Enhancing Fifth Grade Students' Character Values through the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) in Civic Education Learning

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Abstract

The increasing prevalence of moral and social issues among elementary students highlights the urgent need to strengthen character education. This study explores the strategic role of civic education in fostering core values such as religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and tolerance among fifth-grade students at SDN Inpres Pandai. Utilizing a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design conducted over two cycles, the study implemented the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) as an instructional intervention. The research involved 31 students and followed the stages of planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. Data were collected through observation checklists, interviews, document analysis, multiple-choice tests, teacher assessments, and student self-reflection instruments. The results indicated substantial improvements across all five character dimensions. Students' initial mastery levels, which ranged from 54.8% to 74.2%, increased to between 83.9% and 90.3% following the intervention, placing all participants within the "very well developed" category. The VCT approach enabled students to engage critically with real-life moral dilemmas, express their values, and reflect on ethical decision-making. These outcomes demonstrate the effectiveness of VCT in enhancing students' moral reasoning and ethical behavior, aligning with the goals of Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile. In conclusion, the potential of VCT as a valuable pedagogical tool in promoting character education at the primary level.

Keywords: student character, civic education, VCT approach, elementary learning, value formation

INTRODUCTION

In 21st century education, character development is indispensable for preparing students to think critically, act ethically, and engage responsibly in society. Amid globalization and technological advancement, education must go beyond cognitive development to emphasize values such as honesty, discipline, tolerance, responsibility, and religious awareness (Widiyasari & Juandi, 2024). In alignment with this vision, Indonesia has implemented the Independent Curriculum, which prioritizes character building through the Pancasila Student Profile. This profile promotes values like faith in God, global diversity, independence, collaboration, critical thinking, and creativity, encouraging students to remain rooted in national culture while being globally competent (Wantari & Rati, 2022).

Civic education, a key component of the national curriculum, is tasked with instilling democratic values, civic duties, and national identity. The potential of Civic character education is frequently hindered by traditional teaching practices that rely heavily on passive methods such as lecturing, rote memorization, and instructor dominated learning environments. These methods prioritize knowledge acquisition over meaningful moral engagement, resulting in a disconnect between theoretical understanding and actual student behavior (Alya, 2023; Febriyani et al., 2022). Students may know moral concepts but fail to practice them consistently, as passive learning environments rarely foster genuine moral reflection (Ermawati et al., 2021; Lifa, & Sulistyarini, 2020). Furthermore, teacher centered and authoritarian instructional methods constrain the development of students' moral reasoning and obstruct meaningful value construction (Febriany et al., 2021).

This challenge calls for fresh, student-centered teaching strategies. Among character education strategies, the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) is particularly promising as it empowers students to critically engage with moral issues through ethical debates, self-reflection, and value-based decision-making. VCT fosters moral reasoning and helps students clarify their stance on important values. This model has also been linked to the development of students' self-concept and character when integrated meaningfully in classroom interactions (Martati, 2022). In different subject areas such as mathematics, the use of VCT in conjunction with worksheets has been shown to foster students' conceptual clarity and critical reasoning, particularly when lessons are enriched with value-based material (Oktavianti, 2023). VCT has also proven effective in cultivating essential character values, including empathy, responsibility, and ethical reasoning (Astawa et al., 2020; Saputra, 2024).

Despite its potential, VCT remains underutilized at the elementary level, especially in civic education. Most studies concerning the use of VCT have been conducted in tertiary education settings, thereby overlooking its significance for early educational stages. In addition, research employing action-oriented methodologies such as Classroom Action Research (CAR) which promotes ongoing reflection and refinement is relatively scarce (Telaumbanua et al., 2025). Experts recommend implementing the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) in elementary classrooms using the Classroom Action Research (CAR) model, highlighting its potential to enhance students' moral understanding within real world educational contexts (Amanda, 2025; Ramadhani, 2024; Wisesa, 2024).

This research responds to the identified gap by applying the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) in fifth-grade civic instruction at SDN Inpres Pandai through a two cycle Classroom Action Research (CAR) approach. The research focuses on improving

five core character values: religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and tolerance. The study utilizes observation sheets, structured interviews, documentation, and assessment tests to measure students' progress and development. The intervention phase involved students in a range of reflective learning experiences, such as dialogic exchanges, cooperative activities, ethical deliberation, and the examination of real life cases. Through these activities, students were able to grasp the meaning of character values and reflect them in their daily actions. Findings showed that structured and reflective application of VCT significantly enhanced students' moral awareness, interpersonal behavior, and classroom atmosphere. The findings reinforce the value of VCT and CAR as effective strategies in delivering character based learning consistent with the Independent Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile (Ardika et al., 2022; Firdaus, 2024).

