

Implementation of Smart Ticketing as a Strategy to Strengthen Disciplined Character in English Language Learning in Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers to enhance students' critical thinking skills at SD Muhammadiyah Perumnas, as well as the level of students' critical thinking and the factors influencing its development. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings reveal that teachers apply varied strategies, including contextual delivery of religious knowledge, questioning techniques, guided discussions, and reflective feedback to stimulate students' thinking. Students' critical thinking skills show gradual but uneven development; some students actively engage in questioning and discussion, while others remain passive due to limited confidence and concentration. Supporting factors include diverse instructional methods, teacher encouragement, and curriculum integration, whereas inhibiting factors involve low student motivation, limited focus, and differences in cognitive ability. The study highlights that adaptive and student-centered teaching strategies play a crucial role in fostering critical thinking within religious education contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Character education is a crucial component of the national education system, serving as the foundation for shaping students' personalities. In the modern era, educational success is determined not only by academic achievement but also by the moral, social, and spiritual qualities of students. This aligns with the direction of national education policy as outlined in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, specifically Article 3, which states that the goal of national education is to develop students' potential to become individuals who are faithful, pious, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens. [1]

In practice, the challenges of instilling character education in elementary schools are not simple. Teachers often face a dilemma between academic demands and moral responsibility. This is where integrative, contextual, and enjoyable learning strategies for students become crucial. One emerging approach is AIK-based character education (Akhlaq, Iman, dan Pribadi), which emphasizes the formation of a holistic personality through strengthening moral and spiritual values in students' daily lives. The AIK concept does not stand alone, but is derived from Islamic educational philosophy, which places spiritual and moral aspects as the foundation of all forms of intelligence. [2].

The AIK approach rests on three main pillars. First, morals, which reflect social behavior and moral responsibility in everyday life. Second, faith, which instills divine values and religiosity as an internal strength in moral decision-making. Third, personality, which encompasses psychological aspects such as courage, independence, and sociability. These three cannot be taught through a purely cognitive approach but must be developed through direct experience, habituation, role models, and reinforcement through meaningful learning media. [3].

In this context, the emergence of the smart ticketing program as a medium for character education represents an innovation relevant to the needs of basic education. This program awards tickets to students who demonstrate positive behavior during the learning process. These tickets serve not only as a form of reward but

also as a reflection of the character values targeted in the learning. With this system, AIK values can be internalized through concrete activities that are measurable and monitored. Furthermore, smart ticketing functions as a social control tool that enables students to understand the consequences of their actions, both positive and negative, within the school environment [4].

Several studies have shown that a positive reward-based character approach has proven effective in increasing student engagement and improving behavior during learning. Programs such as achievement cards, point systems, or appreciation tickets have been used in various countries to foster positive behavior among elementary school-aged children. However, the effectiveness of these programs depends heavily on consistent teacher implementation, student understanding of the meaning of the rewards, and proper integration with academic learning objectives [5].

In English, implementing a smart ticketing program is both challenging and promising. English as a subject has its own complexities, especially for elementary school students who are still in the early stages of learning a foreign language. Many students struggle with pronunciation, understanding word meanings, and using grammar, which often lowers their motivation to learn. Through a smart ticketing approach, students can be incentivized to try, speak up, work collaboratively in groups, or complete small tasks independently. This makes the English learning process more enjoyable and meaningful.

The implementation of a smart ticketing program in English language learning, integrated with AIK values, has strategic potential in shaping student character. Students not only learn a foreign language but also internalize the values of discipline, responsibility, honesty, and empathy. This program also facilitates an active learning approach that positions students as subjects of learning, not simply recipients of material goods. By awarding tickets based on positive behavior and learning achievement, teachers can build a positive classroom climate while simultaneously developing students' awareness of the importance of ethics in learning and interaction.

