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Development and Preliminary Evaluation of the RAMAH Pedagogical Model for Internalizing Politeness Values in Child-Friendly Elementary Schools

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ABSTRACT

The internalization of politeness remains a challenge in elementary education because existing character education programs are often implemented as fragmented activities rather than coherent pedagogical processes. This study aimed to develop, validate, and evaluate the RAMAH (Respect, Affection, Moderation, Adab, Humanity) Pedagogical Model, implemented through five instructional stages: Reflection, Actualization, Habituation, Affirmation, and Harmonization. An embedded mixed-methods Research and Development design was conducted in two elementary schools implementing the Child-Friendly School Program in Purwakarta Regency, West Java, Indonesia. Participants included school principals, Islamic Religious Education teachers, Child-Friendly School Working Group teachers, three expert validators with expertise in character education, Islamic Religious Education, and elementary education, and 122 elementary school students. Model effectiveness was evaluated using a one-group pretest-posttest design with a paired-samples *t*-test and N-Gain analysis. The findings indicate that the model demonstrated satisfactory validity and practicality, and that students' politeness-internalization scores increased significantly following its implementation, providing preliminary evidence of effectiveness despite the absence of a control group. The study contributes an integrated pedagogical framework for strengthening politeness internalization within the Child-Friendly School context and provides a foundation for future controlled, longitudinal studies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Elementary education represents a critical stage in children's character development because it is during this period that students begin to develop moral reasoning, understand social norms, and form behaviors that influence their future personal and social lives [1], [2].

The success of elementary education is therefore determined not only by academic achievement but also by schools' ability to cultivate students' character through the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action [2].

Among the various moral values promoted in elementary education, politeness is considered a fundamental component of students' character because it reflects respect for others, empathy, self-control, and responsible social behavior. Politeness extends beyond courteous language to encompass attitudes and behaviors that are consistent with social, cultural, religious, and ethical norms [3], [4], [7]. In this study, the internalization of politeness refers to the process by which principles of respectful communication and conduct become personally accepted values that consistently guide students' cognition, communication, and behavior. Accordingly, the internalization of politeness is reflected through three interrelated dimensions: polite thinking, which represents students' cognitive understanding and moral judgment regarding respectful behavior; polite communication, which refers to the appropriate use of respectful language during social interaction; and polite behavior, which represents the consistent manifestation of respectful actions in everyday school life. These dimensions are sequentially connected because moral understanding provides the cognitive foundation for respectful communication, which, in turn, develops into observable behavior through repeated educational experiences.

Despite its recognized importance, recent evidence indicates that the internalization of politeness among elementary school students remains insufficient. Various studies consistently report the persistence of impolite language, disrespectful classroom interaction, declining empathy, peer conflicts, and bullying among elementary school students, indicating that moral understanding has not been consistently translated into everyday behavior [2], [5], [6]. These findings demonstrate that character education continues to face considerable challenges in transforming students' moral knowledge into sustainable moral practice, suggesting that existing educational approaches have not yet fully supported the internalization of politeness as an enduring personal value.

To address these challenges, the Indonesian government introduced the Child-Friendly School (CFS) Program, which aims to establish educational environments that are safe, inclusive, participatory, and respectful of children's rights [8]. The program encourages positive school culture, student participation, and collaborative relationships among teachers, students, parents, and the wider school community. However, in practice, the implementation of the Child-Friendly School Program has predominantly emphasized administrative compliance and policy adherence rather than pedagogical processes that systematically cultivate students' moral development. As a result, opportunities to transform school culture into meaningful learning experiences that strengthen the internalization of politeness remain limited, thereby reducing the sustainability of students' behavioral change.

The internalization of politeness can be understood as a multidimensional educational process that requires integrating complementary theoretical perspectives. Value internalization explains how externally introduced values gradually become personally accepted beliefs through value transformation, value transaction, and value transinternalization [9], [10]. Moral Development Theory explains that students progressively develop the ability to distinguish appropriate moral behavior through

increasingly sophisticated moral reasoning [1], [11]. Nevertheless, cognitive understanding alone cannot ensure behavioral consistency. Social Learning Theory emphasizes that students strengthen moral behavior through observation, modeling, reinforcement, and authentic social interaction within the school environment [12]. Consistent with these perspectives, character education is most effective when moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action are integrated into continuous educational experiences [2]. Furthermore, theories of politeness explain that respectful communication functions as an essential mechanism for maintaining harmonious interpersonal relationships [13], [3], [4], while educational perspectives emphasize that politeness represents the practical manifestation of moral values expressed through everyday interaction [7]. Together, these theoretical foundations indicate that the internalization of politeness requires the simultaneous development of cognitive understanding (polite thinking), respectful communication (polite communication), and consistent behavioral practice (polite behavior), all of which are strengthened by a positive school culture [14].

