

The formation of islamic character through the student-led conference (SLC) program (in grade 9 smp insan cendekia madani boarding school development Serpong, South Tangerang City)

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Abstract

Purpose: This study aims to examine the implementation of the Student-Led Conference (SLC) program for grade 9 students at SMP Insan Cendekia Madani BSD, Ciater Village, Serpong District, South Tangerang City, analyze its role in developing Islamic character, and identify supporting and inhibiting factors.

Research methodology: The research employs a descriptive-qualitative approach, with data collected through observation, documentation, interviews with relevant stakeholders, and triangulation to ensure data validity.

Results: The findings reveal that the SLC program, implemented through structured stages, effectively fosters Islamic character traits such as independence and responsibility among students. Supporting factors include strong commitment and collaboration from the school, parents, and students. Inhibiting factors include parents' delays or absence during scheduled SLC sessions, difficulties in understanding students' presentations, and overlapping school programs requiring simultaneous completion by teachers.

Conclusions: The SLC program serves as an innovative strategy for character education, particularly in enhancing students' independence and responsibility in line with Islamic values. Successful implementation depends on consistent parental involvement, clear communication, and effective time management at the school level.

Limitations: The study is context-specific, focusing solely on grade 9 students at SMP ICM BSD, and may not fully represent other institutions or grade levels.

Contribution: This research provides empirical insights into integrating SLC into Islamic character education, offering practical recommendations for educators to optimize parental engagement and manage program scheduling effectively.

Keywords: *Character Education, Islamic Character Building, Islamic Education, Student-Led Conference, Values-Based Learning*

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1. Introduction

An important and fundamental indicator to support the progress of a country or nation, including Indonesia, is progress in education. Education is the main key for a country to excel in the global

competition. Education is considered the most strategic field for realizing national welfare (H. Chen, Chen, & Tian, 2022). The question is what kind of education makes a country or nation superior and at the forefront. The answer is education that directs and develops all students to have noble moral character and high reasoning abilities so that they can compete and contribute at the world level. Regarding independent behavior in learning, we can find it in Ministerial Regulation number 41 of 2007 which states that: "The attitude of independent learning is an attitude possessed by individuals to learn on their own initiative in an effort to internalize knowledge without depending on or receiving direct guidance from others." This explanation is the main indicator of the importance of directing students to form their independence, in this case, learning independence.

An independent individual is one who fulfills the realization of one of the functions and goals of national education. If a student as an individual already has their own initiative in learning or in doing good (Alfioni & Yuliani, 2022; Anwar, 2023; Jarkawi, 2022). Sheikh Salim bin Sumair Al-Hadlrami, in his book *Safi natunnajah*, explains that there are three indicators that a child has reached puberty. First, the age of 15 years for both boys and girls according to the calculation of the Hijri or Qamariyah calendar. Second, sperm is released after the age of nine for both boys and girls. Third, menstruation is a special sign for girls who have reached puberty (J. Chen, Liu, Dai, & Wang, 2023; Hadhramiy, 2011; Morris, Koutsouris, Stentiford, & Bremner, 2025; Oldham & McLoughlin, 2025; Rosmayanti, Sukmawati, Mohamed, Sujarwo, & Amin, 2024; Siswanto, 2024).

In Japan and the United Kingdom [UK], students study science, social behavior, and culture and are accustomed to using English as a global communication tool. Furthermore, in Jordan, students study the science of the Qur'an and Arabic while trying to use Arabic as a means of communication. On the other hand, students are also given the opportunity to share their experiences and Indonesian culture with their new friends in these countries. SMP ICM BSD is also very concerned with the development and formation of the character of its students. Among the characters developed for its students are independent and responsible characters. To grow and develop students who have independent and responsible characters, one of the strategies implemented by this school is the Student-Led Conference (SLC) program. SLC is one of the main programs and is continuously carried out at this school, even becoming one of the school's unique (special) programs. This program is implemented twice in a school year (September and March).