However, in practice, the implementation of this program has not been entirely ideal. Based on initial observations at SDS Alam Madinah School, several problems remain that hinder the program's effectiveness. First, not all teachers understand how to design ticket-awarding criteria that align with character values and learning indicators. Second, there is a tendency for ticket awards to emphasize cognitive aspects or academic success alone, without considering students' social or spiritual behavior. Third, not all parents understand the significance of the character tickets their children bring home, so the lack of support from home is a significant obstacle to comprehensive character building. [7]. Thus, AIK-based character education through the smart ticketing program can be a strategic model for developing student character, particularly at the elementary school level. This model enables a learning process that is not only oriented toward knowledge, but also fosters the formation of noble values inherent in students' lives in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

Furthermore, consistency in program implementation is also a challenge. Unequal distribution of tickets across teachers can create perceptions of unfairness among students. Similarly, if not followed by reflection or explanation of the meaning of each ticket, students will interpret them as mere gifts, rather than as representations of the character values being developed. Therefore, a clear documentation and evaluation system is necessary so that this program becomes more than just an administrative routine, but truly part of a transformative character education strategy. [8] In the context of the Independent Curriculum, an approach such as smart ticketing is highly compatible with the principles of differentiated learning, project-based learning, and character-based learning. This curriculum emphasizes flexibility in lesson planning and provides teachers with the freedom to design learning strategies tailored to student characteristics and needs. Therefore, program innovations such as smart ticketing can be used not only as a control tool but also as a diagnostic tool to identify individual student character development. [9]. To support this, teachers at this school regularly participate in training (workshops) related to the use of technology media, the development of game-based learning applications (games), and innovative learning strategies. The main objective of this training is to enable teachers to design enjoyable, non-monotonous learning, and to incorporate character values into it. [10]. After receiving the training, the teachers then apply this knowledge to more dynamic and focused classroom practices.

The background to the smart ticketing program is also inseparable from initiatives to strengthen other school programs, such as the morning murojaah program conducted before classes begin, and the bilingual program, a distinctive feature and advantage of SDS Alam Madinah School. This school targets graduates who are able to memorize Juz' 30 and are fluent in communicating in English, thus becoming students with character, religiousness, and readiness to compete globally. [11].

English plays a vital role as an international language used in various fields, including education, science, technology, and international communication. Therefore, mastering English from an early age is crucial for developing a digitally literate and global generation. The majority of technological devices, such as computers, the internet, software, and social media, also use English as their primary language [12]. For this reason, SDS Alam Madinah School developed a concept for character-based English learning. This approach encourages students to actively build their knowledge through direct experience, group work, discussion, and independent

exploration. Teachers act as facilitators, presenting learning models, reflecting with students, and conducting authentic assessments across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects [13]. This approach not only strengthens students' English mastery but also instills the values of responsibility, cooperation, and self-confidence in the learning process. Therefore, the expected outcome of this program is an increase in teachers' ability to implement AIK-based character education in English learning. Learning is no longer teacher-centered, but rather oriented towards active and reflective student learning experiences, in line with the transformative educational values espoused by the Merdeka Curriculum [14].

The character education values in English include friendship, caring, social skills, curiosity, democracy, independence, hard work, discipline, and a love of reading. Students not only need to learn Indonesian but also learn an international language, namely English, to facilitate their future education and the world of work. The smart ticketing program can help students memorize one verse a day and three English words, thereby supporting the successful implementation of related programs and achieving learning objectives. Given the various issues that have arisen, resulting in student learning outcomes at SDS Alam Madinah School still not reaching the desired targets, particularly in English learning, the author is very interested in conducting research on the application of Smart Ticket learning media as a teacher's effort to improve student learning outcomes. Therefore, the author chose the title for this research as "Strengthening Character Education through Smart Ticketing at SDS Alam Madinah School."

2. METHOD

2.1. Research Design

This study used a Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach with the cycle model by Kemmis and McTaggart (1988), which consists of four main stages: planning, action, observation, and reflection. This approach was chosen because it allowed researchers to identify real-world classroom problems, implement solutions based on learning innovations, and continuously evaluate their impact through the action cycle [15].

2.2. Research Location and Subjects

The research was conducted at SDS Alam Madinah School, North Serpong, South Tangerang, during the even semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The subjects were 25 second-grade students, consisting of 14 boys and 11 girls. This class was selected based on purposive considerations, namely:

- This class demonstrated English learning achievement below the KKTP (Comprehension Level Completion Criteria),
- Documentation of the smart ticketing program implementation in the class was available,
- The class teacher was willing to actively participate in the implementation of the action and observation cycle.
- The selection of the number of subjects was not intended to generalize, but rather to answer the research questions in depth within a limited context.

