



## The Development of the "Irama" Innovation Shapes Children's Character

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### Abstract

This article aims to examine how character education innovations are developed in Early Childhood Education Units. This research method was conducted using qualitative research with a descriptive approach. This study implemented character education in the Aisyiyah 1 Integrated Early Childhood Education Unit in Bukittinggi City using four methods: *logical, analytical, feeling and reasoning*. There are 3 service programs in this Early Childhood Education Unit, namely Kindergarten, Playgroup and Childcare, by instilling character education that has a different program every day, but it is necessary to socialize it by involving the role of parents in instilling these character values. Through the literacy character building program "IRAMA" Interaction with Mama Papa which is a program to strengthen character building in children. Thus, the development of character education innovation in Integrated Early Childhood Education can be implemented and run optimally through collaboration between teachers and parents.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education is a conscious effort to fulfill a human need that plays a crucial role in improving the quality of life and driving change. Education in Indonesia is not solely focused on material education; rather, contemporary education in Indonesia has made character education a mandatory component of the curriculum implemented in institutions (Frastika, 2022). Throughout history, education has always had two main goals: to help people become intelligent, smart, and good (Tirtana & Rahmayani, 2025). Making people smart and clever seems easy, but making people better and wiser is much more difficult, even very difficult (Arestya et al., 2024). This proves that character education has a very important role in the world of education (Rahman et al., 2023).

Character education means a school environment that helps children develop morality, responsibility, and character through universal values. John W. Santrock defines character education as education that involves a direct approach to children to instill moral values and teach moral knowledge in an effort to prevent prohibited behavior (Gusminalita, 2023). Character education, according to Thomas Lickona, is a deliberate effort to help someone so that they can understand, pay attention to, and carry out the main ethical principles (Susanti, 2022). According to another opinion, character education is an approach taken to instill a person's image to be able to understand moral, cultural and ethical values to form a character that can be applied in the community (Ence et al., 2025).

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Early childhood education or PAUD is a development effort aimed at children from birth to the age of 6 years which is carried out through providing educational stimulation to help physical and spiritual growth and development so that children are ready to enter further education (Nurachadijat & Selvia, 2023). Early childhood is born with all the potential (intelligence) given by God (Mujiono, 2022). However, they will not develop properly if they are not stimulated from an early age. Early childhood, or the golden age, is a crucial period in a person's development (Yusmaliana et al., 2023). Character education must be carried out from an early age through the habit of instilling religious and moral values both at school and at home (Fajarini, 2023).

Therefore, character education is one of the most important aspects in the world of innovative education. Its goal is to create a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also possesses integrity, responsibility, and empathy (Hasibuan et al., 2025). In this article, we will delve deeper into the importance of innovation in character education at the Aisyiyah 1 Integrated Early Childhood Education Unit in Bukittinggi City and the extent to which its development has been implemented in the unit with parents at home.

Character education has become a topic of learning resources in Indonesia. Instilling character education in Indonesian educational institutions begins in early childhood (Supiyardi et al., 2024). This makes character education a crucial learning experience in schools, as it forms the foundation for a student's identity. Children under 18 years old need guidance from adults, including parents and teachers. Early childhood education is crucial because everyone experiences this period only once in their lifetime (Anggraini et al., 2024).

In early childhood, a person experiences a significant increase in his development (Nasution et al., 2024). Many developmental aspects are involved in early childhood development, including religious and moral values, social-emotional, cognitive, language, physical-motor, and artistic (Nurachadijat & Selvia, 2023). Two core competencies in the 2024 early childhood education curriculum are attitudes and social skills (Annisa et al., 2025). The concept refers to how a person acts in a given situation. Social behavior refers to the behavior a person exhibits when interacting with others, whether peers, younger, or older (Kusumawati et al., 2024). Character education is needed from an early age to ensure children's attitudes and behaviors align with societal values and behaviors (Syukur, 2021).

Character education that is instilled in children from an early age should not be used as the main example for children (Hasanah et al., 2022). Furthermore, the role of teachers must be shared equally. Character education in early childhood is also the primary foundation for a child's personal development (Ramandhini et al., 2023). This encompasses aspects such as character, cognitive abilities, language, arts, social-emotional skills, spirituality, self-discipline, and independence (Huliyah, 2021).

Character education can be defined as the education of values, character, morals, and disposition (Izzati & Irawan, 2023). The goal of character education is to teach students to make good choices, maintain what is good, and truly do good in their daily lives (Angga et al., 2022). The school education system is not the only way to build good character; the role of parents is also very important (Dasopang et al., 2022).