METHOD

This study employed a Classroom Action Research (CAR) design following the model of Kemmis et al. (2014), which consists of four stages: planning, implementation, observation, and reflection. A two-cycle research project was conducted in a fifth-grade class at SDN Inpres Pandai, Bima Regency, during the second semester of the 2024/2025 school year. Thirty-one students were chosen purposively after diagnostic tools and early observations identified gaps in their internalization of fundamental character values. These students demonstrated inconsistent application of values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline, underscoring the need for a character focused intervention.

The research focused on developing five key character attributes in line with the Pancasila Student Profile, namely religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and tolerance. These values are essential for fostering moral reasoning and civic responsibility among young learners. The intervention used the Value Clarification Technique (VCT), which engages students in reflecting on moral dilemmas and values through structured, dialogic, and participatory activities.

To ensure rigorous and structured data collection throughout the Classroom Action Research (CAR) process, six instruments were employed across two cycles and were aligned with each stage: planning, action, observation, and reflection. In the planning phase of Cycle I, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the partner teacher and several students to identify initial challenges in civic and character education. The insights obtained guided the development of a thematic instructional module based on the Value Clarification Technique (VCT), incorporating real-life moral dilemmas relevant to students' daily experiences. In the action phase, a classroom observation checklist was used to assess the implementation of the VCT-based learning activities and student engagement.

During the observation phase, a behavioral observation checklist was completed by the teacher to track students' character development, while students also filled out self assessment sheets to reflect on their personal growth and attitudes. To assess students' comprehension of civic and moral values, a multiple choice test was employed. In the reflection phase, post cycle interviews with the teacher and selected students were conducted to review the learning process and identify areas for improvement, which informed the planning for Cycle II. All instruments were re-employed in Cycle II with several improvements, including refined dilemma scenarios and more structured group activities. Data from the various instruments were triangulated to strengthen the validity and depth of the findings.
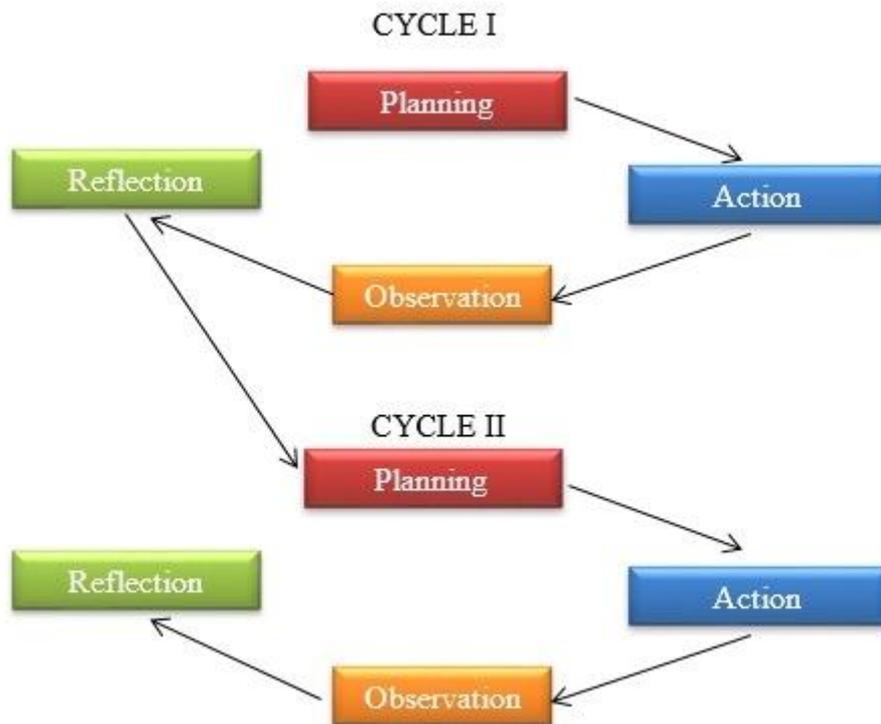
Figure 1. The Cycle of Classroom Action Research

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Findings
Pre Cycle
To establish a foundation for comparison, a pre intervention observation was conducted to analyze the character conduct of fifth grade students before implementing the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) approach. The observations were carried out by the teacher using a character observation sheet, and also by the students through a self assessment reflection form. The results revealed that most students had not yet demonstrated key character behaviors such as religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and tolerance. This condition highlighted the urgency of implementing an instructional model capable of fostering the internalization and real life application of character values.