2.3. Research Instruments

Data were collected through several instruments:

- Written Test: Used to measure improvements in student learning outcomes in cognitive aspects (English vocabulary), conducted in the pre-cycle, cycle I, and cycle II stages.
- Observation Sheet: Used to assess student engagement and character behavior (discipline, responsibility, cooperation) during smart ticketing activities.
- Visual Documentation and Field Notes: Used to record student activities, classroom interactions, and dynamics during the learning process.

The instruments were validated for content validity through expert discussions and checked for readability by the classroom teacher prior to implementation.

2.4. Research Procedure

The research was conducted in three stages: pre-cycle, cycle I, and cycle II, each with the following structure:

- Pre-cycle: Initial evaluation was conducted through a pre-test and observation of conventional learning without intervention. This data was used as a baseline.
- Cycle I: Actions were taken by integrating the smart ticketing program as part of the morning routine before class began. Students were asked to memorize one short verse and three English vocabulary words along with their translations, then tested with a spelling assignment. This activity was followed by teacher reflection and observation.
- Cycle II: Modifications to the action were made based on the reflections from Cycle I. At this stage, writing and pronunciation exercises were added. Students were provided with special assistance if they encountered difficulties. Observations were conducted to evaluate changes in student behavior and participation.

- Each cycle lasted one week, with a total intervention duration of three weeks. Class teachers were involved as co-observers.

2.5. Data Analysis Techniques

Quantitative data from the test results were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including the average, percentage of learning completion, and score distribution. The formula used to calculate the percentage of completion was:

Total percentage = $(\text{number of students completing}) / (\text{total number of students}) \times 100\%$
The class average was calculated using:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$$

Qualitative data from observations and field notes were analyzed using a thematic approach, in which researchers identified key themes related to changes in student behavior based on character indicators: discipline, responsibility, and cooperation. Validation was carried out through data triangulation, member checking, and discussions between researchers.



Figure 1. Example Smart Ticketing

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted in three stages: pre-cycle, cycle I, and cycle II. Each stage was analyzed not only quantitatively but also qualitatively to reveal the character-building process that occurred during the implementation of the smart ticketing program. This approach was intended to avoid purely mechanical descriptions and provide more contextual meaning to the data.



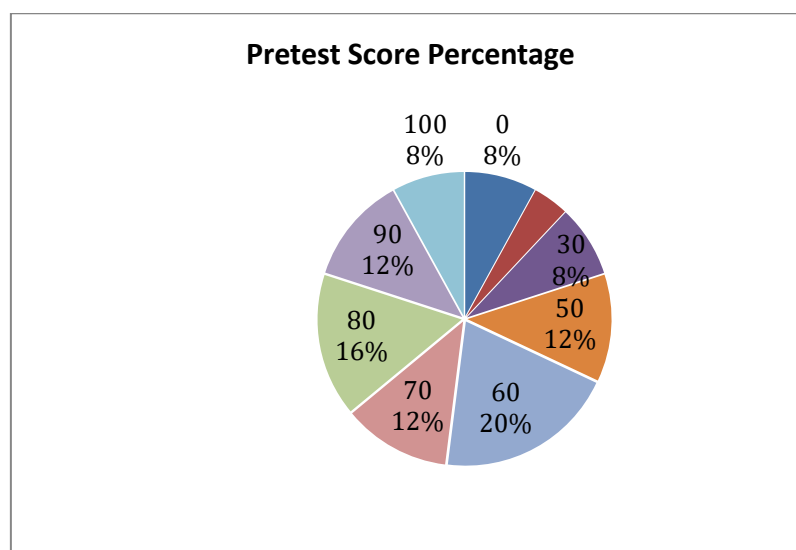
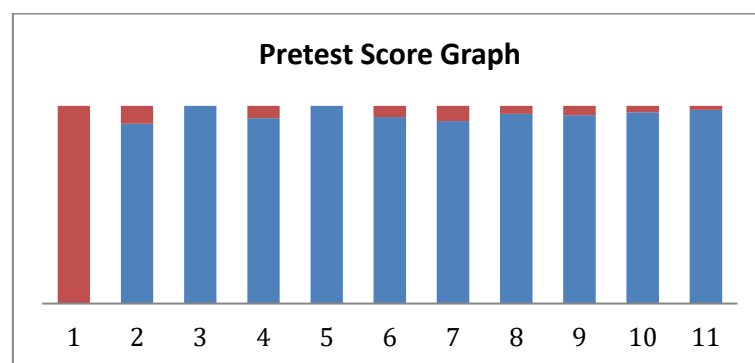
Figure 2. Learning Using Smart Ticketing