Although previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of value-based learning, teacher role modeling, Habituation, and school culture in supporting character education, these approaches have generally examined each component separately rather than integrating them into a comprehensive pedagogical framework. Existing models also provide limited guidance regarding how multiple theoretical perspectives can be translated into systematic instructional procedures that simultaneously strengthen students' moral cognition, respectful communication, and observable behavior within the Child-Friendly School context. Consequently, a comprehensive pedagogical model that unifies these complementary perspectives remains insufficiently developed.

To address these limitations, this study proposes the RAMAH Pedagogical Model as an integrated framework for strengthening the internalization of the moral value of politeness. The model synthesizes the theoretical foundations of moral development, value internalization, social learning, politeness, and school culture into five core educational values and five sequential instructional stages that guide students from moral reflection to the sustainable practice of respectful behavior. The conceptual framework underlying the model illustrates how these theoretical foundations collectively produce the five RAMAH values and their corresponding instructional stages, providing a coherent pedagogical process for character development within Child-Friendly Schools.

The novelty of this study lies not merely in introducing another character education model but in systematically integrating multiple complementary theories into a unified pedagogical framework specifically designed to strengthen the internalization of politeness in elementary education. Unlike previous character education models that primarily emphasize isolated instructional strategies or school culture, the RAMAH Pedagogical Model integrates theory, structures pedagogical stages, and implements school-wide culture within the Child-Friendly School Program, thereby providing a more comprehensive framework for sustainable character development.

Based on this research gap, this study aims to develop, validate, and evaluate the effectiveness of the RAMAH Pedagogical Model for strengthening the internalization of the moral value of politeness among elementary school students who are implementing the

Child-Friendly School Program. Specifically, this study addresses the following research questions: (1) What pedagogical needs are identified in the implementation of politeness education? (2) How is the RAMAH Pedagogical Model developed and validated? (3) To what extent is the model practical for teachers and students? and (4) Do students' politeness-internalization scores improve after the implementation of the model? The findings are expected to contribute theoretically by extending pedagogical knowledge regarding integrated character education and practically by providing teachers and schools with an evidence-based instructional model for cultivating sustainable politeness within Child-Friendly Schools.

2. METHOD

This study employed an embedded mixed-methods Research and Development (R&D) design, in which qualitative and quantitative methods were integrated sequentially throughout the product development process to develop, validate, and evaluate the effectiveness of a pedagogical model for strengthening the internalization of the moral value of politeness within the Child-Friendly School (CFS) Program at the elementary school level. The qualitative component was conducted during the needs assessment, model design, expert validation, and revision phases to explore contextual educational needs, identify implementation challenges, and refine the pedagogical model. The quantitative component was implemented during field testing to assess the practicality and effectiveness of the developed model by analyzing students' learning outcomes using statistical methods. Integration of both datasets occurred during the interpretation stage, in which qualitative findings were used to explain and support the quantitative results, thereby providing comprehensive evidence of the validity, practicality, and effectiveness of the developed pedagogical model. The R&D approach was selected because it aims to produce an educational product that is valid, practical, and effective through a systematic process of product development, validation, field testing, and refinement. Borg and Gall describe research and development as a systematic procedure for designing, developing, validating, and evaluating educational products to ensure their quality and applicability in educational settings [15], [16].

The research procedure was adapted from Borg and Gall's ten-step R&D model into nine operational stages to accommodate better the study's scope and the reporting format of an international journal article, while maintaining the fundamental principles of educational product development. The adaptation was achieved by integrating the dissemination and implementation stage into the final product revision stage because the primary objective of this study was to develop and validate the pedagogical model rather than to conduct large-scale dissemination. Consequently, the revised development procedure consisted of the following stages:

1. Research and information gathering;
2. Planning;
3. Development of the preliminary pedagogical model;
4. Expert validation and preliminary field testing;
5. Revision of the preliminary product;

6. Main field testing;

7. Operational product revision;

8. Operational field testing;

9. Final product revision and preparation for dissemination.

Integrating the dissemination phase into the final revision stage was considered appropriate because large-scale implementation beyond the research setting was outside the scope of this study. In contrast, the study emphasized establishing the model's validity, practicality, and effectiveness before future dissemination. [16]

Research Location and Time

The study was conducted in Purwakarta Regency, West Java, Indonesia, during the implementation period of the Child-Friendly School Program. The research was undertaken in several elementary schools representing different program implementation contexts to ensure the applicability of the developed pedagogical model across diverse school environments.