Furthermore, interviews with the class teacher and notes from classroom observation indicated that students tended to show low initiative during group discussions, hesitated to express opinions, and were dependent in completing tasks. A few students even displayed reluctance in participating, especially in activities involving moral dilemmas or decision making. This emphasized the importance of utilizing a character education model like the Value Clarification Technique (VCT), which guides students in examining, understanding, and internalizing moral values through systematic reflection and dialogue. The complete data from the initial observation are presented in the following tables.

Table 1. Initial Observation of Fifth Grade Students' Character Values at
SDN Inpres Pandai

No	Character Value	Number of Students Not Yet Showing the Behavior	Total Number of Students	Percentage (%)
1	Religious	20 students	31 students	64.5%
2	Honest	18 students	31 students	58.1%
3	Disciplined	23 students	31 students	74.2%
4	Responsible	21 students	31 students	67.7%
5	Tolerant	17 students	31 students	54.8%

Tabel 2. Summary of Initial Interview Results

No	Respondent	Question	Response Summary	Character Aspect
1	Teacher	How do students behave during civic learning?	Sume students appeared passive, less enthusiastic about discussions, and unfocused during group tasks.	Activiness, Responsibility
2	Teacher	Do students show honesty and discipline?	Many tend to delay tasks and do not admit minor mistakes during evaluations.	Honesty, Discipline
3	Student A	How do you feel during group work?	Sometimes I'm confused about what to say, so I just stay quiet and wait for friends.	Confidence, Cooper
4	Student B	Do you prefer working alone or with friends?	I Prefer working with friends because I'm afraid of making mistakes on my own.	Independence, Responsibility
5	Student C	What do you think about being honest in class?	Being honest is important, but sometimes I stay quiet because I'm scared to be wrong.	Honesty, Courage

The findings from both the quantitative observation data and qualitative interviews confirmed that students had not yet reached optimal levels in their character development. The tendency of students to remain passive, overly dependent, and hesitant in values based learning activities highlights the urgency of adopting the VCT model, which is designed to cultivate critical moral reasoning and foster active involvement in the development of students character values had yet to internalize character values effectively, signaling the importance of introducing a model that supports both ethical understanding and behavioral consistency.

Cycle I
Planning

In the planning stage of Cycle I, the researcher collaborated with the classroom teacher to design a Value Clarification Technique (VCT) based learning module that integrated character values into the civic education curriculum. The educational design prioritized character education by instilling values such as religious awareness, integrity, self control, responsibility, and acceptance of others. A detailed lesson plan was developed that included real life moral dilemmas and structured discussion prompts to guide student engagement.

The researcher also created supporting instruments character observation forms, self reflection sheets, and an objective test aligned with curriculum targets. All were reviewed for consistency with the instructional and evaluative framework. Furthermore, classroom seating arrangements and group structures were intentionally designed to foster collaborative learning and provide a safe environment where students felt comfortable expressing their personal values. The teacher was briefed on how to facilitate reflective discussions and moral decision making activities to maximize student involvement. This comprehensive planning process aimed to ensure the successful implementation of VCT as a strategy to promote both cognitive understanding and affective character development.

Action

During the action phase of Cycle I, the instructional activities were implemented according to the VCT based learning plan. The teacher introduced Civic Education lessons through real life moral dilemmas designed to provoke students' thoughts and emotions. Students were guided to identify values embedded in the dilemmas, articulate their personal viewpoints, and engage in structured group discussions. These activities were conducted both individually and collaboratively to allow students to reflect on their beliefs and compare them with those of their peers.

During the instructional process, the teacher acted as a facilitator, employing open ended inquiries and dialogic techniques to activate students' moral reasoning and promote respectful dialogue. Moral scenarios were delivered through storytelling, dramatization, and visual media to support student engagement. Students were encouraged to make decisions based on the values they believed in, and to reflect on the consequences of those decisions.

Rather than focusing solely on moral theory, this stage emphasized value internalization through student engagement. Lessons were designed to link academic learning with everyday life, supporting genuine character growth.

