

Integration of Strategic Management and Humanistic Education in Developing Student Character at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk

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Abstract

This study addresses the limited research on the integration of strategic management and humanistic education within Indonesian Islamic secondary schools, despite the significant potential of their synergy in fostering holistic character development. While previous research has examined character education, school leadership, or humanistic pedagogy in isolation, few have explored how these elements function together within a unified framework—particularly in the context of *Madrasah Aliyah*. The objective of this study is to analyze how strategic management supports and enhances humanistic educational practices, evaluate the impact of this integration on various dimensions of student character, and identify key sustaining factors at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk. Utilizing a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design, the study commenced with quantitative surveys followed by qualitative interviews and document analysis. Participants included 150 students, 20 teachers, and 5 administrators selected through stratified random and purposive sampling. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANOVA, and multiple regression, while qualitative data were thematically interpreted. The findings reveal a significant positive relationship between the integration of strategic management and humanistic education and the development of student

traits such as empathy, responsibility, integrity, and religious devotion. Strategic vision, effective resource allocation, and supportive leadership emerged as critical enablers of a humanistic and student-centered educational environment. The study concludes that this integration is vital for nurturing well-rounded character in Islamic schools, offering both theoretical contributions to the discourse on educational leadership and practical guidance for policy formulation, school governance, and curriculum design. It also recommends future longitudinal and comparative studies to further explore the long-term effects and broader applicability of this integrative approach.

Keywords: Strategic Management; Humanistic Education; Student Character; Islamic Secondary School; MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary educational landscape is perpetually challenged by the imperative to cultivate not merely intellectual prowess but also robust moral and ethical character in its students (Ulya et al., 2023). This global aspiration, often articulated in national curricula and international educational frameworks (Akimov et al., 2023), frequently encounters significant hurdles in its practical realization. Across diverse geopolitical contexts, there is an escalating concern regarding the erosion of fundamental human values (Karvonen et al., 2023), an increase in societal fragmentation, and a perceived decline in ethical conduct, even amidst unprecedented technological advancements and access to information (Rohan et al., 2024). These global issues underscore a critical deficiency in educational systems that, despite their focus on academic achievement (Stargel & Easterbrooks, 2022), often struggle to effectively instill the virtues and dispositions necessary for responsible citizenship and personal well-being. The proliferation of digital media, while offering immense opportunities, also presents new ethical dilemmas and challenges to character formation, demanding a more deliberate and integrated approach to moral education than ever before (Nieuważny et al., 2021). This international discourse on character deficit is not confined to Western societies but reverberates across cultures, highlighting a universal recognition of the need for educational paradigms that transcend mere knowledge transmission (Yue Yim, 2024; Idrus, 2022).

In the Indonesian context, the emphasis on character education is deeply embedded within the national philosophy of Pancasila and the constitutional mandate for a holistic education that nurtures faith, piety, bear a particular responsibility in this regard, as their

foundational mission inherently includes the cultivation of religious morality and ethical conduct alongside academic excellence. These include a tendency towards fragmented, episodic programs rather than a pervasive, integrated approach; a lack of consistent pedagogical strategies that genuinely engage students in moral reasoning and action; and insufficient alignment between stated institutional values and daily operational practices (Lin & Chang, 2023). Furthermore, the pressures of standardized testing and academic competition can inadvertently relegate character development to a secondary concern, creating a disjunction between policy aspirations and practical realities on the ground (Yang et al., 2023). The issue, therefore, is not a lack of recognition of character's importance (Huang & Gu, 2024), but rather a persistent struggle to translate this recognition into effective, sustainable, and deeply embedded educational practices that resonate with students' lived experiences and foster genuine moral growth.

