

Improving Midwifery Education: A Strategic Approach to Strengthening Character Development for Professional Excellence

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Abstract. Character education in midwifery is essential, as the profession demands not only academic competence but also ethical conduct in providing health services. Midwifery professionals must embody high integrity, empathy, professionalism, and the ability to maintain dignity. However, the integration of character education into midwifery education remains insufficient because of challenges, such as inadequate curriculum integration, limited teaching resources, lack of field experience, and ineffective character evaluation. This study utilizes George Robert Terry's management principles and Thomas Lickona's character education framework, alongside Ministry of Health standards, to analyze the management of Character Education Strengthening (CES) in improving graduate quality at the DIII Midwifery Program at Universitas Faletahan Banten and STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang. Using a qualitative case study approach, the data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation. The results showed that systematic CES management, encompassing planning, organising, implementing, and evaluating, significantly enhances both the character and competence of midwifery graduates, aligning them with professional standards and ethics. Challenges such as limited human resources and resistance to character education integration can be addressed by enhancing lecturer training and raising awareness of its importance for community services. Therefore, operational standards for midwifery character education are essential for producing graduates who excel academically and possess strong professional ethics, benefiting both the profession and society.

Keywords: Character education, Service management, Graduate quality

1. Introduction

The quality of professional health workers, especially midwives, is important for ensuring the health and well-being of mothers and babies. In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the importance of character education in midwifery training, as this directly affects their professional behaviour and the quality of care they provide. Alarming statistics on maternal and infant mortality highlight the urgent need for a paradigm shift in midwifery education, which emphasises not only technical skills, but also the ethical and moral dimensions of care. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 810 women die every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth,

underscoring the importance of educated and ethically grounded midwives in mitigating this tragedy [1].

Character education, defined as the process of developing ethical and responsible individuals, is important in midwifery education. This includes values, such as empathy, integrity, and respect, which are essential for effective patient care. Research has shown that graduates who receive character education are more likely to exhibit professional behaviours that improve patient outcomes [2]. Additionally, expert opinions suggest that integrating character education into the curriculum can lead to a more holistic approach to midwifery training, ultimately improving the quality of graduates entering the workforce [3].

Barriers to character education implementation often arise because of the limited time and resources. In many midwifery colleges, the curriculum focuses more on mastering technical skills and clinical midwifery theory, whereas character education is often considered less important and treated as complementary. Some studies have shown that midwifery students often feel burdened by intensive academic and practicum demands, leaving little opportunity to reflect on the moral values they teach. This causes an imbalance between technical competence and character development, which ultimately affects the quality of midwifery services in the world of work. Therefore, it is important to develop a more holistic curriculum model in which character education is not only taught in theory courses but also applied directly in clinical practice and daily interactions on campus.

In addition, lecturer training in character education is a crucial factor for the successful implementation of character education in midwifery colleges. As explained only a small proportion of lecturers undergo character education training. Most lecturers focus more on teaching midwifery technical skills, and the development of student characteristics is often neglected. Character education requires a more interactive and reflective approach, which requires lecturers not only to teach material but also to set an example by demonstrating ethical and professional values. Therefore, training lecturers that focus on character-based teaching methods is essential to guide students in developing attitudes and behaviours that are in line with humanistic midwifery values.

The long-term impact of effective character education is the creation of midwives who are not only competent in technical aspects but also have a professional attitude, empathy, and the ability to build strong relationships with patients. This is important for improving the quality of midwifery services and strengthening public confidence in the midwifery profession. A report from The Royal College showed that a lack of empathy and communication from midwives can reduce the quality of the patient experience, leading to decreased patient satisfaction with midwifery services. Therefore, strengthening character education, including the development of communication, empathy, and professional ethics skills, must be a major focus in midwifery education. Further research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of character education implementation and identify the factors that influence the success of character education in midwifery colleges.

Character education in midwifery plays an important role in producing graduates who not only master technical skills but also have professional attitudes, strong ethics, and good interpersonal skills. However, at Faletahan Banten

University and Widya Dharma Husada College of Health, there are several challenges to strengthening character education. First, the integration of character education into the curriculum is still weak, so the main focus is on mastering midwifery technical skills, without paying attention to the development of ethical values and characters that support professional practice. Second, there is a lack of teaching staff with competence in character education, which affects the implementation of these values among the students.