Participants and Sampling Strategy

Participants were selected purposively to align with the objectives of each R&D stage. Schools were selected based on their active implementation of the Child-Friendly School Program and their willingness to participate in the research. School principals, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and teachers serving on the Child-Friendly School Working Group were purposively selected because they had direct experience implementing character education and child-friendly school policies. Students participating in the field trials were selected from schools implementing the Child-Friendly School Program and represented the target users of the developed pedagogical model. Expert validators were selected purposively according to their expertise in educational research, curriculum development, character education, and instructional design. The composition of participants at each research stage is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Participants at Each Stage of the Research

Research Stage	Participants
Needs assessment	School principals, Islamic Religious Education teachers, Child-Friendly School Working Group teachers
Expert validation	Educational experts, curriculum experts, and instructional design experts
Preliminary field testing	Teachers and students from two elementary schools
Main field testing	Teachers and students
Operational field testing	122 elementary school students, teachers, and school principals

Data Sources and Data Collection

The study employed both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, expert validation sheets, and students' assessment results. Secondary data included school

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documents, Child-Friendly School policy documents, curriculum documents, and supporting institutional records.

Data collection was conducted sequentially according to the R&D stages. Observations and interviews were administered during the needs assessment to identify existing educational practices and contextual problems. Expert validation sheets were employed to evaluate the content, construct, and practicality of the developed pedagogical model. Questionnaires were administered during the field-testing stages to collect participants' perceptions of the model, while students' learning outcomes were measured using pre-test and post-test instruments to determine the effectiveness of the developed model.

Research Instruments

Several research instruments were developed, including observation guidelines, interview protocols, expert validation sheets, teacher response questionnaires, student response questionnaires, and tests measuring students' internalization of the moral value of politeness. Instrument development followed a systematic procedure consisting of indicator formulation, item construction, expert review, revision, limited testing, and final refinement before implementation in the main field trials.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

Content validity was established through expert judgment involving specialists in educational research, character education, curriculum development, and instructional design. The content validity of each instrument was evaluated using Aiken's V, the Content Validity Index (CVI), and inter-rater agreement to determine the relevance, clarity, and representativeness of each item. The obtained validity coefficients demonstrated that the developed instruments satisfied acceptable content validity criteria prior to field implementation.

The reliability of the questionnaire instruments was examined using Cronbach's alpha, while McDonald's omega and/or composite reliability were calculated where appropriate to strengthen internal consistency evaluation. The obtained reliability coefficients exceeded the minimum acceptable threshold for educational research, indicating satisfactory reliability of the developed instruments before being employed in the field-testing stages. [17]

Variables and Measurement

The principal outcome variable of the study was students' internalization of the moral value of politeness following implementation of the developed pedagogical model. The variable was measured using cognitive, affective, and behavioral indicators derived from the conceptual framework of the Child-Friendly School Program and assessed through validated research instruments.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Qualitative data were analyzed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), which involved iterative reading of the data, initial noting, theme development, identification of relationships among themes, cross-case analysis, and synthesis of the essential meanings of participants' experiences [17], [18]. Qualitative findings informed revisions to the pedagogical model at each development stage and were subsequently integrated with quantitative findings during interpretation to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the model. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarise participants' responses and students' learning outcomes, whereas inferential statistics were conducted after testing prerequisite assumptions, including tests of normality and homogeneity. The effectiveness of the pedagogical model was evaluated through prerequisite assumption testing, a paired-samples *t*-test, and N-Gain analysis to determine the improvement in students' internalization of the moral value of politeness following its implementation.

Ethical Considerations

This study complied with ethical principles governing educational research involving human participants. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the participating schools. All participants voluntarily agreed to participate after receiving information regarding the objectives, procedures, and benefits of the research. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study, and all collected data were used solely for academic purposes.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. RESULT

Overview of the Findings

This section presents the empirical findings obtained throughout the research and development process, beginning with the needs assessment, followed by the development of the RAMAH Pedagogical Model, expert validation, limited field testing, and operational field testing. The findings are organized sequentially to demonstrate how the empirical evidence informed the design of the pedagogical model and how the model was subsequently validated and evaluated for validity, practicality, and effectiveness.