3.1. Pre-cycle

The pre-cycle phase is the initial phase of this research, which aims to map the initial conditions of students' abilities in learning English, while also assessing aspects of student character before the smart ticketing program intervention is carried out. The pre-cycle activity was conducted on April 10, 2025, involving 25 second-grade students of SDS Alam Madinah School. Evaluation was carried out through a pre-test to measure students' ability to understand and memorize English vocabulary relevant to the lower grade curriculum.

Value	attendance absence	Ns	Percentage
0	2	0	8%
10	1	10	4%
20	0	0	0%
30	2	60	8%
40	0	0	0%
50	3	150	12%
60	5	300	20%
70	3	210	12%
80	4	320	16%
90	3	270	12%
100	2	200	8%
Total	25	1520	100%

Table 1 Value Pre Test



Based on the initial test results presented in Table 1, only 12 of 25 students (48%) achieved scores above the Understanding Level Completion Criteria (KKTP), which is 65. The class average score was 60.8, indicating that most students had not yet adequately mastered the material. Furthermore, the distribution of scores showed an uneven distribution, with some students achieving very low scores (even 0 and 10), and only a small proportion achieving high scores (80–100). This reflects a gap in ability among students, which can impact the collaborative learning process and the overall classroom atmosphere.

However, if these results are simply interpreted as low cognitive achievement, the interpretation is superficial. Therefore, a deeper examination from a character education perspective is necessary. The low achievement scores in the pre-cycle also correlated with the lack of character indicators demonstrated by students during learning observations. Teachers reported that students tended to be passive, lacked an internal drive to learn, and exhibited weak discipline upon entering the classroom. Some students arrived late, did not bring memorization materials, and appeared mentally unprepared for learning.

In terms of responsibility, students appeared dependent on the teacher's direction at every step and showed no initiative to study independently or help friends who were struggling. Interactions between students also tended to be individualistic, indicating a low ability to work collaboratively in group learning. This fact reflects the weak application of AIK (Akhlak, Iman, and Pribadi) values in their daily lives, particularly the values of discipline, responsibility, and togetherness, which are essential foundations of character education.

When linked to Albert Bandura's social learning theory, this pre-cycle condition indicates a lack of positive behavioral modeling within the school environment. Students did not see concrete examples or a system that consistently reinforced character behavior. The lack of reinforcement for good behavior also made students less motivated to display positive character traits, as the reward and feedback system was not yet structured.

Furthermore, from the perspective of Thomas Lickona's (1991) character education theory, character is formed through three main dimensions: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. In the pre-cycle stage, these three dimensions have not yet been explored. Students may have a conceptual understanding of values such as discipline or responsibility, but there is no mechanism or system in place to consistently translate these values into concrete actions.

In other words, the pre-cycle describes a state of English learning that is still solely oriented toward cognitive aspects, without strengthening the affective and psychomotor dimensions relevant to character values. Teachers only assign memorization and evaluation tasks without a social and emotional context that can motivate students. This condition aligns with criticisms of learning approaches that focus too much on drill and test, without incorporating a more effective reflective and contextual approach for early childhood students.