Observation

The observation phase of Cycle I was carried out collaboratively by the researcher and the classroom teacher during the implementation of the VCT based learning activities. The aim was to monitor the behavioral development of students across five character indicators: religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and tolerance. Character data were gathered using observation checklists, student reflection instruments, and researcher field notes.

The results of the observation showed that students began to demonstrate more active engagement in the learning process. During the collaborative sessions, students were involved in meaningful dialogue, showed respect for differing opinions, and began to verbalize the values they found important. Although progress was evident, the level of involvement was not yet evenly distributed. Some students still appeared passive and had difficulty connecting the values to their everyday experiences. The recap of Cycle I observation data is presented in the following Table.

Table 3. Observation Results Cycle I

Character Value	Number of Students Demonstrating the Value	Total Students	Percentage%
Religious	21	31	67,7%
Honest	22	31	70,9%
Disciplined	24	31	76,5%
Responsible	22	31	71,0%
Tolerant	23	31	72,5%

These results indicate that most students had reached the "Beginning to Develop" category. The data reflect that the implementation of the VCT model had begun to positively influence students' awareness and attitudes, although additional refinement was still necessary for more meaningful internalization of values.

Reflection

At the end of Cycle I, the researcher and the classroom teacher conducted a comprehensive reflection based on observation results, student self reflection sheets, interviews, and formative test outcomes. In general, the implementation of the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) model began to show a positive impact on students' engagement and awareness of character values. Many learners gradually exhibited greater assertiveness in expressing their views, participated meaningfully in collaborative dialogues, and showed progress in recognizing the importance of making morally grounded decisions.

However, the reflection also revealed several limitations. Although student participation increased, the level of involvement remained uneven. Some learners still displayed hesitation and limited self assurance, and were not yet able to meaningfully connect the character values explored in class with their everyday lives. This indicated that, while students were beginning to recognize the values taught, their internalization process was still superficial and inconsistent.

Drawing from the observations, both the researcher and the teacher identified areas for refinement in the second cycle, including the development of more contextually relevant moral dilemmas to enhance student engagement everyday experiences, providing dedicated time for personal reflection after group discussions, utilizing visual learning media to enhance engagement and comprehension and structuring group roles to ensure active participation from all students.

These steps were designed to support deeper internalization of character values and to encourage students to become more reflective, critical, and emotionally engaged in the learning process.

Cycle II
Planning

As a result of the reflections drawn from the first cycle, the second cycle was planned with a focus on enriching the quality of instruction and making learning activities more contextually meaningful for students. The researcher and teacher revised the VCT learning module by selecting more realistic and relatable moral dilemmas drawn from students' daily lives. Greater emphasis was placed on enhancing the quality of reflective discussions and personal value clarification activities.

The same set of research instruments character observation sheets, student self reflection forms, and multiple choice tests were retained, as they had proven effective in capturing both behavioral and cognitive progress. Several instructional enhancements were implemented, such as the use of visual tools, deeper reflective questioning, and structured group responsibilities to ensure equal participation.

The classroom environment was also restructured to promote student centered learning, and additional time was allocated for individual and group reflections. Teachers were provided with updated facilitation guides to help navigate sensitive value based discussions with empathy and openness. This enhanced planning process aimed to address the limitations identified in the first cycle and optimize the implementation of VCT in fostering students' character values more effectively.

Action

In Cycle II, the implementation of VCT based learning was carried out with refined strategies derived from the reflections of the first cycle. The teacher designed moral dilemma scenarios that were emotionally engaging and closely tied to students' real life experiences, such as truthfulness in peer interactions, a sense of duty within group activities, and appreciation for diverse perspectives.

Instructional activities were enriched by incorporating reflective journal writing and more in depth group discussions. Students were consistently encouraged to share their perspectives, engage in active listening, and make decisions guided by core values. Greater attention was given to creating an inclusive atmosphere, ensuring that each student felt respected and heard during classroom interactions.

To increase engagement, the teacher applied cooperative roles and integrated visual tools that encouraged students to participate more actively. Role playing exercises were introduced more frequently to help students empathize with others' perspectives and apply values in realistic scenarios.

By the conclusion of this stage, students demonstrated increased self confidence, openness in expressing their thoughts, and greater emotional engagement during learning. The implementation of the VCT model was effective in cultivating moral awareness and nurturing character traits that were reflected in students' everyday actions.