Participant Characteristics and Research Stages

The study involved participants representing multiple educational stakeholders to ensure that the pedagogical model was developed based on authentic classroom conditions and the practical implementation of the Child-Friendly School (CFS) Program. The participants included school principals, Islamic Religious Education teachers, teachers serving as members of the Child-Friendly School Working Group, and elementary school students. Different participant groups contributed at different stages of the research, aligned with the objectives of each development phase. Table 1 summarises the participant characteristics and their roles throughout the study.

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Table 1. Participant Characteristics and Research Stages

Research Stage	Participants	Role
Needs assessment	2 school principals	School policy and implementation of the Child-Friendly School Program
Needs assessment	4 Islamic Religious Education teachers	Character education implementation and instructional practices
Needs assessment	4 Child-Friendly School Working Group teachers	School culture and Child-Friendly School implementation
Needs assessment	Elementary school students	Experiences related to politeness and classroom interaction
Expert validation	Three experts (character education, Islamic Religious Education, and elementary education)	Validation of theoretical framework, instructional syntax, and feasibility
Limited field trial	Teachers and students	Practicality and classroom implementation
Operational field trial	122 elementary school students	Evaluation of model effectiveness through pretest-posttest design

Empirical Findings and the Need for Developing a Pedagogical Model

The initial phase of the research aimed to investigate the empirical conditions for the internalization of the moral value of politeness in the implementation of the Child-Friendly School (CFS) Program in elementary schools. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, document analysis, and questionnaires administered at SDN 2 Margasari and SDN 5 Sindangkasih. The integration of multiple data sources enabled methodological triangulation, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of existing character education practices and identifying the gap between current implementation and the expected outcomes of moral value internalization.

The findings indicate that both schools had implemented numerous character education initiatives designed to promote students' moral development. These initiatives included the 5S habituation program (smile, greet, salute, politeness, and courtesy), religious activities, Islamic Religious Education instruction, character literacy programs, morning assemblies, classroom agreements, teacher role modeling, and school culture activities aligned with the Child-Friendly School Program. Collectively, these initiatives created a positive educational climate that supported students' social, emotional, and spiritual development.

Nevertheless, observations and interview findings consistently demonstrated that these initiatives had not yet led to optimal internalization of polite behavior among students. Various forms of inappropriate communication, teasing among peers, limited emotional self-regulation, inadequate empathy, and inconsistent respectful behavior toward teachers and classmates continued to be observed during classroom learning and daily school interactions. These findings suggest that existing character education practices remain largely activity-oriented rather than being implemented through a coherent pedagogical framework that systematically facilitates value internalization.

The qualitative findings were organized into several recurring themes that emerged consistently across participant groups. Table 2 summarises the thematic analysis, supporting

evidence, participant groups, and implications for developing the RAMAH Pedagogical Model.

Table 2. Thematic Analysis of the Needs Assessment

Theme	Supporting Evidence	Participant Group	Implication for Model Development
Character education programs have been implemented.	"Our school has consistently implemented the 5S program and religious habituation every day." (Principal P1)	Principals	Existing programs should be integrated into a unified pedagogical framework.
Teacher role modeling is important but inconsistent	"Teachers have tried to become role models, but students do not always imitate polite behavior consistently." (Teacher T2)	Teachers	The model should strengthen reflective learning and continuous reinforcement.
Students understand politeness but struggle to practice it	"We know we should speak politely, but sometimes we forget when playing with friends." (Student S5)	Students	Learning activities should provide authentic opportunities to practice polite behavior.
School culture supports character education.	Observation and document analysis showed that school regulations and routines consistently promoted respectful interaction.	Teachers and Principals	School culture should become an integral component of the pedagogical model.
Existing programs remain fragmented.	Observation findings indicated that classroom learning, Habituation, reinforcement, and evaluation were implemented separately without systematic integration.	All participant groups	Development of an integrated pedagogical model is required.

These findings indicate that the effectiveness of character education depends not merely on the availability of school programs but, more fundamentally, on the quality of the value internalization process students experience. This finding is consistent with the perspective of Hakam and Nurdin, who argue that value internalization is a process by which external values are integrated into an individual's belief system and consistently reflected in everyday behavior [9]. Likewise, Muhaimin explains that value internalization progresses through the stages of value transformation, value transaction, and value transinternalization, demonstrating that sustainable character formation requires continuous educational interaction rather than the simple transmission of moral knowledge [10].

Overall, the empirical findings demonstrate that although both participating schools had implemented various character education programs, these initiatives remained fragmented and lacked systematic pedagogical integration. Consequently, there was a clear conceptual and practical need to develop a pedagogical model that integrates classroom instruction, teacher role modeling, authentic learning experiences, behavioral Habituation, reinforcement, and school culture into a coherent instructional process to strengthen the internalization of the moral value of politeness within the Child-Friendly School Program.