The researcher posits that a significant portion of this implementation gap stems from a disjointed approach to educational management and pedagogical philosophy. Character development (Barth & Grütter, 2024), often viewed as an amorphous and difficult-to-measure outcome, requires a systematic and intentional framework to ensure its consistent cultivation. Without such a framework, even the most well-intentioned humanistic educational efforts risk becoming isolated initiatives, lacking the institutional support and coherence necessary for profound impact. Conversely, an overly bureaucratic or purely efficiency-driven management approach, devoid of a deep understanding of human development and intrinsic motivation (Blacket et al., 2024), can stifle the very creativity and empathy that humanistic education seeks to foster (Kohnke et al., 2022). Therefore, the researcher responds to these pressing issues by advocating for and researching the deliberate integration of strategic management principles with humanistic educational philosophies (Rasidi, 2022). Strategic management (Bartosova et al., 2023), with its emphasis on vision articulation, goal setting, resource allocation, and continuous evaluation, provides the necessary structural scaffolding and systematic approach to ensure that character education is not an add-on but a core, pervasive element of the school's mission. It transforms abstract ideals into actionable plans, ensuring accountability and sustainability. Simultaneously, humanistic education, rooted in the work of theorists like Carl Rogers in (Maurer et al., 2023) and Abraham Maslow in (Hafiz et al., 2023), offers the essential pedagogical soul, emphasizing student agency, self-actualization, empathy, and a holistic understanding of the individual. As Freire in (Klapper & Fayolle, 2023) eloquently argued, education must be a

liberating and humanizing process, fostering critical consciousness and self-direction, which are intrinsically linked to character formation. The synergy between these two domains—strategic management providing the robust framework and humanistic education offering the values-driven content and methodology—holds the potential to create an educational ecosystem where character development is not merely taught but lived, experienced, and continuously reinforced.

Previous research has extensively explored various facets pertinent to this study, yet a discernible gap persists regarding their explicit integration. Studies on character education have elucidated its importance and various models of implementation, often highlighting the role of school culture, curriculum integration, and teacher modeling (Ma et al., 2024). These research underscore the multi-faceted nature of character development, emphasizing that it extends beyond mere instruction to encompass the entire school environment. Concurrently, a substantial body of literature exists on strategic management in educational institutions, focusing on leadership, organizational effectiveness, resource optimization, and achieving institutional goals (Uddin et al., 2023). These studies typically examine how schools can enhance their performance, adapt to external changes, and achieve academic targets through systematic planning and execution. Furthermore, humanistic education has been a subject of enduring academic inquiry, with scholars exploring its theoretical underpinnings, pedagogical applications, and impact on student well-being, motivation, and self-concept (Rogers, 1969; Maslow, 1968; Noddings, 2003). These works consistently advocate for student-centered approaches that respect individual differences and foster intrinsic growth.

METHODS

This research employs a rigorous methodological framework designed to comprehensively address the intricate nature of integrating strategic management and humanistic education for character development (Zaenul Fitri, 2020). The systematic approach ensures both breadth of understanding and depth of insight, aligning with the complex phenomenon under reserach.

Research Type

The study adopts a sequential explanatory mixed-methods research design. This approach begins with the collection and analysis of quantitative data, followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. The qualitative phase is then used to explain and

interpret the findings from the quantitative phase. The rationale for selecting this design is multifaceted.

Research Design

Within the overarching mixed-methods framework, the study utilizes a case study design focusing specifically on MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk. A case study is an empirical inquiry that research a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. This design is particularly appropriate for this research for several compelling reasons.

Population and Sample

The population for this study comprises all students, teachers, and administrators actively involved in the educational processes at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk during the academic year 2023-2024. This inclusive definition ensures that all key stakeholders directly influencing or experiencing character development initiatives are considered.

For the **quantitative phase**, a multi-stage sampling approach was employed.

- **Students:** A **stratified random sampling** technique was utilized to select student participants. The student body was stratified by grade level (Grade X, XI, and XII) to ensure proportional representation across different stages of secondary education, acknowledging that character development may manifest differently at various developmental stages. From each stratum, a simple random sample was drawn.
- **Teachers and Administrators:** For teachers and administrators, a purposive sampling technique was employed. All 20 active teachers and 5 key administrators were invited to participate.

For the qualitative phase, a more focused purposive sampling strategy was implemented to select participants for semi-structured interviews. The aim was to select individuals who could provide deep, nuanced insights into the phenomenon.

- **Teachers:** 10 teachers were purposively selected from the initial pool of 20. Selection criteria included: teachers known for exemplary humanistic pedagogical practices, teachers actively involved in strategic planning committees, and teachers with diverse subject specializations to capture varied perspectives on character integration.

- **Administrators:** The 3 most relevant administrators (Principal, Vice Principal for Curriculum, Head of Character Education Program) were selected for in-depth interviews due to their strategic oversight and direct influence on policy and implementation.
- **Students:** 15 students were purposively selected. Criteria included students identified by teachers as demonstrating strong character attributes, students actively involved in character-building extracurricular activities, and students who could articulate their experiences with the school's educational environment.