Observation

During the second cycle, observations were carried out once more to assess the impact of the enhanced teaching strategies derived from the reflections in Cycle I. The assessment maintained its focus on the five character dimensions identified in the earlier phase. The use of more contextual and emotionally resonant moral dilemmas led to greater cognitive and emotional engagement from students.

Students appeared more confident in expressing their thoughts, consistently completed tasks on time, and demonstrated tolerance and cooperation during group activities. The teacher also observed that students who were previously passive had started to participate more actively and provided honest self assessments. The VCT based learning approach successfully created a reflective and dialogic classroom environment that encouraged students to clarify, evaluate, and internalize moral values. The results of Cycle II observation are summarized in the following table.

Table 4. Observation Results Cycle II

Character Value	Number of Students Demonstrating the Value	Total Students	Percentage%
Religious	28	31	90.3%
Honest	27	31	87.1%
Disciplined	26	31	83.9%
Responsible	28	31	90.3%
Tolerant	27	31	87.1%

The findings indicate notable progress in each of the assessed character indicators, with all values achieving classification within the "Very Well Developed" category. These findings demonstrate that the refined application of the VCT model in Cycle II successfully enhanced students' value internalization, which was reflected in their consistent and observable behavior during learning activities.

Reflection

Reflection at the end of the second cycle revealed that the pedagogical adjustments made throughout the process had successfully generated optimal learning results. Students demonstrated significant growth in their confidence to express opinions, independence in making moral decisions, and consistency in applying character values in both academic and social settings.

The teacher reported that students who were previously passive became more active in discussions, showed honesty during self evaluations, maintained discipline in completing assignments, and exhibited tolerance toward differences. The classroom atmosphere evolved into a more open, dialogic space that strongly supported holistic character development.

As all five character indicators attained the "Very Well Developed" level, the researchers concluded that the intervention goals had been successfully accomplished. The integration of reflective activities, contextual moral dilemmas, and student centered facilitation proved effective in shaping strong character values. Therefore, continuation to another cycle was deemed unnecessary. These findings reaffirm that the VCT model, when implemented systematically and reflectively, can meaningfully foster the internalization of character values in elementary education.

In addition to the previously described findings, this study also revealed several additional findings, which are elaborated in the following section.

Table 5. Recap of Students' character Self Assesment Result (N = 31)

No	Statement	Average Score (1-4)
1	I always pray before and after studying.	3,42
2	I am grateful to god for what I have.	3,35
3	I admit my mistakes when I do something wrong.	3,52
4	I never cheat during tests.	3,55
5	I come to school on time.	3,48
6	I complete school assigments on time.	3,61
7	I complete tasks without being repeatedly reminded.	3,65
8	I take care of school property and facilities.	3,48
9	I respect friends who have different religions or cultural backgrounds.	3,42
10	I am willing to work in groups even with classmates I'm not close to.	3,52
	Total Average Sore	35,0

The self assessment questionnaire results indicate that students demonstrated strong internalization of character values following the VCT intervention. The average total score reached 35.0 out of 40, with particularly high scores in aspects of responsibility (3.65) and discipline (3.61). All indicators scored above 3.3, reflecting a positive shift in students' self awareness and moral attitudes. These findings align with observational and interview data, further confirming that the VCT model effectively supports reflective and value based learning at the elementary level.
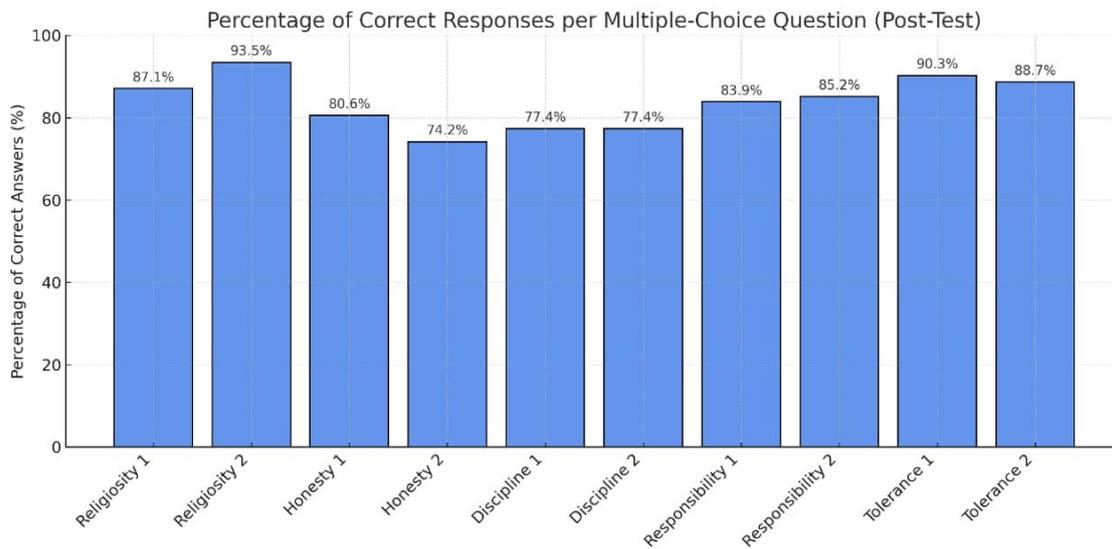