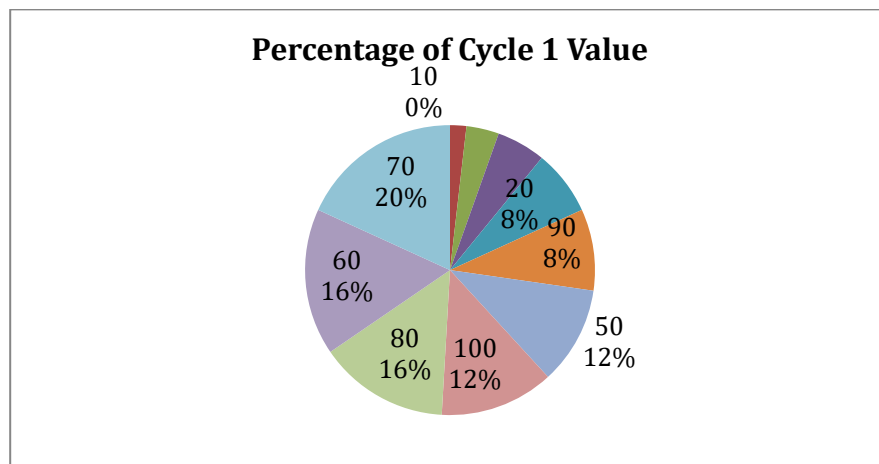
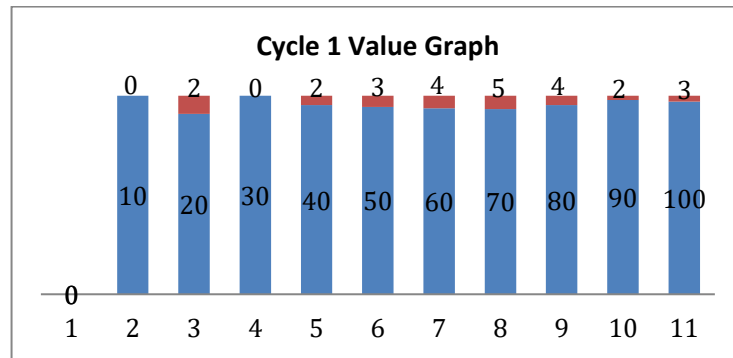
The findings from this pre-cycle stage provide an important basis for smart ticketing-based learning interventions. The need for a method that not only delivers material but also creates a social learning structure that instills character values through daily practice is becoming increasingly apparent. Therefore, the smart ticketing program was designed not only as a medium for English memorization but also as an instrumental tool for building stronger routines, responsibility, and cooperation among students. Thus, the pre-cycle results not only indicate that students have not yet mastered the subject matter cognitively, but also reveal that the classroom environment is not yet conducive to character development. This opens up space for more integrative and reflective learning innovations, as implemented in subsequent cycles through the implementation of the smart ticketing program.

3. 2. Cycle 1

Setelah identifikasi masalah pada pra-siklus, tahap intervensi pertama dimulai pada tanggal 15 April 2025 melalui implementasi program smart ticketing dalam pembelajaran Bahasa Inggris. Program ini dirancang sebagai sistem apresiasi dan kontrol sosial yang mendorong siswa untuk menghafal tiga kosakata bahasa Inggris dan satu ayat pendek Al-Qur'an sebelum memasuki kelas. Model pembelajaran ini dilakukan secara rutin dan dibarengi dengan aktivitas pengejaan (spelling) oleh setiap siswa.

Value	attendance absence	Ns	Percentage
0	0	0	0%
10	0	20	0%
20	2	40	8%
30	0	0	0%
40	2	80	8%
50	3	150	12%
60	4	240	16%
70	5	350	20%
80	4	320	16%
90	2	180	8%
100	3	300	12%
Total	25	1680	100%

Tabel 2. Value Test Spelling



Test results in Cycle I showed that 14 students (56%) achieved scores above the minimum competency standard (KKTP), with the class average increasing to 67.2. Numerically, this indicates an improvement compared to the previous phase. More importantly, however, there were behavioral changes reflecting improvements in student character, particularly in aspects of discipline and responsibility.

Through teacher observations and documentation of daily processes, it was discovered that most students began arriving earlier and preparing their memorization independently. Queuing before class became a moment to internalize the value of discipline, as students were trained to be orderly, patiently waiting their turn, and submitting memorization materials in an orderly manner. This aligns with habit formation theory, which states that repeated behaviors linked to meaning (in this case, character) will be more firmly embedded in students.

However, several weaknesses were also identified in this cycle. For example, cooperation among students was not optimally developed. Activities still focused on individual achievement, and students were not actively involved in helping their peers who were struggling. Furthermore, some students demonstrated mechanical memorization without truly understanding the meaning of the vocabulary or verses presented. This indicates that character development has not fully penetrated students' affective dimensions. From a constructivist learning perspective, learning that relies solely on memorization tends not to stimulate students' in-depth understanding. Therefore, in the next cycle, it is necessary to add components of contextual understanding, small group discussions, and strengthening collaboration as essential aspects in instilling AIK values more comprehensively.