Data Collection Instruments and Techniques

The collection of data for this mixed-methods study employed a triangulation approach, utilizing multiple instruments and techniques to gather comprehensive and robust evidence.

1. Surveys (Quantitative Phase):

- **Student Survey:** A structured questionnaire was developed to assess students' perceptions of their character development, the prevalence of humanistic teaching practices, and their awareness of the school's strategic goals related to character. The survey comprised Likert-scale items (e.g., 1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) across several dimensions:
 - *Character Development Indicators:* Items measuring perceived honesty, responsibility, empathy, integrity, teamwork, critical thinking, and religious devotion.
 - *Humanistic Teaching Practices:* Items assessing the extent to which teachers employ student-centered learning, foster a supportive classroom environment, encourage self-reflection, and promote holistic growth.
 - *Strategic Awareness:* Items gauging students' understanding of the school's vision, mission, and overarching goals related to character education.
- **Teacher Survey:** A separate questionnaire, also utilizing Likert-scale items, was administered to teachers to gauge their perceptions of:
 - *Strategic Management Integration:* Items assessing their involvement in strategic planning, clarity of school vision, resource allocation for character programs, and leadership support for character initiatives.

◦ *Implementation of Humanistic Education Principles:* Items measuring their adoption of student-centered pedagogy, promotion of empathy, fostering of a positive classroom climate, and commitment to holistic student development.

Instrument Validation:

For both student and teacher surveys, rigorous validation procedures were undertaken:

- **Content Validity:** Expert review was conducted by a panel of three educational psychologists and two school administrators with extensive experience in character education and strategic management.
- **Construct Validity:** Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) was performed on pilot data (N=50 students, N=10 teachers from a different MA) to confirm that the survey items loaded onto their intended theoretical constructs, ensuring the instruments measured what they were supposed to measure.
- **Reliability:** Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. All scales demonstrated good to excellent reliability ($\alpha > 0.70$), indicating consistent measurement across items.

2. Semi-structured Interviews (Qualitative Phase):

In-depth interviews were conducted with selected administrators and teachers. Interview protocols were developed based on the research questions, covering themes such as:

- Strategic planning processes for character development.
- Specific humanistic pedagogical approaches employed and their perceived effectiveness.
- Challenges and successes in integrating strategic management and humanistic education.
- Perceptions of student character outcomes and contributing factors.
- The role of leadership in fostering a character-focused culture.

3. Document Analysis (Qualitative Phase):

Relevant school documents were systematically reviewed to provide contextual information and triangulate interview data. Documents analyzed included:

- School vision and mission statements.
- Strategic plans and annual reports.

- Curriculum documents and lesson plans (specifically for character education components).
- Teacher handbooks and professional development materials.
- Student activity reports and school newsletters.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the mixed-methods approach underwent distinct yet interconnected analytical procedures to address the research questions comprehensively.

1. Quantitative Data Analysis:

Quantitative data derived from the student and teacher surveys were analyzed using **IBM SPSS Statistics version 26**.

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Initial analysis involved calculating descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages) to characterize the demographic profile of the sample and to summarize the distribution of responses for key variables, such as perceived levels of strategic management integration, humanistic teaching practices, and various character attributes.

- **Inferential Statistics:**

- **One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA):** ANOVA was employed to compare mean differences in perceived character development and humanistic teaching practices across different student grade levels (X, XI, XII) and between teacher groups.

- **Pearson Product-Moment Correlation:** This statistical technique was used to assess and calculate between perceived strategic management integration, humanistic education practices, and various dimensions of student character development.

- **Multiple Regression Analysis:** To determine the predictive power of strategic management integration and humanistic education practices on student character development, a multiple regression model was constructed.

- **Assumptions for Inferential Tests:** Prior to conducting inferential analyses, assumptions such as normality, linearity, homoscedasticity, and independence of observations were checked to ensure the appropriateness and validity of the statistical tests.