Development of the RAMAH Pedagogical Model

The needs-assessment findings demonstrated that existing character education practices within the Child-Friendly School (CFS) Program had not yet been implemented through a systematic pedagogical process. Although schools had successfully established various character-building activities, including habituation programs, teacher role modeling, religious instruction, and school culture initiatives, these components functioned independently and lacked pedagogical integration. Consequently, students' moral understanding did not consistently translate into sustainable polite behavior across different social contexts. These empirical findings became the primary basis for designing the RAMAH Pedagogical Model.

The development process followed the educational product development procedures described in the Research and Development methodology. The model was formulated through an iterative synthesis of empirical findings from the needs assessment and relevant theoretical perspectives on moral education, value internalization, politeness, social learning, and organizational culture. This approach ensured that every instructional component of the model was supported by both classroom evidence and educational theory, thereby strengthening its conceptual validity and practical applicability.

In response to these findings, the present study developed the RAMAH Pedagogical Model, a pedagogical framework designed to strengthen the internalization of the moral value of politeness within the implementation of the Child-Friendly School Program. The model was developed through the synthesis of Piaget's and Kohlberg's theories of moral development [1], [11], Bandura's Social Learning Theory [12], Lickona's character education framework [2], Hakam and Nurdin's and Muhaimin's theories of value internalisation [9], [10], the politeness theories of Grice [13], Brown and Levinson [3], and Leech [4], Sauri's educational perspective on politeness [7], and Schein's theory of organisational culture [14]. Rather than adopting these theories independently, the present study integrated their complementary perspectives into a unified pedagogical framework that connects moral cognition, social interaction, behavioral practice, value internalization, and school culture within a continuous instructional process. The integration of these theoretical perspectives positions students as active participants in character formation through reflective, participatory, and contextual learning experiences.

Conceptually, the RAMAH Pedagogical Model assumes that moral value internalization cannot be achieved solely through the transmission of moral knowledge but requires continuous educational experiences that engage students cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally. Accordingly, the instructional process was designed to connect moral understanding, authentic social interaction, behavioral practice, reinforcement, and school culture into a continuous cycle of character formation. This conceptual orientation emphasizes that polite behavior develops gradually through repeated meaningful experiences rather than through isolated instructional activities.

The model is grounded in five core values represented by the acronym RAMAH: Respect, Affection, Moderation, Adab (Moral Conduct), and Humanity. These values collectively promote respect for human dignity, positive interpersonal relationships, appreciation of diversity, ethical conduct, empathy, and social responsibility. Each value

represents a complementary dimension of moral character that collectively supports students' development as respectful, caring, and socially responsible members of the school community.

To operationalize these values, the model employs five interconnected instructional stages: Reflection, Actualization, Habituation, Affirmation, and Harmonization. The Reflection stage encourages students to examine personal experiences, recognize moral dilemmas, and develop awareness of respectful interpersonal relationships through dialogue and critical reflection. Actualization provides students with opportunities to translate their moral understanding into practice through collaborative learning, simulations, role-playing, and authentic social interaction. Habituation reinforces polite behavior through daily routines, teacher role-modeling, classroom management, and school culture activities. Affirmation strengthens students' intrinsic moral commitment through constructive feedback, appreciation, guidance, and positive reinforcement from teachers and peers. Finally, Harmonization integrates the acquired moral values into students' everyday interactions, so that politeness gradually becomes an integral part of individual character and the collective culture of the school community.

The relationship between empirical findings, theoretical foundations, RAMAH values, instructional stages, and expected learning outcomes is presented in Table 3. This matrix illustrates how each component of the pedagogical model was systematically derived from both empirical evidence and educational theory.

Table 3. Model Development Matrix of the RAMAH Pedagogical Model

Empirical Problem	Theoretical Basis	RAMAH Value	Instructional Stage	Expected Outcome
Students understand politeness but do not consistently demonstrate it in everyday interactions.	Piaget's and Kohlberg's Moral Development Theory [1], [11]	Respect	Reflection	Students develop moral awareness and recognize the importance of polite behavior.
Students experience difficulty applying moral values in authentic social situations.	Bandura's Social Learning Theory [12]	Affection	Actualisation	Students demonstrate polite communication through collaborative learning and authentic interaction.
Character education activities remain fragmented and inconsistent across school routines.	Hakam and Nurdin; Muhaimin [9], [10]	Moderation	Habituation	Polite behavior becomes a consistent daily habit through repeated practice.
Reinforcement of polite behavior is not systematically implemented.	Lickona's Character Education Framework [2]	Adab (Moral Conduct)	Affirmation	Students strengthen intrinsic motivation and commitment toward moral conduct.
School culture has not fully supported the internalization of sustainable values.	Schein's Organizational Culture Theory [14]; Grice [13]; Brown and Levinson [3]; Leech [4]; Sauri [7]	Humanity	Harmonisation	Politeness becomes embedded within classroom interaction and the broader school culture.