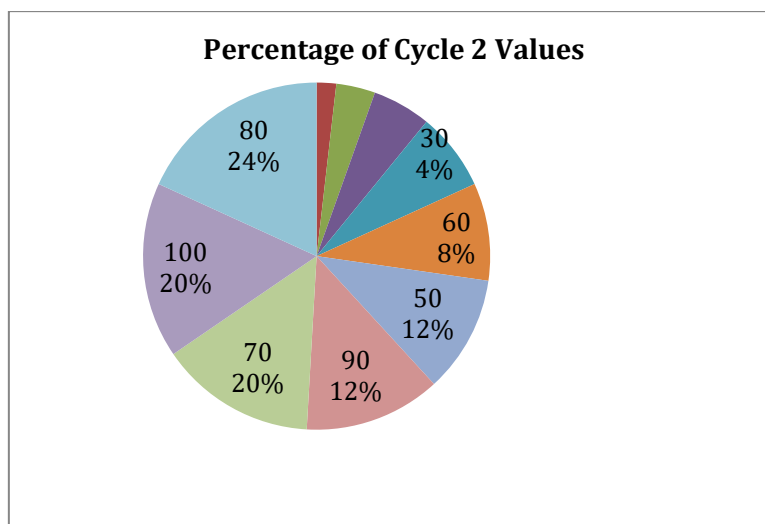
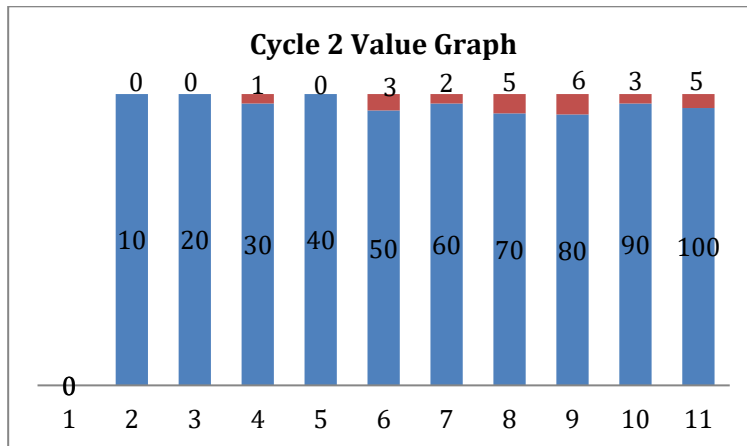
3.3. Cycle 2

Cycle II was implemented on April 17, 2025, with a more varied approach. In addition to memorization and spelling activities, students were involved in writing assignments to translate learned vocabulary into simple sentences. Furthermore, teachers provided special guidance to students who still struggled with pronunciation and writing. This approach enabled a more active, reflective, and student-centered learning process.

Value	attendance absence	Ns	Percentage
0	0	0	0%
10	0	0	0%
20	0	0	0%
30	1	30	4%
40	0	0	0%
50	3	150	12%
60	2	120	8%

70	5	350	20%
80	6	480	24%
90	3	270	12%
100	5	500	20%
Jumlah	25	1900	100%

Tabel 3. Value Test Spelling



In terms of academic results, there was significant improvement: 76% of students achieved grades above the minimum grade point average (KKTP), with the class average rising to 76. However, the key achievement of this cycle was not only cognitive, but also holistic character building. Teacher observations showed that students began to demonstrate empathy and cooperation, for example, by helping each other with pronunciation practice or sharing vocabulary memorization strategies. The sense of responsibility strengthened, reflected in the increasing number of students regularly bringing their tickets and preparing without being reminded. Some students even took the initiative to remind classmates who had forgotten their memorization, demonstrating the emergence of moral awareness and small-scale leadership within the class community.