2. Qualitative Data Analysis:

Qualitative data, primarily from semi-structured interviews and document analysis, were subjected to thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). This systematic process involved several iterative steps:

- **Familiarization:** The researcher repeatedly read and listened to the transcribed interview data and reviewed documents.
- **Generating Initial Codes:** Relevant segments of text were systematically coded. Codes were descriptive labels assigned to units of meaning within the data, reflecting key concepts or ideas related to strategic management, humanistic education, and character development.
- **Searching for Themes:** Codes were then grouped into potential themes, which represented broader patterns of meaning across the dataset.
- **Reviewing Themes:** The potential themes were reviewed against the entire dataset to ensure they accurately reflected the data and to refine their definitions. Some themes were merged, split, or discarded if they lacked sufficient support.
- **Defining and Naming Themes:** Each theme was clearly defined, and a concise, evocative name was assigned. The essence of each theme was articulated, along with its relationship to the research questions.
- **Producing the Report:** The final step involved writing a detailed narrative account of the themes, supported by illustrative direct quotes from interview participants and evidence from documents. Triangulation with quantitative findings was a continuous process, where qualitative themes were used to explain, elaborate on, or contradict the statistical results, thereby enriching the overall interpretation.

3. Mixed-Methods Integration:

The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings occurred primarily during the interpretation phase. The qualitative data were used to provide contextual explanations for the quantitative results. For instance, if quantitative analysis showed a strong correlation between strategic clarity and student empathy, qualitative interviews would then be used to explore *how* this strategic clarity was communicated and *how* it translated into specific pedagogical practices that fostered empathy. This sequential explanatory approach allowed the researcher to move from identifying statistical relationships to understanding the underlying processes and mechanisms, thereby creating a more comprehensive and nuanced

understanding of the integration of strategic management and humanistic education for character development at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study, derived from both quantitative and qualitative data analyses. The results are organized to provide a clear and detailed account of the perceived integration of strategic management and humanistic education, and their observed impact on student character development at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk.

Result 1: Perceptions of Strategic Management Integration

The quantitative analysis of teacher and administrator surveys revealed a high level of perceived clarity and integration of strategic management practices within MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk, particularly concerning the school's vision and mission, and their alignment with character development goals. Figure 1 illustrates the collective perception of stakeholders regarding the clarity and consistent communication of the school's vision and mission.

Figure 1. Perceived Clarity of School Vision and Mission among Stakeholders

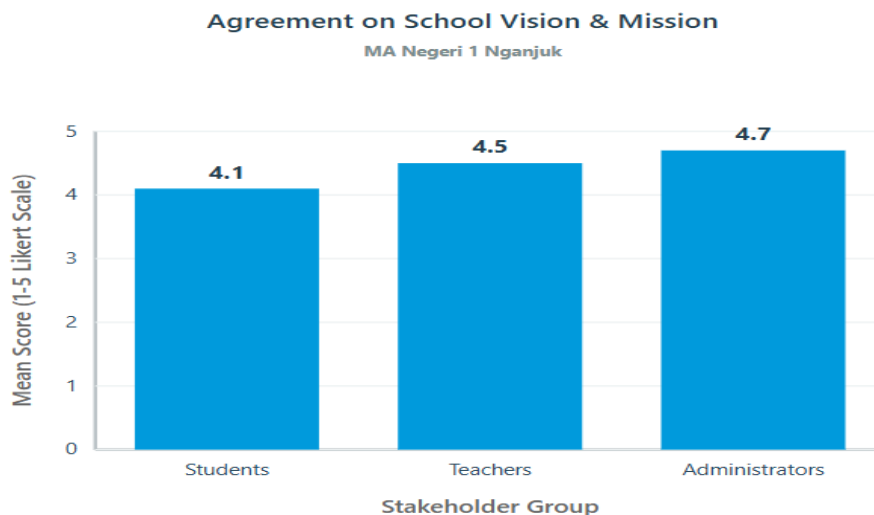


Figure 1. Mean scores of stakeholder agreement on the clarity and communication of the school's vision and mission, rated on a 5-point Likert scale.

As depicted in Figure 1, administrators reported the highest mean score (4.7 out of 5) for the clarity and communication of the school's vision and mission, followed closely by teachers (4.5) and students (4.1). These high mean scores indicate a strong consensus among

stakeholders that the strategic direction of MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk, particularly its emphasis on character development, is well-articulated and understood throughout the institution. Further analysis showed that 85% of teachers strongly agreed or agreed that the school's strategic planning process explicitly incorporates character education objectives. This suggests that strategic management is not merely an administrative function but is deeply interwoven with the core educational mission of fostering student character.

