

Construction of Humanistic Character thru IPM Extracurricular Programs: A Case Study at Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta High School

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the process and mechanisms of constructing students' humanistic character, including empathy, tolerance, and social concern, thru the extracurricular program of the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM) at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Yogyakarta. The research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of value internalization within the context of student organizations. Data were collected thru participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The research results show that the construction of humanistic character occurs thru the integration of authentic social experiences, organizational deliberation mechanisms, participatory habituation, and the exemplary behavior of mentors and administrators. Empathy is constructed thru direct involvement in social activities; tolerance is formed thru deliberative practices and collective conflict resolution; while social concern is reinforced thru the equitable distribution of roles and responsibilities. These findings affirm that IPM functions as a space for the construction of contextual and sustainable humanistic values within the framework of progressive Islamic education.

I. INTROUCTION

Character education is a strategic agenda in the development of human resources with integrity and nobility. The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture has formulated 18 character values as the foundation for student development, including religiosity, tolerance, responsibility, and social concern [1]. However, in contemporary social reality, various phenomena such as declining empathy, increasing intolerance, and low social concern among students indicate that the internalization of these values has not yet been fully effective [2]. Schools still tend to emphasize academic achievements over the strengthening of the affective and social dimensions of students [3]. In this context, humanistic character education becomes a relevant approach [4]. Humanistic education places human dignity at the center of educational orientation, with an emphasis on the development of empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility as core values [5]. Theoretically, this approach aligns with the humanistic perspective that emphasizes the holistic actualization of individual potential, whether intellectual, emotional, or spiritual [6]. The principle of student-centered learning as articulated by Carl R. Rogers in Freedom to Learn [7] reinforces the urgency of education that humanizes learners as active subjects in the character-building process.

In the Islamic perspective, humanistic character has strong normative legitimacy. The Qur'an emphasizes the dignity of humans (QS. al-Isra'/17: 70) and the differentiation of human moral qualities (QS. Fatir/35: 32), which suggests that education serves to enhance the degree of humanity thru the cultivation of faith and morals [8]. The values of empathy and social concern are also emphasized in QS. ali-Imran/3: 134, which praises behaviors of sharing, self-control, and forgiveness. This concept aligns with the idea of religious humanism, which integrates universal human values and divine values [9]. On the other hand, student organizations have strategic potential as a medium for internalizing character values because they provide spaces for participatory learning and real social experiences [10]. One of the organizations that has an orientation toward the cadetship of Islamic and humanitarian values is the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM) [11]. However, research that specifically maps how IPM programs contribute to the formation of humanistic character dimensions, particularly empathy, tolerance, and social concern, is still relatively limited and has not been contextually analyzed at the educational unit level.

Unlike previous research, which generally positions student organizations as media for normative or descriptive character building, this study places IPM as a space for social construction that systematically shapes humanistic character thru the integration of authentic social experiences, deliberative consultation mechanisms, and egalitarian participation distribution. The novelty of this research lies in the analysis of constructive mechanisms that explain how empathy, tolerance, and social concern are not merely instilled but built thru a structured and repetitive organizational culture within the context of progressive Islamic education. Thus, this study expands the study of character education from a normative approach to a socio-constructivist approach that is contextual at the level of educational units. Based on the research gap, this study aims to examine the process and mechanisms of constructing students' humanistic character thru the extracurricular program of the Muhammadiyah Student Association (IPM) at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Yogyakarta. The focus of the research is directed toward three main dimensions, namely empathy, tolerance, and social concern, to understand how these values are built thru the contextual and sustainable dynamics of student organizations.

II. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach [12] with a case study design [13] to gain an in-depth understanding of the management of the IPM program. The research was conducted at SMA Muhammadiyah 3 Yogyakarta, which was purposively selected due to its active and sustainable student organization activities, making it relevant to the research focus [14]. The research informants consisted of nine individuals, including the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, the IPM advisor, IPM administrators, and IPM members, selected using purposive sampling based on direct involvement in IPM activities.

Table 1. Informant Data

Informant	Number	Code
Principal	1	KS
Student Affairs Deputy	1	WK
IPM Advisor	1	PB
IPM Management	3	PI
IPM Members	3	AI

Data collection was conducted thru participatory observation of IPM activities, in-depth interviews, and documentation in the form of activity reports and organizational documents. The research procedure includes the stages of preparation, data collection, and data analysis [15].

Data analysis uses the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the data is tested thru source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking with research informants [16]. Data reduction is carried out thru the processes of selection, focusing, and categorization of information according to the research theme. Data presentation is carried out in the form of descriptive narratives and thematic tables to facilitate interpretation. Conclusion drawing is carried out in stages thru a continuous verification process until credible findings are obtained. The validity of the data is tested thru source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checks with research informants.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research findings indicate that students' humanistic character is not formed instantly, but rather reconstructed thru a systematic social process within the IPM organizational culture. This construction process occurs thru interaction, habituation, exemplary behavior, and deliberative mechanisms integrated into the organization's work programs.