Family education also significantly influences how children develop, especially in shaping their resilience and courage (Hasanah et al., 2022). It is the responsibility of both parents to educate their children from an early age and provide appropriate care for their development, ensuring their growth and development, and to prepare them mentally, psychologically, and physically for the environment they find themselves in (Wismanto et al., 2024).

Innovation in character education is essential, making the role of innovative character education increasingly crucial for instilling moral values in a digital context, addressing social challenges, and enhancing the readiness of the younger generation for global competition (Arbi & Amrullah, 2024). Four pillars of the character approach are applied in a comprehensive method of thinking and acting for students:

- 1) **Logical:** Encourage children to understand the cause and effect of an action.
- 2) **Analytical:** Train children to observe the situation around them critically.,
- 3) **Feeling:** Sharpen empathy so that children are able to feel what other people feel,
- 4) **Reasoning:** Provide space for children to argue and understand the reasons behind a moral value.

One of the biggest challenges in character education is the disconnect between values when children return home. To address this, the character literacy program IRAMA (Interaction with Mothers and Fathers) was created. IRAMA is a collaborative movement that directly involves parents in the educational process. Through intensive literacy and interaction, parents are no longer "spectators" but strategic partners with teachers. With this program, the values taught in school are reinforced through hugs, stories, and lighthearted discussions between children and parents at home. The success of this innovation demonstrates that optimal character education is born from two-way synergy.

The flagship character innovation program developed in daily learning activities is the "KEMBANG SEPATU" program (character habituation activities for Aisyiyah Kindergarten One). Monday "SELADA" (Monday literacy and culture) familiarizes the introduction of literacy and Minang culture, such as *sumbang duo baleh*. Tuesday ABCD (Children Dare to Tell Their Stories in Front) accustoms children to positive self-confidence. "RaGi" (Wednesday perseverance) activities that accustom children to perseverance and never give up. Thursday "GEMAS" (Fruit Eating Movement), while Friday Manis (increasing charity) accustoms the character of wanting to share and empathize.

## METHODS

### Mechanism

This article is the result of research related to the character dynamics applied by teachers to children at Aisyiyah 1 Integrated Early Childhood Education (PAUD Terpadu Aisyiyah 1) in Bukittinggi City. This research takes a qualitative approach and explores in depth how Character Education Innovation is implemented in Early Childhood Education. Building a child's character is not simply about teaching what is right and wrong. It is an artistic process of sculpting the soul that must begin at a golden age (*golden age*) (Afrianti et al., 2024). In Bukittinggi City, an innovative step was taken by Aisyiyah 1 Integrated PAUD to ensure that character education does not just stop in the classroom, but also permeates into the home.

As an integrated institution, this PAUD oversees three main service programs: Kindergarten (TK), Playgroup (KB), and Childcare (TPA). Although each program has a different daily schedule, the common thread remains the same: character building as the top priority. Every day, children are exposed to activities specifically designed to consistently form good habits. However, the school recognizes that teachers are not the only actors in a child's development scenario. Through the "IRAMA" innovation, it can connect school and home.

This research is in the form of field research (*field research*) with a qualitative descriptive method. Descriptive research is "A method for researching the status of a group of people, objects, a set of conditions, a system of thought, or a class of events in the present. The purpose of this descriptive research is to create a systematic, factual and accurate description, picture or painting of the facts, characteristics and relationships between the phenomena being investigated."