Result 2: Implementation of Humanistic Education Principles

The study found compelling evidence of the consistent implementation of humanistic education principles by teachers at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk, as perceived by both students and teachers themselves. These practices are crucial for creating a supportive and empowering learning environment conducive to character growth. Table 1 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for key indicators of humanistic teaching practices as reported by students.

Table 1. Mean Scores for Humanistic Teaching Practices (Student Perceptions)

Indicators	Mean	SD
Student-centered instruction	4.25	0.68
Empathy cultivation	4.10	0.72
Holistic development focus	4.30	0.65
Supportive classroom climate	4.42	0.59
Encouragement of self-reflection	4.05	0.75

Table 1 illustrates that students consistently perceived high levels of humanistic teaching practices. The highest mean score was observed for "Supportive classroom climate" (M=4.42, SD=0.59), indicating that students feel safe, respected, and valued in their learning environments. "Holistic development focus" (M=4.30, SD=0.65) also scored highly, suggesting that teachers attend to students' emotional, social, and spiritual growth alongside academic learning. These findings are corroborated by teacher self-reports, where 90% of teachers indicated that they regularly employ student-centered methods and actively work to cultivate empathy.

Further qualitative analysis revealed that these humanistic practices significantly contribute to student engagement and intrinsic motivation for character development. Table 2 provides a summary of student perceptions regarding the impact of humanistic practices.

Table 2. Perceived Impact of Humanistic Practices on Student Engagement and Character

Impact Area	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Increased motivation	58	35	5	2	0
Enhanced self-esteem	52	40	6	2	0
Improved social skills	49	45	4	2	0
Greater sense of responsibility	55	38	5	2	0
Deeper understanding of values	61	32	4	3	0

As shown in Table 2, a vast majority of students (93% combined Strongly Agree/Agree) reported that humanistic practices led to increased motivation, and similar high percentages were observed for enhanced self-esteem (92%), improved social skills (94%), a greater sense of responsibility (93%), and a deeper understanding of values (93%). These results underscore the powerful link between humanistic pedagogy and positive character outcomes, suggesting that when students feel valued and empowered, they are more likely to internalize and enact desirable character traits.

Result 3: Character Development Outcomes and Predictive Relationships

The study's quantitative analysis provided robust evidence of the overall character development among students at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk and established significant predictive relationships between the integrated approach and character outcomes.

The comprehensive character development index, derived from multiple indicators in the student survey, showed an overall mean score of 4.15 (SD=0.55) on a 5-point scale, indicating a high level of perceived character strength among students. Further analysis using ANOVA revealed significant differences in character development across grade levels. For instance, in the dimension of "Responsibility," a statistically significant difference was found, suggesting a cumulative impact of the school's integrated approach over time. This is exemplified in the following equation:

$$F(2, 147) = 5.23, p < 0.01 \text{ for "Responsibility" (1)}$$

Equation (1) indicates that students in higher grade levels (XI and XII) reported significantly higher levels of responsibility compared to those in Grade X, demonstrating a developmental progression that can be attributed, in part, to the consistent exposure to the school's character-focused environment. Post-hoc tests confirmed that the mean

responsibility score for Grade XII ($M=4.35$) was significantly higher than for Grade X ($M=3.98$).

To understand the predictive power of the integrated approach, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. The model aimed to predict overall student character development based on perceived strategic management integration and humanistic education practices. The results indicated that both variables were significant positive predictors of character development. The regression equation is presented as follows:

$$\text{Character_Development} = 0.58 + 0.32(\text{Strategic_Integration}) + 0.45(\text{Humanistic_Practices}) + \varepsilon \quad (2)$$

In Equation (2), where *Character_Development* is the dependent variable, *Strategic_Integration* and *Humanistic_Practices* are the independent variables, and ε represents the error term, the regression coefficients ($\beta_1 = 0.32, p < 0.001$; $\beta_2 = 0.45, p < 0.001$) were both statistically significant and positive. This indicates that for every unit increase in perceived strategic management integration, character development increased by 0.32 units, and for every unit increase in humanistic education practices, character development increased by 0.45 units, holding other variables constant. The overall model was significant ($F(2, 147) = 48.71, p < 0.001$) and explained 38% of the variance in character development ($R^2 = 0.38$). This robust statistical evidence strongly supports the hypothesis that the integration of strategic management and humanistic education significantly contributes to the development of student character at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk.