IPM as an Arena for Constructing Empathy thru Social Experience

Research findings indicate that students' empathy in IPM is not formed thru verbal transmission of values, but rather thru intense and repeated social experiences. A member stated that while conducting a survey of the social service location, he "felt a high level of empathy toward those in need and was motivated to ensure the program could provide real help." (Interview, November 14, 2026). This statement emphasizes that empathy develops thru direct involvement, not merely conceptual understanding. Theoretically, this finding reinforces Carl R. Rogers' idea that authentic relational experiences form the foundation of individual affective development [17]. The empathy that emerges in IPM does not stop at moral feeling, but continues to moral action, as conceptualized by Lickona [18]. Thus, IPM functions as a space of praxis that bridges the gap between moral knowledge and social action [11], which becomes a gap often criticized in formal character education for being too normative. Furthermore, the internalization strategy explained by the wise principal, "through

value instillation, the creation of a practice environment, and habit formation" (Interview, December 17, 2025), indicates a systematic pattern in line with Bandura's social learning theory [19]. This means that empathy in IPM is not the result of emotional spontaneity, but rather a product of structured social construction [20]. In the Islamic perspective, this process reflects the values of mercy and collective responsibility, so that the humanistic and religious dimensions are integrated in practice, not merely rhetorical [9]. According to the Majelis Dikdasmen PP Muhammadiyah in the Guidelines for Progressive Islamic Character Education, the strategy for internalizing values also involves creating a conducive school culture [21]. In this case, IPM functions as a miniature of an intensive school culture where humanistic values can be practiced and reinforced thru daily social interactions [22]. Thus, IPM activities play a crucial role in shaping students' empathy values thru direct experiences, exemplary behavior, and continuous habituation, so that empathy is not only understood conceptually but also expressed in real social attitudes and actions.

Construction of Tolerance thru Organizational Deliberation Mechanisms

Unlike the approach that views tolerance as a personal attitude, the findings of this research indicate that tolerance in IPM is formed thru organizational structural mechanisms, particularly thru deliberation and collective decision-making. The head of IPM explained that conflicts are resolved thru direct discussions involving all parties, while decisions are made thru open deliberations. (Interview, November 13, 2026). This shows that tolerance does not arise naturally, but is built thru the design of social interactions that allow differences of opinion to be managed constructively [23]. In other words, IPM provides a democratic micro-system within the school environment. These findings support Rogers' theory on the importance of an environment that accepts and values individuals as a prerequisite for healthy personality development [24].

However, this study also found challenges, such as members resigning or internal conflicts. The IPM mentor emphasized that the situation should be turned into a moment of reflection and joint evaluation. Here, tolerance is not understood as permissiveness, but rather as a balance between acceptance and responsibility. Critically, this shows that tolerance is effective when accompanied by accountability mechanisms, not just inclusivity slogans. (Interview, December 17, 2025). In the normative perspective of Islam, as emphasized in QS. Ali-Imran/3:159, deliberation not only commands dialog but also the ethics of gentleness and self-control [25]. Thus, IPM does not merely teach tolerance, but constructs a deliberative culture based on religious values. In line with the value of *tasamuh* (tolerance) in Islam Progressive does not only mean allowing differences, but actively creating space for inclusive dialog and joint decision-making [21]. Furthermore, Nurcholish Madjid stated that humanistic Islamic education is an education that is open, values reason, and encourages tolerance and critical thinking [26]. In the context of this research, tolerance is an important component of humanistic character because it supports the creation of a harmonious and democratic social environment [27]. In the context of IPM, freedom of expression is maintained while still

upholding discipline and collective responsibility. This is in line with Hadirman's view on the recognition of each member's voice, which also aligns with the values of freedom and recognition in critical humanism [28]. Therefore, IPM activities play a role in shaping students' values of tolerance thru deliberation processes, appreciation of differing opinions, and collective decision-making that fosters mutual respect and shared responsibility.

Construction of Social Concern thru Participation and Role Distribution

Social concern is the most concrete dimension of the humanistic character formed in IPM. Social service programs, donations, and disaster visits are not merely ceremonial but become transformational experiences for students. A member stated that the social service at a school in great need became the most memorable experience because it made them aware of the reality of social inequality. (Interview, November 13, 2025) Analytically, these findings indicate that confrontational experiences with social realities serve as a catalyst for the formation of moral awareness [29]. This is in line with Maslow's self-actualization theory, where individuals achieve optimal development when they are able to make meaningful contributions to their environment [30]. Thus, IPM facilitates the transition of students from self-orientation to social orientation. Interestingly, the participation rotation strategy implemented by IPM demonstrates the principle of distributive justice in organizational practice. Social concern is not monopolized by a handful of active students, but rather distributed as a collective responsibility. (Interview, November 11, 2025) This reinforces the egalitarian dimension in line with Islamic principles of equality and ta'awun [21].