Figure 2. Percentage of Corrent Responses per Multiple-Choice Question (Post Tes)

The post test results showed a strong cognitive understanding of character values among students after the VCT model was applied. As shown in Figure 2, the percentage of correct answers per item ranged from 74.2% to 93.5%, with the highest scores in Religiosity and Tolerance. These results suggest that students were able to grasp and apply key character concepts effectively. The data supports the success of the VCT model in strengthening both knowledge and values in civic education.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the application of the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) learning model significantly contributes to the improvement of students' character values in civic education. Five core indicators of character religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and tolerance showed substantial improvement across two research cycles. The outcomes correspond with the primary goals of the Independent Curriculum, which seeks to cultivate holistic learners by integrating character education through the Pancasila Student Profile framework. Similar results were observed by Adit et al. (2025), who demonstrated that VCT positively impacted students' social concern in IPAS instruction, underscoring the method's versatility across subjects.

The success of the VCT method is attributed to its structure, which emphasizes active student involvement and personal reflection, encouraging learners to examine values through moral challenges, open conversation, and thoughtful analysis. It empowers learners to internalize values grounded in rational thought and lived experiences. Such a learning environment fosters ethical awareness and social responsibility among students. Alya (2023) emphasize that consistent implementation of VCT can broaden students'

dialogical space in personally and socially interpreting values, making it more effective than conventional approaches.

The improvement in students' cognitive performance, as evidenced by their multiple choice test results, reinforces the notion that the VCT model offers both academic and character development benefits. As character values improved, students' academic engagement and understanding of civic concepts also grew. This finding supports the perspective put forward by Astawa et al. (2020), emphasize that the VCT approach fosters critical thinking and ethical reasoning by connecting abstract principles to everyday experiences. Ermawati et al. (2021) also point out that integrating character values into learning activities can nurture students' moral growth and enhance academic performance, particularly when they are involved in real life based learning experiences. Similarly, Nurhijriah (2021) found that the VCT method effectively improved students' analytical skills in civic education, especially in understanding complex citizenship concepts.

Progress was clearly evident in the transition from the initial cycle to the second phase of the study. Adjustments made in the second cycle such as contextualizing moral dilemmas, using visual media, and adding time for personal reflection proved highly effective. This development enhanced students' emotional engagement with the subject matter and supported the application of core values in everyday situations. (Febriany et al., 2021) state that students are more likely to internalize values when the learning material is relevant to their environment and emotional experiences. This strengthens the idea that values are not merely taught but must be experienced and emotionally processed in real life contexts. Tuty (2023) reinforces this by showing that VCT based learning had a positive impact on students' social attitudes when applied at the elementary level, especially in Islamic school settings.

The effectiveness of VCT largely depended on the teacher's role as a supportive and guiding facilitator during instruction. In Cycle II, the teacher shifted from an authoritarian model to a more dialogical and empathetic approach. This change was crucial in building students' confidence and promoting moral independence. Maharani et al. (2023) highlight that students' character formation is significantly shaped by the teacher's attitude, particularly when they exemplify respect, patience, and open mindedness. When learners are engaged as moral agents rather than passive knowledge recipients, they are more likely to express their values with sincerity and critical thought. Developing meaningful trigger questions is a crucial task for educators to maintain alignment between classroom dialogue and character education objectives.