The information we obtained from this school indicates that the main purpose of implementing this program is to help students develop independent and responsible characters (Hermawati, Rohaeni, Nurhayati, & Ansori, 2021; Ramadhan, 2022; Walker & Thoma, 2017). From all the stages that exist, it can be understood and concluded that the peak stage of SLC activity is when all students without exception present their learning outcomes at school or in the dormitory to their respective parents, and they discuss the obstacles and support needed from their parents (Pangestu & Hariri, 2022; Syarif & Riza, 2022; Wiranti, 2021). At this stage, students independently and responsibly convey their level of learning progress to their parents (Sri kuning, 2021).

Thus, students will grow and develop their Islamic character in the form of independence and responsibility, as expected. Based on these initial findings, the researcher felt challenged and interested in conducting further research in the form of a thesis. With this research, the researcher hopes to find objective data on the pattern of Islamic character formation, in the form of independence and responsibility of SMP ICM BSD students through the Student Led-Conference (SLC) program and then present it comprehensively as information that can be scientifically accounted for. The researcher finally gave the title to this study as follows: "**Formation of Islamic Character Through the Student-Led Conference (SLC) Program (In Class 9 of SMP Insan Cendekia Madani Boarding School Development Serpong, South Tangerang City).**"

2. Literature Review

2.1. Character Education

According to the online Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), character refers to psychological traits, morals, or manners that distinguish a person from others. So far, teachers have taught character education to their students. However, the majority still focus on theory and concepts only, not reaching the realm of methodology and its application in real life. The four aspects of the learning process, namely concept (hakikat), theory (syariat), method (tarikat), and application (makrifat), should be implemented well. If teachers have taught character education comprehensively through these 4 (four) aspects, then the meaningfulness of the character education they teach will be more effective. In terms of terminology, Thomas Lickona defined character. According to him, character is "A reliable inner disposition to respond to situations in a morally good way." (A reliable tendency of the heart to respond to situations in a morally good way).

Furthermore, Lickona added, "A character so conceived has three interrelated parts: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral behavior." (The character that is understood has three interrelated parts: moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral behavior). According to Lickona, noble character (good character) includes knowledge of goodness (moral knowing), which then creates a commitment (intention) towards goodness (moral feeling), and finally does good (moral behavior). In other words, character refers to a series of knowledge (cognitive), attitudes (attitudinal), motivations (motivational), behaviors (behavioral), and skills (skill-based) (Izzati, Bachri, Sahid, & Indriani, 2019; Kurniawan & Fitriyani, 2023; Lickona, 2013; Sarkadi, Casmana, Hisyam, & Wardatussa'idah, 2022).

2.2. Character Education in Islamic Perspective

Islamic character education is a conscious and serious effort by teachers to teach Islamic values to their students. Islamic character education has become an educational movement that supports the social, emotional, and ethical development of students. It is a proactive effort carried out in the closest environment of students, both schools and communities, to help students develop the main core of other Islamic values such as caring, honesty, diligence, fairness, tenacity, fortitude, responsibility, and respect for oneself and others (Gunawan & Hapsari, 2023; Meriyati, Siminto, & Wahid, 2024; Samani, 2019).

2.3. Urgency of Islamic Character; Independence and Responsibility for Students

For someone with an independent character, independence will play an important role in their future, namely making a better life, not always depending on help from others, and being able to solve problems independently. In the school environment, for example, students with independent characters are those who can show attitudes and behaviors that are not easily dependent on others in completing their tasks. This character is reflected in their actions and attitudes in life independently when carrying out personal tasks, getting used to controlling and managing themselves, and being ready to get further tasks for their success in the future (Hudiyono, 2012; Suyono, Nurhuda, & Sari, 2023). Thus, independence is an important aspect of personality for students. Anyone who has lived this life will never be free from the trials and challenges. Individuals with independent character are relatively able to face all the problems they face. Because independent individuals do not depend on others, they will always try to face and solve existing problems with their beliefs (Pratiwi, Khairunnisa, Ramadhandy, & Savitri, 2024; Yuliarti, Pangabean, Farida, & Gulo, 2023).