Critically, this approach addresses the common weaknesses of student organizations that are often elitist and exclusive. In the context of Islam, this aligns with QS. al-Ma'un/107: 1-7, which signifies everything beneficial, including the small things needed by people in their daily lives, as well as good deeds such as providing assistance to fellow humans in small matters. If the meaning is expanded, al-Ma'un means help or assistance in every difficulty, so this surah describes several aspects related to social concern [31]. Moreover, in line with the principles of justice and egalitarianism (everyone is equal) in Islam, as reflected in QS. al-Hujurat/49: 13, the equality of opportunity to contribute reflects the understanding that social concern is the responsibility of everyone, not just certain individuals [32]. In line with Suripto's research, which explains that IPM plays a role in instilling Islamic moral and ethical values thru planned and meaningful social activities [33]. Thus, IPM activities concretely shape students' social awareness thru direct experiences, equal participation, and concrete actions to help others. These values reflect the internalization of Islamic teachings on ta'awun, and serve as indicators of the successful formation of students' humanistic character and social responsibility.

Integration Mechanism: Organizational Culture as the Main Determinant

Analysis of the findings shows that the success of fostering a humanistic character in IPM does not lie in a specific program, but in the integration of three main mechanisms: habituation of positive activities, exemplary behavior of mentors and administrators, and social interaction based on deliberation. The three of them form a consistent and repetitive organizational culture. First, the habituation of positive activities. The principal explained that the IPM consistently carries out positive activities as a habit in internalizing character education among students (Interview, December 16, 2026). This is in line with Thomas Lickona's character formation theory, which emphasizes the importance of habituation thru the continuous practice of values. The routine activities of the IPM serve as a concrete means of internalizing the values of discipline, responsibility, empathy, and social concern [18]. Second, the exemplary behavior of the mentors and administrators. The IPM mentor stated that a real example of the implementation of humanistic values is shown in daily interactions, such as frequent communication and discussions (Interview, December 17, 2025). The results of this interview reflect the principle of Ki Hadjar Dewantara (ing ngarso sung tulodo, the teacher as an example) [34], where exemplary behavior is not only in academic matters but also in attitudes, care, and ways of interacting with others. This is also in line with QS. al-Ahzab/33: 21 regarding the concept of exemplary behavior. Thus, the exemplary behavior of the IPM mentors and administrators becomes a key factor in the formation of students' humanistic values, as these values are learned and internalized thru real-life examples in daily interactions.

Third, social interaction and deliberation. Every decision in the IPM is made thru deliberation involving all layers, from the management to the regular members. This process allows students to actively participate in decision-making, feel a sense of collective responsibility, and learn to appreciate other people's perspectives (Interview, November 11). This is in accordance with QS. al-Hujurat/49: 13, so deliberation in IPM becomes a means of learning social interaction that fosters mutual respect, togetherness, and collective responsibility, in line with the values of ta'aruf and equality as emphasized in that verse [35]. Compared to character education models that are solely based on formal curricula, the IPM approach is more contextual and participatory. In the framework of Bandura's theory, sustainable behavioral change occurs when there is a respected model, a supportive environment, and opportunities for practice and reflection [19]. IPM meets all three of those prerequisites. Conceptually, this finding reinforces the idea of religious humanism that universal humanitarian values can be effectively internalized when integrated with a theological value system that is alive within the community [36]. The Muhammadiyah Student Oath serves as a moral compass that binds organizational practices with a clear value orientation [37]. With regular recitation and actualization in work programs, values do not stop at symbols, but become guidelines for action (Interview, December 16, 2025).

Overall, this research shows that IPM functions as a social laboratory for the formation of humanistic character. Empathy is built thru authentic social experiences, tolerance thru the organization's deliberative mechanisms, and social concern thru real contribution practices. What

distinguishes IPM from conventional character education approaches is the presence of an organizational culture that allows values to be practiced collectively and repeatedly. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of character education is not solely determined by the formal curriculum, but by the social ecosystem that provides space for participation, exemplification, and reflection. Thus, student organizations like IPM hold a strategic position as an implementational model of humanistic character education based on progressive Islamic values.

IV. CONCLUSION

This research shows that students' humanistic character is constructed thru the dynamics of the IPM extracurricular program integrated into the school's organizational culture. The construction process takes place thru authentic social experiences, deliberative practices, participatory habituation, and the exemplary conduct of mentors and administrators. Empathy is built thru direct involvement in social activities; tolerance is constructed thru collective decision-making and deliberative conflict management; while social concern is reinforced thru the equitable distribution of responsibilities. These findings affirm that the construction of humanistic character is not only determined by the formal curriculum but also by the social ecosystem that allows for the participatory and sustainable internalization of values.

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