## Research Instruments

There are 15 informants who are used as data sources in this study. The data sources in this study are: (1). Primary data sources. Primary data sources are data obtained directly from the community, whether through interviews, observations and so on. The primary data sources in this study are the principal, teachers, and education staff at the Aisyiyah 1 Bukittinggi Integrated Early Childhood Education Center. (2). Secondary data sources. Secondary data sources are data obtained from or originating from library materials of certain institutions, which support the truth of the facts of the object being studied. The secondary data sources in this study are parents and students of the Bukittinggi City Integrated Early Childhood Education Center. (3). Data Collection Techniques. Data were collected through observation techniques, interviews and documentation studies to 15 informants so that the data in this study could be obtained objectively and perfectly to be used as a guideline in this writing, the tools used in this data collection are: (a). Observation. Observation is a way to obtain data or information by systematically observing and recording the symptoms that appear in the research object. In this observation, the researcher will go directly to the field and conduct observations at Aisyiyah 1 Integrated Early Childhood Education by observing the educator's strategy, with data sources to be able to complete the research conducted by the researcher in three educational services of Aisyiyah 1 Integrated Early Childhood Education Unit Bukittinggi. (b). Interview. Interview is conveying information verbally between two or more people directly. The interview was conducted using a structured model, namely asking questions to informants by referring to questions that had been prepared and asked sequentially to find out in depth about "The Development of "Rhythm" Innovation in Forming Children's Characters in Aisyiyah 1 Integrated Early Childhood Education in Bukittinggi City. In one day, interviews were conducted with three informants in one educational unit. (c). Documentation study. Documentation study is data obtained from documents or books related to the problem being studied. Documentation is used to search for data from official documents, especially internal documents in the form of data on the teaching and learning process, report card data used in Kindergarten.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Studies show that children have 1,000 billion brain cells that must be stimulated and utilized to survive and thrive (Maharani et al., 2024). If these cells are not stimulated, they will shrink and erode a child's potential. Early childhood education can improve their development. Education also fosters attitudes, so children need to cultivate character through education. Character education can improve the quality of students (Ardiyanti & Khairiah, 2021). The educational process and results refer to the education of children's character and morals in an integral, complete and balanced manner, in accordance with the desired educational standards.

Based on observations conducted at the three integrated early childhood education units in Aisyiyah 1 Bukittinggi, character education is implemented daily in learning activities. Children have the opportunity to participate in structured learning within the lesson plan. In character education activities, teachers employ four pillars in delivering the material: *logical, analytical, feeling, and reasoning*. From these various methods, teachers can choose the approach that best suits the character material they will be delivering to children.

As a form of reinforcement, teachers can read storybooks, character pillar books, or provide direct examples of behavior related to instilling character values (Afnan et al., 2024). This innovation was then expanded through the "IRAMA" (Interaction with Mothers and Fathers) program, a character literacy initiative that

connects learning at school with habits at home. Through "IRAMA," collaboration between teachers and parents is key to ensuring the character values taught using the four pillars method are optimally internalized in children's daily lives. The character education implemented includes faith in God, respect for and honoring others, interfaith tolerance, self-confidence, responsibility, self-respect, self-control, compassion for living things, compassion for friends, and various other character values (Khofifah & Mufarochah, 2022).

Character education programs implemented in early childhood education units (PAUD) in Bukittinggi City vary across units. However, the Bukittinggi City Government has promoted a character education innovation that involves parents. In this program, children take home a storybook, which parents read to them, and the children can retell the story. This is done in collaboration with parents to strengthen character education in children and improve family harmony, ensuring they pay attention to their children's development and instill character values (Karimah et al., 2021).

The Bukittinggi City government has socialized the role of parents in instilling character values by involving them in the literacy program "IRAMA" Interaction with Mama Papa, which is a program that is often implemented to strengthen character building in children.

The development of innovation at Aisyiyah 1 Bukittinggi Integrated Early Childhood Education (PAUD Terpadu) demonstrates that contemporary character education must be dynamic. By combining logical-analytical-feeling-reasoning thinking methods and real collaboration through the IRAMA program, we are producing not only academically intelligent children but also a generation with strong moral roots.

The flagship program on developing character values in daily learning activities is the "KEMBANG SEPATU" program (Character habituation activities for Aisyiyah Kindergarten One). Monday "SELADA" (Monday literacy and culture) familiarizes the introduction of literacy and Minang culture, such as sumbang duo baleh. Tuesday ABCD (Children Dare to Tell Their Stories in Front) accustoms children to positive character traits of self-confidence. "RaGi" (Wednesday perseverance) activities that accustom children to perseverance and never give up. Thursday "GEMAS" (Fruit Eating Movement), while Friday Manis (increasing charity) accustoms the character of wanting to share and empathize.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that character education is an approach taken to instill in a person an understanding of moral, cultural, and ethical values, thus developing character that can be applied in society. All three kindergartens implement character education in their daily learning activities. Teachers provide character education materials tailored to the methods used, such as: *feeling*, *reasoning*, And *acting*. The character education instillation carried out in Kindergartens has a different program in each unit, but in Bukittinggi City, it has been socialized which involves the role of parents in instilling character values. There is a common program in all three educational units, namely the Literacy character instillation program "IRAMA" Interaction with Mama Papa which is a flagship program to strengthen character instillation in children. Through a habit is also carried out by the unit in collaboration between parents and teachers by practicing directly. It is hoped that in this research the development of character education innovations in Kindergartens in Bukittinggi

City can run optimally and create cooperation between teachers and parents.

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