In addition, inadequate field experience is a major problem, where students feel unprepared to face the world of work because of the lack of emphasis on character building in field practice activities. This contributes to the unpreparedness of graduates to face non-technical challenges such as communication with patients and stress management. Evaluation of character development and graduate competencies is also limited, and the existing curriculum does not fully support the character development required in the midwifery profession. The lack of facilities and resources for soft skills and interpersonal skills training also presents a challenge in building the character required by the profession. More structured character education and ongoing evaluation are essential for improving the quality of midwifery graduates at both institutions.

The health education landscape continues to evolve, with an increasing emphasis on integrating character education into the curriculum, especially in midwifery programmes. This shift is driven by the recognition that technical skills alone are insufficient to produce competent health workers. Character education, which includes the development of ethical values, empathy, and professionalism, is essential for midwives who play an important role in the health of mothers and babies. Recent studies have shown that midwives with a strong character are better positioned to provide compassionate care and make ethical decisions in complex situations [6]. Worrying maternal and infant mortality rates worldwide underscore the urgent need for a technically skilled and morally grounded workforce.

Research has shown that character education can significantly improve the quality of graduates in various fields including health [7]. In addition, the integration of character education into vocational training has been shown to improve student learning outcomes, as evidenced by the findings of Muji et al., who evaluated the implementation of a character-based curriculum in secondary schools [8]. These studies collectively support the idea that character education is an important component of professional training, especially in fields that require a high level of interpersonal interaction and ethical decision making.

Although a growing body of literature advocates character education, there remains a striking gap in its implementation in midwifery education. Although character education has been extensively studied in the nursing and other health disciplines, its specific application in midwifery programs has not been thoroughly explored [9]. This article aims to position itself in this context by discussing the need for a structured approach to integrate character education into the midwifery curriculum. This study sought to contribute to the ongoing discourse on improving the quality of midwifery graduates by examining existing practices and proposing a management framework.

The main objective of this study was to investigate the integration of character education into midwifery education programs. This study argues that a systematic management approach to character education can improve the quality of midwifery graduates significantly. By fostering an environment that prioritises ethical behaviour and professional integrity, educational institutions can produce midwives who are not only skilled practitioners but also compassionate caregivers. This hypothesis is based on the understanding that character education is not only an addition to technical training but also a fundamental component of professional development in healthcare [10].

Research conducted emphasised the importance of teacher competence in the successful implementation of educational programmes, which shows that the same principle applies to midwifery education. Furthermore, highlighted the role of practical learning experiences in developing conceptual and procedural competencies among students, which is particularly important for midwives who must deal with complex clinical situations. These findings underscore the need for a holistic approach to midwifery education that integrates character development with technical training. In addition, literature shows that character education can be effectively implemented through a variety of pedagogical strategies, including experiential learning and reflective practice [7]. These methods encourage students to engage in real-world scenarios, thereby promoting empathy and ethical reasoning. Educational program management plays an important role in facilitating this pedagogical approach, ensuring that character education is integrated into the structure of midwifery training.

Positioning this article in the existing literature, it is evident that, although character education is recognised as important in healthcare, its specific application in midwifery education requires further exploration. By synthesising insights from various studies, this study aims to provide a comprehensive framework for integrating character education into midwifery programmes, which will ultimately improve the quality of graduates.

2. Methods

This study employs a mixed-methods approach that integrates both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. The qualitative aspect explores the perceptions and experiences of midwifery educators and students regarding character education, whereas the quantitative component measures the effectiveness of character development initiatives in midwifery education. This study focuses on midwifery programs across multiple institutions and examines how character education is integrated into the curriculum to enhance professional competence among graduates. Participants included midwifery educators, current students, and recent graduates, selected through purposive sampling to ensure diverse perspectives. Data collection involved surveys, semi-structured interviews, and focus-group discussions. Surveys will assess perceptions of character education using Likert-scale items and open-ended questions, whereas interviews and focus groups will provide deeper insights into the experiences, challenges, and perceived impact of character education in midwifery training.