The learning in this cycle reflects Kolb's concept of experiential learning, where students not only receive information but also actively engage in the learning process, reflecting on its meaning, and applying it in a social context. Memorization and writing activities, combined with daily reflection, make the smart ticketing program a medium for character transformation that is not only symbolic but also practical. When linked to Lickona's value theory, character building in this cycle has begun to touch on three important dimensions: students know what discipline and responsibility are (moral knowing), feel that it is important (moral feeling), and demonstrate it in real actions (moral action). This improvement strengthens the claim that the smart ticketing program is not just an administrative gimmick, but a systematic and measurable character-based learning strategy [16]

3. 4. Systematic Analysis and Critical Reflection

The findings of this study illustrate that the smart ticketing program is not merely an administrative tool for classroom management, but can be interpreted as a values-learning system that simultaneously integrates

cognitive, affective, and social aspects. Its consistent implementation in daily routines can form new habits that support character learning, especially at the elementary school age, which is highly flexible in moral development.

Systematically, the success of this program is supported by three main aspects. First, the consistency of daily practice, where character traits such as discipline and responsibility are not only taught normatively but are cultivated through concrete and repetitive activities. This aligns with Thomas Lickona's view that effective character education must build moral habits, not just moral knowledge alone [17].

Second, this program is designed within a supportive school ecosystem, where teachers, as facilitators, play a key role in building a positive classroom climate. Teachers act not only as instructors but also as role models and value directors. As Bandura argued in social learning theory, behavior formation is heavily influenced by modeling and social reinforcement, which in this context is achieved through the provision of tickets, social recognition, and active student participation [18].

Third, student involvement in this process also fosters the development of moral agency, namely the ability to choose and act morally based on understood values. When students begin to prepare memorization independently, remind their peers, or demonstrate initiative, this indicates that the process of internalizing values has begun.

However, reflectively, this study also leaves several critical limitations. First, the evaluation of the program's success relies heavily on quantitative indicators (test scores) without support from richer qualitative data such as student journals, interviews, or teacher reflections. This makes it difficult to deeply assess the process of character formation, which is more dynamic and not always visible in numbers.

The potential for dual role bias also needs to be examined. Researchers who also serve as intervention implementers may have subjective tendencies in assessing the program's success. To address this, data triangulation and the involvement of external observers are necessary to validate the results. This aligns with the principle of trustworthiness in qualitative research proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which emphasizes the importance of credibility and confirmability through triangulation techniques [19].

There was no apparent follow-up mechanism or program sustainability after the research concluded. In fact, character building requires a long-term, ongoing, and systemic process, involving all elements of the school, including parents. According to Nucci and Narvaez (2008), effective character education must be integrated into a whole-school approach, not simply a stand-alone, temporary program [20]. Therefore, this critical reflection confirms that although the smart ticketing program demonstrates positive short-term impacts, its long-term success still depends on system strengthening, documentation, reflection, and the school's collective commitment to making it part of the school culture, not simply a program intervention.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the implementation of a smart ticketing program in English learning contributed to improved academic grades while strengthening the character of elementary school students, particularly in the areas of discipline, responsibility, and cooperation. These findings reinforce the argument that effective character education is not simply based on theory or moral instruction but must be built through a system of consistent, reflective habits and active student participation.

Theoretically, the results of this study support a character education approach based on AIK (Akhlaq, Iman, Pribadi) and enhance understanding of how these values can be internalized through structured daily learning practices. The smart ticketing program can be positioned as a practical model of integrative character education that combines cognitive and affective aspects in a single integrated activity. These findings are also consistent with the framework proposed by Lickona, Bandura, and Kolb regarding character formation through habitus, modeling, and direct experience.

However, it is important to recognize that this study has limitations. First, the evaluation approach used is still dominated by quantitative data (test scores), while the more complex affective and social dimensions of students have not been explored in depth through qualitative methods. Second, the potential bias of the researcher's dual role as both intervention implementer and outcome evaluator requires independent validation in further research. Third, the study's limited scope to one grade and one subject also limits the generalizability of the results.

As a practical implication, schools wishing to adopt similar programs need to ensure their sustainability through teacher training, reflective documentation, and the involvement of parents and the school community. The success of character programs like smart ticketing is largely determined by a supportive educational ecosystem and the collective commitment of all stakeholders.

For future research, it is recommended to conduct longitudinal explorations to examine the long-term impact of this habit-based character learning. Furthermore, the integration of ethnographic methods such as participant observation, student journals, and in-depth interviews can enrich the analysis of student character transformation more holistically. A cross-contextual approach, for example, implementing the program at different grade levels or in other subjects, also has the potential to make a significant contribution to the development of practice-based character education models in elementary schools.

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