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Pedagogically, the five instructional stages constitute a continuous learning cycle that begins with moral awareness, proceeds to authentic behavioral practice, is reinforced through systematic Habituation and positive affirmation, and culminates in the establishment of a sustainable culture of politeness. Unlike many existing character education approaches that primarily emphasize either teacher role modeling or routine Habituation, the RAMAH Pedagogical Model integrates cognitive, affective, behavioral, and sociocultural dimensions within a single pedagogical framework. This integration enables students not only to understand moral values conceptually but also to experience, practice, internalize, and sustain them through continuous interaction within the school environment.

Furthermore, the model extends character education beyond classroom instruction by positioning the entire school environment as a learning ecosystem for moral development. Classroom learning, teacher role modeling, peer interaction, habituation programs, reinforcement strategies, and organizational culture are interconnected to facilitate continuous value internalization. Consequently, the RAMAH Pedagogical Model provides both a theoretical contribution to character education and a practical framework for strengthening the implementation of the Child-Friendly School Program in elementary schools.

Expert Validation of the RAMAH Pedagogical Model

Following the conceptual development phase, the RAMAH Pedagogical Model underwent expert validation to evaluate its theoretical soundness, instructional feasibility, and practical applicability before proceeding to field implementation. The validation process served as an essential quality assurance stage, ensuring that the model was conceptually consistent, pedagogically appropriate, and aligned with the objectives of strengthening the internalization of the moral value of politeness within the Child-Friendly School (CFS) Program.

Table 4. Components Evaluated During Expert Validation

Validation Component	Evaluation Focus	Validation Result
Theoretical foundation	Relevance and consistency of supporting theories	Appropriate and conceptually consistent
Model objectives	Alignment between objectives and expected learning outcomes	Appropriate
RAMAH core values	Relevance of Respect, Affection, Moderation, Adab, and Humanity	Appropriate
Instructional syntax	Logical sequence and coherence of the five instructional stages	Highly appropriate
Learning activities	Compatibility with elementary school learning characteristics	Appropriate and feasible
Teacher's guidebook	Clarity of instructional guidance	Appropriate with minor revisions
Assessment procedures	Alignment between assessment indicators and learning objectives	Appropriate with refinement
Classroom implementation	Practical feasibility in Child-Friendly School settings	Highly feasible

The validation involved experts with professional expertise in character education, Islamic Religious Education, and elementary education. The experts evaluated the model comprehensively by reviewing its theoretical foundation, instructional syntax, core values, supporting learning materials, assessment procedures, and implementation feasibility. The evaluation emphasized the coherence among the conceptual framework, instructional procedures, expected learning outcomes, and classroom applicability.

Overall, the experts concluded that the RAMAH Pedagogical Model demonstrated strong conceptual coherence between its educational objectives, theoretical foundations, instructional procedures, and expected indicators of moral value internalization. The five instructional stages—Reflection, Actualization, Habituation, Affirmation, and Harmonization—were considered logically interconnected and capable of facilitating a gradual process of character formation from moral awareness to sustainable polite behavior.

The experts further emphasized that the model successfully integrates the cognitive, affective, behavioral, and sociocultural dimensions of character education within a single pedagogical framework. This integration was considered one of the model's principal strengths because it extends moral education beyond classroom instruction by incorporating authentic learning experiences, teacher role modeling, reinforcement, and school culture into a continuous instructional process.

Although the overall evaluation indicated that the model was appropriate for implementation, several constructive recommendations were provided to improve its clarity and practicality before field testing. These recommendations primarily focused on strengthening instructional guidance rather than modifying the model's conceptual framework.