2.4. Program Student-Led Conference (SLC)

Lyn Le Countryman and Merrie Schroeder explain SLC as follows: "A student-led conference is a preplanned meeting in which students demonstrate responsibility for their academic performance by providing a review of their work for parents and teachers. The students lead the conference by presenting work samples and discussing their learning, strengths, weaknesses, and progress toward their goals." (Le Countryman & Schroeder, 1996; Listyarti, 2012). The SLC is a meeting between students, their parents, and their teachers at a certain time that has been planned in advance. During the meeting, students present a portfolio of their learning results/work and discuss their learning achievements with their parents. Students even convey their strengths, weaknesses, and expectations of support from their

parents to them so that their learning achievements are better and increase. In this activity, students facilitated the meeting from start to finish. With this explanation, it can be stated that SLC is a form of activity intended for students in the form of presentations and discussions in front of their parents and teachers. This SLC activity provides an opportunity for students to take the main role as active, independent, and responsible students. Regardless of who the students are, they will learn better when they are empowered with a device or mechanism and or structured activities that can assess their overall learning process both at school and in the dormitory, as well as assess their attitudes towards learning itself.

2.5. Objectives of the Student-Led Conference (SLC) Program

Student-led conferences or meetings differ from traditional parent-teacher conferences or meetings that are usually held in almost all schools. In SLC, students directly and actively participate in all stages of the conference (before, during, and after). Under these conditions, SLC has certain goals for students. By understanding the explanation of these stages, it is concluded that SLC aims to condition students to lead communication with their respective parents independently and responsibly, which shows the progress of what they have learned during a certain time. Students also receive feedback from their parents and teachers about their strengths, weaknesses, and goals for future improvement (Brown, 2020; Lambert, 2016; Şişman & Bahadır, 2021).

2.6. Formation of Islamic Character; Independence and Responsibility Through the Student-Led Conference (SLC) Program.

Based on the explanation related to the objectives and benefits of the SLC program that have been described previously, it can be concluded that Islamic character in the form of independent character and student responsibility can be developed and formed through SLC activities. SLC that is carried out properly according to its stages can help students grow and become independent and responsible, because they are involved in all stages of the learning process. Under these conditions, students feel that all stages of learning that are currently being carried out are essentially the best provisions that are being prepared for them in the form of knowledge and attitudes that must be possessed by someone to become a good person in the future. Patti Kinney, principal of Talent Middle School in Oregon stated that the SLC program helps students to accept and grow responsibility for their learning. Hayden further stated that preparation time is valuable when conducting SLC. This means that independence is needed from students to manage their time effectively and efficiently, especially when a teacher hears or finds a student who has difficulty explaining what he has learned from a given assignment and is then responsible for the score/value he achieves to be able to convey to his parents.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Type, Place and Time of Research

This study used a qualitative approach to describe the problems and focus of the study. The researcher chose SMP ICM BSD, Serpong District, South Tangerang City, Banten Province as the research location. SMP ICM BSD Tangerang Selatan is a boarding school under the auspices of the South Tangerang City Education and Culture Office, with a leading reputation among other boarding schools. SMP ICM BSD Tangerang Selatan always strives to be at the forefront of education by implementing many excellent programs. The research period was January 2022-February 2023.

3.2. Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Researchers can conclude that interviews are a tool for collecting data as well as proving information or statements obtained from informants. The informants for this interview were the Vice Principal for Curriculum, Guidance and Counseling Teacher, Homeroom Teacher 9, and Parents of Class 9 Students, and six Class 9 Students.

3.3. Data Analysis Techniques

This data analysis begins with the process of reviewing the collected results obtained by the researchers through interview techniques, observations, and other supporting documents related to the implementation of Student-Led Conference at SMP ICM BSD.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Implementation of the Student-Led Conference (SLC) Program at SMP ICM BSD, Ciater Village, Serpong District, South Tangerang City

4.1.1. Preparation

The initial step taken at this stage is that all 9th grade students without exception identify subjects with topics that they have previously studied in one term (around three months) accompanied by their respective portfolios. Furthermore, 9th grade students collect work samples/portfolios to choose the best before being presented to their parents during the SLC activities according to the set schedule. Information related to this stage was also revealed by M. Raffah Ardiansyah when the researcher interviewed the person concerned. "At the initial stage of the SLC, we are required to make presentation slides containing what material has been studied during one term. We then present our strengths, weaknesses, and evaluations during that term. The goal is to evaluate our weaknesses and plan for improvements in the future. We also have to present the presentation slides independently in front of our teachers and parents, so that this can increase our self-confidence and improve our public speaking skills.