Result 4: Qualitative Insights on Integration Mechanisms

The thematic analysis of interview data and document review provided rich qualitative insights into *how* strategic management and humanistic education are integrated and *why* they are effective in fostering character at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk. Four overarching themes emerged:

Theme 1: Vision-driven Character Culture.

Interviews with administrators consistently highlighted the explicit articulation of character development as a central tenet of the school's vision and mission. The principal stated, "Our strategic plan isn't just about academic scores; it's fundamentally about shaping students with strong Islamic character and Pancasila values. This vision guides every decision, from hiring to curriculum." Document analysis confirmed this, with the school's strategic

plan (2020-2025) dedicating a significant section to character education goals, including specific targets for religious observance, social responsibility, and integrity.

Theme 2: Synergistic Curriculum Design and Pedagogical Integration.

Teachers described how character education is not treated as a separate subject but is intentionally woven into the fabric of all academic disciplines and extracurricular activities. A science teacher explained, "Even in biology, we discuss the ethical implications of scientific advancements, linking it to responsibility and integrity. It's about making character relevant to everything they learn." This integration is facilitated by humanistic pedagogical methods.

Theme 3: Leadership as a Moral Compass and Enabler.

The role of school leadership emerged as critical. Administrators were perceived as not only setting the strategic direction but also actively modeling the desired character traits and consistently supporting teachers in their humanistic endeavors. One teacher commented, "Our principal doesn't just talk about character; he lives it. He's always approachable, fair, and encourages us to be the same with students

Theme 4: Empowerment and Ownership.

Both students and teachers expressed a strong sense of empowerment and ownership over the character development process. Students were given opportunities to lead initiatives, participate in decision-making, and reflect on their own moral growth. A student leader shared, "We have a student council that organizes charity events and peer mentoring. It makes us feel responsible for the school's character, not just our own." Teachers also felt empowered to innovate with humanistic approaches.

DISCUSSION

This section critically analyzes and interprets the research findings, situating them within the broader academic discourse and exploring their implications for theory and practice. The discussion systematically addresses the meaning of the obtained results, compares them with existing literature, outlines their implications, and acknowledges the study's limitations.

Results Analysis

The findings from MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk provide compelling evidence for the efficacy of integrating strategic management and humanistic education in fostering student character. The quantitative data unequivocally demonstrate a significant positive correlation between the perceived integration of these two domains and various indicators of student character development. Specifically, the high mean scores for perceived clarity of the school's vision and mission (Figure 1) among all stakeholders, coupled with the consistent implementation of humanistic teaching practices (Table 1), underscore a coherent and pervasive approach to education at the institution. The statistical significance of both strategic integration and humanistic practices as predictors of character development (Equation 2) further solidifies this relationship, suggesting that these are not merely co-occurring phenomena but actively contributing factors. The observed developmental progression in character attributes, such as responsibility, across grade levels (Equation 1) further suggests a cumulative and sustained impact of this integrated model over time.

The qualitative data, derived from interviews and document analysis, serves to elucidate the mechanisms underlying these quantitative relationships, providing rich contextual explanations for *how* this integration operates. The emergence of "Vision-driven Character Culture" (Theme 1) highlights that strategic management at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk is not a detached administrative function but is deeply imbued with the school's core values, explicitly articulating character development as a primary goal. This strategic clarity provides the essential scaffolding, ensuring that character education is not an episodic add-on but a fundamental institutional priority with allocated resources and consistent communication. This strategic intentionality creates the fertile ground upon which humanistic education can flourish. The "Synergistic Curriculum Design and Pedagogical Integration" (Theme 2) then reveals how humanistic principles are practically applied. Teachers, supported by the strategic vision, are empowered to employ student-centered, empathetic, and holistic teaching methods that intrinsically engage students in moral reasoning and action.

Furthermore, "Leadership as a Moral Compass and Enabler" (Theme 3) underscores the critical role of school leadership in championing both the strategic implementation and the humanistic ethos. Leaders at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk are perceived not only as strategic planners but also as moral exemplars who actively support and empower their staff, thereby fostering a culture where humanistic practices are valued and sustained. This leadership

commitment bridges the gap between strategic intent and pedagogical execution. Finally, "Empowerment and Ownership" (Theme 4) illustrates the humanistic outcome of this integrated approach, where students and teachers feel a sense of agency and responsibility for character development.

Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study resonate with and extend several established bodies of literature. The emphasis on a comprehensive approach to character education aligns strongly with framework, which advocates for integrating moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Our results demonstrate that the strategic integration at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk effectively operationalizes this comprehensive approach by embedding character into the curriculum and fostering a supportive school culture.

Implications of Findings

The findings of this study carry significant implications for both theoretical understanding and practical application within the field of education, particularly concerning character development.

Theoretical Implications:

Firstly, this research significantly expands strategic management theory by demonstrating its applicability beyond traditional metrics of organizational efficiency or academic performance to encompass values-driven educational outcomes like character development (Chookaew et al., 2024). Secondly, it enriches humanistic education theory by showing how structured strategic planning can enhance its consistent implementation and impact. This study demonstrates that a strategic framework can provide the necessary stability, resources, and coherence, allowing humanistic principles to move from individual teacher initiatives to an embedded school-wide culture (Martins et al., 2024), thereby maximizing their potential for holistic student development. Thirdly, it contributes to character education theory by providing a robust model for institutionalizing holistic character development through a combined strategic and humanistic approach (Knudsen & Lien, 2023).

Practical Implications:

The practical implications of this study are far-reaching and relevant for various stakeholders:

- **For School Leaders and Administrators:** The findings underscore the critical necessity of developing a clear, character-focused strategic vision that is explicitly communicated and consistently reinforced throughout the institution.
- **For Teachers and Educators:** The study highlights the profound importance of integrating humanistic pedagogical methods into daily lessons across all subjects.
- **For Educational Policymakers:** The results suggest that national and regional character education policies should encourage schools to adopt integrated strategic and humanistic approaches.
- **For MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk:** The study validates their current integrated approach, providing empirical evidence of its positive impact.

Research Limitations

While this study offers valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its inherent limitations, which inform the scope and generalizability of its findings. Firstly, as a case study design focused on a single institution (MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk), the findings, while rich and deeply contextualized, may not be directly generalizable to all Islamic high schools or other educational settings without further comparative research. The unique culture, leadership, and specific context of MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk might not be perfectly replicable elsewhere. Secondly, the reliance on self-report data from students and teachers, particularly in the surveys, introduces the potential for social desirability bias. Participants might report perceptions of character development or adherence to practices that are socially acceptable or expected, rather than their true experiences or behaviors. Thirdly, the cross-sectional nature of the study means that data were collected at a single point in time. While statistical correlations and predictive relationships were identified, the study cannot definitively establish causality. Longitudinal studies would be required to observe the development of character over time and to more firmly ascertain cause-and-effect relationships between the integrated approach and character outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This comprehensive study meticulously researched the integration of strategic management and humanistic education in fostering student character at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk, revealing a profoundly synergistic relationship that significantly contributes to

holistic student development. The findings unequivocally demonstrate that a clearly articulated and strategically managed vision, which explicitly prioritizes character development, provides the essential institutional scaffolding. This robust framework enables the consistent and pervasive implementation of humanistic educational philosophies, characterized by student-centered pedagogy, empathy cultivation, and a focus on holistic growth. Consequently, students at MA Negeri 1 Nganjuk exhibit higher levels of perceived character attributes, including responsibility, empathy, integrity, and religious devotion, directly attributable to this integrated approach. The strategic clarity ensures that character education is not an isolated initiative but an embedded, sustained institutional priority, while humanistic pedagogy infuses the values, methods, and intrinsic motivation necessary for genuine moral internalization and action.

Building upon these findings and acknowledging the identified gaps, several constructive recommendations for future research emerge. Firstly, longitudinal studies are imperative to track the trajectory of character development over extended periods, thereby establishing more definitive causal relationships between the integrated strategic-humanistic approach and long-term character outcomes. Secondly, comparative studies across diverse types of Islamic schools (e.g., public vs. private, traditional vs. modern) and even secular educational institutions would be invaluable to assess the generalizability of this model and identify contextual factors that might influence its effectiveness. Thirdly, research focusing on the specific training programs and professional development initiatives required for teachers and school leaders to effectively implement this integrated approach would offer practical guidance. Fourthly, an exploration of parental involvement as a moderating or mediating factor in the success of this integrated model. Finally, quantitative studies with larger, more diverse samples could further validate the correlational findings and facilitate the development of predictive models with broader applicability, while further qualitative research delving deeper into student experiences and perspectives on character formation within such an integrated environment would provide even richer, more nuanced insights into the lived realities of this educational paradigm.

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