Table 5. Revisions Following Expert Validation

Expert Recommendation	Revision Implemented
Improve the clarity of the instructional syntax.	The description of each instructional stage was revised to improve conceptual clarity and implementation procedures.
Strengthen the relationship between instructional stages and indicators of politeness.	Learning indicators were reorganized to correspond to each instructional stage explicitly.
Simplify the language used in the teacher's guidebook	Several instructional explanations were rewritten in clearer, more practical language.
Expand examples of classroom implementation.	Additional examples of learning activities and classroom interactions were incorporated into the implementation guide.
Refine the assessment procedures.	Assessment indicators and observation guidelines were revised to better align with the objectives of moral value internalization.

All recommendations were incorporated into the revised version of the RAMAH Pedagogical Model before the limited field trial was conducted. The revisions primarily enhanced the model's operational clarity without altering its theoretical structure or instructional principles. Consequently, the revised model demonstrated greater consistency

between its conceptual framework and practical implementation procedures, thereby improving its readiness for classroom application.

The expert validation findings indicate that the RAMAH Pedagogical Model possesses satisfactory conceptual validity and instructional feasibility for implementation in elementary schools. The validation process also confirmed that integrating reflective learning, authentic social experiences, behavioral Habituation, positive reinforcement, and school culture provides a coherent pedagogical framework for strengthening the internalization of the moral value of politeness. Therefore, the validated model was considered sufficiently refined to proceed to the limited field trial and subsequent operational evaluation.

3.2. DISCUSSION

The findings demonstrate that implementing the RAMAH Pedagogical Model significantly strengthened students' internalization of the moral value of politeness. The improvement was evident not only in students' understanding of politeness but also in their ability to demonstrate polite behavior in everyday school interactions consistently. The moderate N-Gain observed in this study indicates that the intervention produced meaningful educational improvement rather than a dramatic behavioral transformation. This level of improvement suggests that moral value internalization is a gradual developmental process that requires repeated learning experiences and continuous reinforcement within the school environment. These results suggest that moral value internalization becomes more effective when learning is designed as a continuous pedagogical process integrating reflection, authentic learning experiences, Habituation, positive reinforcement, and school culture. Similar findings have been reported in recent studies showing that character education is more effective when instructional activities are embedded within daily school practices and supported by collaborative school environments rather than delivered through isolated moral instruction alone [19], [20].

The magnitude of improvement observed in this study is also comparable with findings from previous character education interventions, which generally report moderate improvements in students' moral attitudes and behaviors following structured pedagogical programs. This similarity suggests that although character education interventions rarely produce immediate, large behavioral changes, systematically implemented instructional models within authentic school contexts can generate meaningful improvements in students' moral development.

The findings support the theory of value internalization proposed by Hakam and Nurdin, which argues that moral values cannot be effectively developed through knowledge transmission alone but must become part of an individual's belief system through sustained educational experiences [9]. Likewise, the results are consistent with Muhaimin's framework of value transformation, value transaction, and value internalization [10]. Within the RAMAH Pedagogical Model, these stages are reflected in the instructional sequence: Reflection promotes moral awareness; Actualization provides opportunities for authentic value practice through social interaction; and Habituation, Affirmation, and Harmonization reinforce moral values until they become stable behavioral dispositions. Recent empirical

evidence similarly indicates that repeated participation in authentic learning activities promotes deeper moral internalization than conventional teacher-centered instruction [21], [22].

From a moral development perspective, the findings are also consistent with the theories of Piaget and Kohlberg, both of whom emphasize the importance of cognitive development, social interaction, and moral reasoning in children's moral growth [1], [11]. By engaging students in dialogue, collaborative learning, reflection, and ethical decision-making, the model enables learners not only to understand moral norms but also to appreciate the moral reasoning that underlies polite behavior. Recent studies further demonstrate that reflective learning combined with collaborative problem-solving enhances students' moral judgment and ethical decision-making in elementary education [23], [24].

The results further corroborate Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which explains that behavior develops through observation, imitation, direct experience, and reinforcement [12]. Throughout the model's implementation, teachers served as consistent role models, while repeated practice and supportive school interactions enabled students to transform observed behaviors into enduring habits. These findings indicate that moral behavior develops more effectively when reinforced through authentic social experiences rather than solely through classroom instruction. This interpretation is supported by recent research highlighting the importance of teacher modeling, peer interaction, and continuous feedback in strengthening prosocial behavior and character development among elementary school students [25], [26].

The findings also reinforce Lickona's character education framework by integrating moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action within a single pedagogical process [2]. The Reflection stage strengthens students' moral understanding. Actualization and Habituation cultivate empathy and social responsibility through meaningful experiences, whereas Affirmation and Harmonization reinforce consistent moral action, ensuring polite behavior becomes embedded in the school's culture. Consequently, the model provides a balanced integration of the cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions of character education. Similar conclusions have been reported in recent studies, emphasizing that effective character education requires the simultaneous development of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral competencies through integrated instructional approaches [27], [28].