This stage of choosing is one of the stages that must be carried out by students. At this stage, students are encouraged to have the ability to overcome various problems faced, whether easy or difficult, pleasant or unpleasant. The ability to overcome various problems is one form of intellectual independence, as explained by Robert Havighurst, as quoted by Desmita, that independence is divided into four forms: 1) emotional independence, 2) economic independence, 3) intellectual independence, and 4) social independence (Desmita, 2009). With the strength in the form of potential that they have, students will be supported by parents and guided by teachers so that they can improve their deficiencies and/or weaknesses. Therefore, the students concerned will focus on their strengths, and ultimately, there will be continuous improvement in the students from their weaknesses. The next stage of SLC preparation is that all students complete self-evaluations by filling in their work habits and social skills. The format of this form is shown in the following image:

In the first form, the students explained their plans for learning goals that they wanted to achieve or improve in the future (next term). In the second form that has been completed, students convey their hopes to their parents and/or teachers so that they can provide support to them in the form of prayers and the best motivation, so that they can achieve and/or improve learning goals in the next period with the best results. After students have completed all the forms that have been mentioned, students, guided by teachers or homeroom teachers, do SLC role-playing exercises with their friends (some are students, parents, and teachers). This is necessary so that students are more prepared, independent, and responsible in presenting their SLC in front of their parents.

4.1.2. Formation of Islamic Character; Independent and Responsible Through the Student-Led Conference (SLC) Program for 9th grade students of SMP ICM BSD, Ciater Village, Serpong District, South Tangerang City

The main characteristic of a person with an Islamic character is independence, which is the ability to fulfill their own needs with their own efforts and not depend on others. In the school environment, independent students can complete their own tasks and responsibilities and demonstrate behavior that is not easily dependent on others. The SLC program implemented at SMP ICM BSD is a program that is carried out every 3 (three) months (mid-semester) in both semesters 1 (one) and 2 (two) in each academic year for all students from grades 7 (seven) to 9 (nine).

Based on the information that the researcher has previously described in the point of implementing the SLC program at SMP ICM BSD, supplemented with observation and documentation data, interviews were conducted with 9 (nine) informants that the researcher had previously determined, so that data was obtained that was proven to be true, because the data obtained by the researcher was compared between one informant and another. Researchers compared data or information obtained from students, parents, and schools regarding the formation of independent and responsible characters through the Student-Led Conference (SLC) program at SMP ICM BSD.

4.1.3. Formation of Independent Character

The main objective of holding SLC activities at SMP ICM BSD is to implement the aim to grow and develop students with independent characters. Grade 9 students recognized the implementation of this program and believed that it could help them form independent characters. This information and these findings were obtained from the collection of observation data, documentation, and interviews that were conducted by researchers with the following informants: "In our opinion as parents of grade 9 students, the SLC program can form children's independence, because they are given space and opportunity to prepare reports on the results of their own learning process."

This explanation was provided by Lia Putuanda (one of the parents of grade 9) when asked about indicators of the formation of students' independent character through the SLC program. Due to her busy schedule and time constraints, the interview process with her could not be carried out by the researchers face-to-face but online via the Zoom application. According to information provided by Lia Putuanda, the indicator of student independence formed through the SLC program is that students prepare their own reports on the results of the learning process or achievements at school or in the dormitory to their respective parents, according to the guidelines set by the school. This explanation is in line with the opinions of other parents.

