the courage to perform in public, over time, many began to demonstrate greater self-confidence. The opportunity to perform in turns provided a platform for students to hone their speaking skills, courage, and communication skills.

Relevant cultum material to students' daily lives is also a crucial supporting factor. Presenting material in a simple, easy-to-understand manner that's close to students' experiences makes moral messages easier to accept and apply. Teaching materials on honesty, discipline, responsibility, courtesy, and good morals to parents and teachers is effective in supporting student character development.

Furthermore, adequate facilities and infrastructure also contribute to the smooth implementation of the cultum (religious lectures). The availability of a comfortable space, loudspeakers, and a conducive school atmosphere help the activities run smoothly. The support of a religious school environment also strengthens the success of the cultum program as a strategy for strengthening character education.

2. Factors Inhibiting the Implementation of Kultum at SDN 13 Penarik

In addition to the driving factors, there were also several inhibiting factors in the implementation of the cultum at SDN 13 Penarik. One obstacle identified was the continued lack of focus among students during the activity. Some students sometimes talked with friends, paid little attention to the material being presented, or had difficulty remaining calm during the activity. This situation can reduce the effectiveness of the message conveyed in the cultum.

Lack of self-confidence among some students is also a inhibiting factor. Not all students are brave enough to speak in front of their peers. Some still feel shy, nervous, and afraid of making mistakes when asked to deliver a sermon. This requires teachers to provide more guidance and motivation to encourage students to speak.

Another inhibiting factor is time constraints. Kultum (religious outreach) activities are held before the start of class, so their duration must be adjusted to avoid disrupting the learning schedule. This time constraint sometimes results in less than optimal delivery, especially if the material requires more in-depth explanation.

Furthermore, differences in student character and background also pose challenges. Each student has a different level of understanding, habits, and response to character development. Some students quickly accept and apply the values taught, while others require more time to adapt and change.

Overall, despite several inhibiting factors, the implementation of the cultum program at SDN 13 Penarik continued to run smoothly. The existing enabling factors helped the school overcome the various obstacles that arose. Therefore, strong collaboration between the principal, teachers, students, and the entire school community is necessary to ensure the cultum program continues to run optimally and positively impacts student character development.

Conclusion

Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the morning cultum culture at SDN 13 Penarik is an effective strategy in strengthening students' character education. The cultum program is implemented through three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation, which are carried out systematically and continuously. In the planning stage, the school prepares a schedule, materials, and supporting facilities for the cultum activities. In the implementation stage, the cultum activities are carried out routinely every Friday morning with the active involvement of the principal, teachers, and students. This activity makes a positive contribution in instilling religious values, discipline, responsibility, courtesy, and self-confidence in students. Meanwhile, the evaluation stage shows changes in student behavior for the better, although several obstacles are still encountered in the implementation process. Factors driving the success of the cultum program include full support from the school, student enthusiasm, relevant materials, and adequate facilities and infrastructure. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include a lack of focus on the part of some students during the activity, low self-confidence in some students, limited time, and differences in the characters of each student. Therefore, good cooperation is needed between the principal, teachers, students, and all school residents so that the morning cultum culture can continue to run optimally and provide a sustainable positive impact in shaping the character of students.

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