One of the most remarkable improvements occurred in the value of religiosity. At the beginning of the intervention, 64.5% of students struggled to internalize and apply religious values. By the end of the second cycle, positive changes were observed, with 90.3% exhibiting notable improvement. These findings suggest that the incorporation of spiritual values into civic education is most effective when learners are provided with opportunities for reflection. Saputra (2024) explains that religious values develop when students are encouraged to connect ethical teachings with their spiritual beliefs and social relationships. The Value Clarification Technique (VCT) employed in this research promoted a deeper moral awareness by encouraging both introspection and peer discussion focused on spiritual and ethical concerns.

While the VCT approach offers considerable promise, its execution is constrained by practical limitations, including the need for extended lesson durations, strategic classroom management, and adaptable timetables to support instructional revisions.

Value discussions, group reflections, and decision making activities cannot be rushed if deep engagement is to be achieved. Alya (2023) emphasize that VCT demands prepared teachers, flexible scheduling, and high student involvement conditions that are not always easily met in resource-constrained school settings. Additionally, student participation varied. While active involvement was common among most students, a few showed hesitation and lacked assurance in verbalizing their opinions. Contributing factors may include personal insecurity, restricted vocabulary, or sociocultural influences that discourage open communication. Widiyasari & Juandi (2024) recommend that VCT be accompanied by strategies to boost self-confidence and inclusive facilitation techniques to ensure that all students feel safe and valued. Beyond internal learning factors, school environmental support also plays a crucial role. The successful implementation of the VCT model is influenced by external factors such as a positive classroom environment, a transparent school culture, and the support of educational leaders and fellow teachers. According to Wantari & Rati (2022), character education is most effective when the whole school community actively fosters positive values through consistent role modeling, institutional practices, and routine interactions.

The scope of this study is limited, as it was conducted in a single elementary school involving a relatively small group of participants. Consequently, generalizing the results should be done cautiously. Broader investigations involving various educational levels and institutional contexts are essential to validate the effectiveness of the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) model more comprehensively. Moreover, future research should aim to explore the long-term impacts of character education, particularly whether the values internalized during formal schooling endure over time and influence students' lives beyond the classroom. According to Martati et al. (2025), character formation necessitates continuous, meaningful exposure to value-rich learning and cannot result from brief or disconnected activities. Hence, longitudinal studies are critical to substantiate character education as a continuous developmental process rather than a one-off instructional effort.

Despite these challenges, the strengths of this study are noteworthy. The findings show that when applied systematically and reflectively, VCT not only enhances students' character values but also enriches the learning process in a more active, contextual, and meaningful way. The classroom is no longer a space for one way knowledge transfer but becomes a dynamic arena for moral exploration. Although refinements are necessary to optimize time management and ensure equitable participation, the VCT approach has proven notably effective in fostering students' cognitive and affective development. The findings indicate that integrating the Value Clarification Technique within reflective frameworks like Classroom Action Research can effectively transform students' moral perspectives and behavioral tendencies. This approach facilitates not only the recognition of core values but also their embodiment, fostering learners who are intellectually capable, ethically aware, and socially empathetic.

CONCLUSION

Findings from the two-cycle Classroom Action Research indicate that the Value Clarification Technique (VCT) is an effective pedagogical model for cultivating five essential character traits, religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and tolerance, among elementary school students. Evidence of improvement was observed not only in students' cognitive test scores but also in their behavioral consistency within and beyond the classroom setting. Through structured activities such as group discussions, case-based

analyses, and reflective exercises, students developed critical thinking skills, value discernment, and ethical decision-making capabilities. Notably, during the lesson on tolerance, students were able to translate abstract concepts into concrete actions that demonstrated inclusivity and mutual respect, highlighting the model's relevance to character education in primary schools.

The implementation of the VCT model is also well aligned with the objectives of Indonesia's Merdeka Curriculum and the Pancasila Student Profile, promoting holistic, contextualized, and value-oriented learning. However, this study was limited by its small sample size, short intervention period, and single-institution focus, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Furthermore, the research did not assess long-term behavioral changes or comparative effectiveness across different character education approaches. To ensure the sustainability and scalability of the VCT model, ongoing professional development for teachers, institutional support, and inter-teacher collaboration are crucial. Future researchers are encouraged to investigate the long-term impact of VCT through longitudinal studies, apply the model across varied educational and cultural contexts, and explore its integration with digital learning tools such as the "APP Nusantara". Additionally, comparative studies involving other character-building methodologies could provide deeper insights into the relative effectiveness of VCT in diverse learning environments.

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