"As parents whose children live in dormitories, of course, we cannot meet all the time. For us, the SLC moment is when we see our children preparing something independently to present in front of us as their parents. We also see how they convince themselves to have the courage to communicate the things they have learned while studying at school with us. With the SLC program, these two indicators are what we see forming independence in our children." According to information provided by Rahmat Dzulfikry, the implementation of the SLC program forms student independence with three indicators:

- 1) Before the SLC, students independently prepare SLC invitations to be sent to their respective parents via email.
- 2) In the SLC preparation process, students independently prepare materials or information that they have studied (both those that they have mastered and those that are still difficult) to be delivered to their respective parents.
- 3) Students independently conduct self-evaluations (related to attitudes and learning outcomes).

Daffa Almursyid Sujana, a 9th grade student, stated that the implementation of the SLC program fosters the character of independent students. The growth of independent character is based on indicators of students who can communicate their learning outcomes to their parents. From several data and information that have been explained by the informants, the researcher found data and information that showed that the implementation of the SLC program in accordance with the stages that have been set is able to shape the character of independent students. Thus, the researcher concluded that the SLC program at SMP ICM BSD, along with its stages, is able to shape the character of independent students, as evidenced by their full confidence in completing the tasks given, their ability to make their own decisions, and their initiative to solve the problems they face themselves.

4.1.4. Formation of Responsible Character

The implementation of the SLC program at SMP ICM BSD, in addition to aiming to foster and shape students who have independent characters, also aims to shape the character of responsible students. This information and these findings were obtained from the collection of observation data, documentation, and interviews with several informants, which are described as follows: "There are two indicators of responsibility that I found in my child when implementing this SLC Program: responsibility before SLC and responsibility after SLC. Before the SLC, my child must write down what they have learned. He must think hard that many things have been learned during a certain time and must be accounted for in front of their parents. After the SLC, my child must fulfill the promise made during the SLC. The promise to make improvements according to the notes of deficiencies that are owned."

According to the information provided, Putuanda found that in the implementation of the SLC program, students are conditioned with the timeline and dateline from the school, so that they are formed with a

character of responsibility to be able to complete the tasks given according to the available time allocation. Furthermore, Triani, a guidance and counseling teacher at ICM BSD Middle School stated, "The implementation of the SLC program can really shape responsible students because they must be able to explain what they have done in that term (certain period) to their parents. Indicators of responsibility obtained by students include when they prepare themselves to learn, are actively involved in all learning processes, and are able to control their respective learning outcomes." The statement from this student informant provides clearer information to researchers that the SLC program, which is designed in such a way according to the stages that have been set, is able to shape students to have a responsible character, with the main indicator being that students have the ability to be ready to accept the consequences of what they have done.

Thus, the researcher concludes that the implementation of the SLC program at SMP ICM BSD along with its stages, in addition to being able to form independent characters in students, is also able to form responsible student characters with the main indicators that can be measured, namely: a) they show commitment in completing the tasks given on time. 2) they have the ability to complete the tasks given according to the best standards, and 3) they have the courage to take risks for all decisions that have been made. The findings of the data and information in the form of documentation, observations, interview results, and triangulation show that the implementation of the SLC program for grade 9 students of SMP ICM BSD is able to form independent and responsible student characters.

4.2. Analysis of Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of the Student-Led Conference Program for Grade 9 Students of SMP ICM BSD, Ciater Village, Serpong District, South Tangerang City

The implementation of a program cannot be separated from the existence of supporting and inhibiting factors. Supporting factors are all factors that encourage, support, facilitate, help, and accelerate the occurrence of something. Inhibiting factors are all factors that inhibit (make it slow) or even hinder and hold back the occurrence of something. Based on the findings related to the supporting factors for the implementation of the SLC program at SMP ICM BSD expressed by several informants, the researcher determined the results of his analysis as follows:

4.2.1. School Support to Support the Successful Implementation of the SLC Program

The support provided includes the following:

- a. Teachers play the role of facilitators who guide students to develop an independent and responsible attitude.
- b. The availability of adequate facilities in the school environment, including classrooms complete with tables and chairs and equipped with AC, Laptops, an adequate internet network, LCD Projectors, Screen Displays.