Compared with previous studies, which generally emphasize isolated strategies such as teacher role modeling, Habituation, or value integration within individual subjects, the RAMAH Pedagogical Model offers a more comprehensive approach by integrating these strategies into a coherent pedagogical framework. The model combines clearly defined instructional stages, learning activities, assessment indicators, and evaluation procedures, thereby facilitating a systematic process of internalizing moral values. Furthermore, by incorporating the principles of politeness proposed by Grice, Brown and Levinson, Leech, and Sauri [13], [3], [4], [7], together with Schein's concept of school culture [14], the model extends character education beyond classroom instruction and positions polite behavior as an integral component of everyday school life. This integrated approach aligns with recent studies suggesting that effective character education depends on the interaction between

instructional practice, school culture, and active participation from the entire school community [29].

Although the observed improvement is consistent with the proposed pedagogical mechanisms, alternative explanations should also be considered. The increase in students' scores may have been influenced not only by the instructional model itself but also by repeated exposure to assessment instruments, increased teacher attention during the intervention, students' growing familiarity with expected classroom behaviors, or other contextual factors within the participating schools. Because the present study did not include follow-up measurements or additional controls for these influences, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of improvement associated with the implementation of the RAMAH Pedagogical Model rather than definitive proof of exclusive causal effects.

The principal contribution of this study lies in the development of an integrated pedagogical framework that synthesizes theories of moral development, value internalization, social learning, character education, politeness, and school culture into a unified instructional model. Rather than viewing character education as a series of isolated classroom activities, the RAMAH Pedagogical Model positions school culture as the primary context through which moral values are continuously constructed, reinforced, and practiced.

From a practical perspective, the RAMAH Pedagogical Model provides teachers with an operational framework for integrating character education into everyday instruction without requiring substantial curricular modifications. Its instructional syntax has the potential to be adapted across various elementary school subjects, particularly Islamic Religious Education, Pancasila Education, and thematic learning, although this transferability was not directly examined in the present study. Moreover, the model supports the implementation of the Child-Friendly School Program by promoting respectful communication, participatory learning, inclusive classroom interactions, and a school culture that values empathy, mutual respect, and children's rights. Recent educational studies likewise recommend whole-school approaches that integrate curriculum, classroom pedagogy, and school culture to ensure the long-term effectiveness of character education initiatives [30].

Several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study evaluated the intervention's effectiveness only during the implementation period; therefore, the persistence of students' behavioral changes over time cannot yet be determined. Second, the research was conducted within a limited educational context, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to schools with different characteristics. Third, although the results demonstrate significant improvement, the moderate N-Gain indicates that additional supporting factors beyond classroom pedagogy may also contribute to students' moral development. Future studies should incorporate longitudinal follow-up designs, broader school settings, and comparisons with alternative character education models to examine the long-term effectiveness and wider applicability of the RAMAH Pedagogical Model.

Overall, these findings indicate that strengthening the internalization of the moral value of politeness requires more than isolated character education activities or ceremonial programs. Instead, it requires a comprehensive pedagogical model that systematically

integrates classroom learning, teacher practices, school culture, and student participation into an educational system. In this regard, the RAMAH Pedagogical Model offers a theoretically grounded and empirically validated pedagogical framework for strengthening character education within the implementation of the Child-Friendly School Program in Indonesian elementary schools.

4. CONCLUSION

This study developed, validated, and evaluated the RAMAH Pedagogical Model as a framework for strengthening the internalization of the moral value of politeness within the Child-Friendly School Program in Indonesian elementary schools. The findings indicate that the model demonstrated satisfactory validity and practicality and showed preliminary effectiveness in improving students' politeness-internalization scores in the participating schools, with the moderate N-Gain suggesting meaningful educational improvement rather than conclusive evidence of lasting behavioral change. The study contributes to the character education literature by offering an integrated pedagogical framework that links classroom instruction to school culture and provides teachers with a structured approach to character education within the participating school context. However, the findings should be interpreted cautiously because the study used a pretest-posttest design across a limited number of schools, without longitudinal follow-up, thereby limiting the generalizability of the results and precluding conclusions about the long-term maintenance of students' behavior. Future research should employ controlled experimental designs, evaluate the model across different regions and educational contexts, examine its adaptation in various school subjects, incorporate longitudinal follow-up, and investigate the influence of teacher- and school-level factors on implementation and outcomes.

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