4.2.2. There is support from the parents of students, including:

1. The presence and involvement of parents who are willing to pay special attention to the achievements of student character development.
2. The role of parents who are good listeners when students deliver their presentations and are willing to appreciate each achievement of student learning outcomes. The following is documentation related to the role of parents in the implementation of the SLC program at SMP ICM BSD:

However, researchers also found that there were inhibiting factors in the implementation of the SLC program at SMP ICM BSD, which were expressed by several informants. Furthermore, researchers determined the results of the analysis of the inhibiting factors as follows.

1. For students, parents' lateness to attend school according to the predetermined schedule is a factor that inhibits the success of the SLC program.
2. Parents find it difficult to understand the material and series of information presented by children during the SLC, so that this condition interferes with the effectiveness of the SLC program.
3. For teachers at school, the large number of programs that must be completed at almost the same time requires effective time management. In addition, the behavior of some students who like to delay completing the tasks given has an impact on students' readiness to carry out the SLC program.

Thus, from the results of the analysis of the supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of the SLC program, researchers can conclude that the main supporting factor for the implementation of the SLC program is the active involvement of three parties, namely schools, students, and parents. The main inhibiting factor is the delay or even absence of parents in the implementation of the SLC program.

5. Conclusion and Suggestions

5.1. Conclusion

The thesis entitled "Formation of Islamic Character Through Student-Led Conference (SLC) Program for 9th grade students of SMP Insan Cendekia Madani Boarding School Development (SMP ICM BSD) Serpong, South Tangerang City" which the researcher has discussed in the previous description and explanation, can be concluded as follows:

1. The implementation of the Student-Led Conference (SLC) program for students at SMP ICM BSD Serpong, South Tangerang City, in practice can be one of the breakthroughs in innovative programs in schools that make students have Islamic characters, namely independent and responsible in their learning process and can convey directly to parents about the achievements of learning outcomes more completely, clearly, communicatively, and easily understood by parents.
2. The Student-Led Conference (SLC) program for 9th grade students at SMP ICM BSD Serpong, South Tangerang City, is one of the alternative "good practice" programs carried out by the school as an effort to form the Islamic character of students in carrying out their learning process as well as preparation efforts made to report the results of the learning process to their respective parents.
3. In implementing the Student-Led Conference (SLC) program at SMP ICM BSD, there are supporting and inhibiting factors. The supporting factor is the existence of good support in preparing for the Student-Led Conference (SLC) program from the beginning by all parties, namely the school, parents, and students themselves. The inhibiting factors are as follows: 1) Parents' lateness in attending school according to the predetermined schedule, so that time utilization is not optimal. 2) Parents find it difficult to understand the materials presented by their children during the SLC, so they hope that the materials and information learned and understood by the students can be conveyed before the SLC. 3) For teachers at school, the number of programs that must be completed at almost the same time requires effective and efficient time management, in addition to the behavior of some students who like to delay completing assignments, which affects the readiness of students in implementing the SLC program.

5.2. Suggestion

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, here are some suggestions from researchers that can be conveyed to related parties, namely the government through related agencies and SMP ICM BSD Tangerang Selatan and for other researchers who are interested in conducting further research related to the formation of independent and responsible characters through the Student-Led Conference (SLC) program.

1. For the government, through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, which is in charge of elementary and secondary education, the results of this study can be used as a reference to strengthen character education for students in schools through innovative programs. In this case, the SLC program is implemented so that students can be independent and responsible in directly conveying to their parents a description of the achievements of their learning outcomes in a more complete, clear, communicative, and easy manner for parents to understand.
2. For SMP ICM BSD, the SLC program that has been implemented can continue to be improved and enhanced to strengthen the independence and responsibility of students in carrying out their learning process as well as when reporting the results of the learning process. It is expected to be more optimal so that the school's hopes of realizing its grand vision of producing future leaders with Islamic character are realized.
3. For other researchers interested in conducting further research on the formation of independent character and responsibility through the Student-Led Conference (SLC) program, there is still room to research the effectiveness of the formation and strengthening of independent character and responsibility of students in schools as one way to actively participate in growing, developing, and strengthening the character education of the generation of leaders of civilization in the future.

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