The study was conducted in four phases: (1) development and validation of research instruments, (2) participant recruitment through collaboration with midwifery institutions, (3) data collection via online surveys, in-person or virtual interviews, and focus groups, and (4) data analysis using descriptive statistics for quantitative responses and thematic analysis for qualitative data. Numerical data were manually analysed to identify trends, whereas qualitative data were coded and categorised into themes to obtain meaningful insights. The combination of these methods ensures a comprehensive understanding of the role of character education in midwifery programs and provides evidence-based recommendations for strengthening professional ethics and values in midwifery education.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Planning of Character Education Strengthening Management in Midwifery Services

This study examines the planning of character education to strengthen management in midwifery services at Universitas Faletahan Banten (UFB) and STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang (WDH). Universitas Faletahan Banten implemented an integrated curriculum that combines technical midwifery knowledge with managerial skills, ethics, and leadership. The program aims to prepare students to become technically competent healthcare professionals who possess communication, empathy, and critical thinking skills. Through case-based approaches and clinical simulations, students gain practical experience in various settings, including large hospitals and community health centres, to ensure that their skills are ready to be applied in the field.

In addition to the comprehensive curriculum, Universitas Faletahan Banten emphasised character education as part of the development of professional midwives. This character education program included the development of empathy, effective communication, and professional ethics. Students are involved in in-depth practical activities, such as case studies, role-playing, and community services, to sharpen their social and emotional skills. Evaluations were conducted systematically through feedback from mentors, patients, and the community to ensure that graduates were ready to contribute to the healthcare sector with comprehensive skills.

On the other hand, STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang focuses on developing clinical skills and characteristics closely related to midwifery practice. The practice-based midwifery curriculum not only teaches technical skills but also integrates materials on professional ethics, effective communication, and social responsibility. Character education is applied through intensive practical activities that prioritise clinical skills such as managing childbirth and caring for mothers and infants. In these activities, students encounter real-world situations that require them to demonstrate empathy, good communication, and composure when handling emotional stress.

Table 1. Planning of Character Education Strengthening in Midwifery Services at UFB and WDH

No	Planning of Management for CES in Midwifery Services	UFB	WDH
1	Curriculum Approach	Integrates midwifery techniques with ethics, managerial skills, and leadership.	Focuses on midwifery practice and professional ethics.
2	Practicum Approach	Case simulations and community service.	Intensive clinical practicum in the field.
3	Character Evaluation	Evaluation through feedback from mentors and the community.	Assessment of clinical competence and character during practicum.
4	Role of Lecturers in Character Education	Lecturers guide through social activities and empathetic teaching.	Lecturers as role models through professional mentoring.

Source: Data processed by the researcher

STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang also strengthens character education by involving lecturers and clinical instructors as role models in attitudes and behaviors. This program is reinforced through mentoring, which helps students develop professional characteristics. Assessments at STIKes focus on clinical competence and student characteristics in practicum situations. Additionally, extracurricular activities such as social services and health campaigns provide students with opportunities to enhance their empathy, care, and social responsibility. As a result, graduates from STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang are not only excellent in technical skills, but also possess strong professional attitudes and high midwifery ethics.

The implementation of Character Education (CES) at Universitas Faletahan Banten and STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang prioritises a holistic approach within the midwifery curriculum. At both institutions, character education is designed not only to produce graduates proficient in technical skills but also those with integrity, empathy, and high professional ethics. This process involves designing a curriculum that integrates character development across both theoretical and practical aspects of midwifery education. At Universitas Faletahan Banten, character values are integrated through a structured curriculum, while STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang emphasises clinical experiences and mentorship from experienced practitioners to develop students' character competencies.

According to management theory, character education planning is conducted both systematically and comprehensively. Universitas Faletahan Banten and STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang designed CES programs with clear and measurable objectives such as improving empathy and effective communication. These goals are monitored through periodic evaluations that assess students' character development, such as their communication skills with patients or their ability to handle emotionally challenging situations. The program also adopted a flexible and adaptive approach, allowing for changes based on feedback from students and field practitioners.

Collaboration between academics, healthcare practitioners, and students is also an essential part of CES planning at both institutions. The Universitas Faletahan Banten involves various stakeholders in designing the curriculum to ensure that character

values are aligned with real-world needs. At STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang, strong relationships with clinics and hospitals supported the implementation of character education. Additionally, mentorship programs involving experienced midwifery practitioners provide students the opportunity to learn directly from professionals who can model the application of characters in midwifery practice. Through well-planned and collaborative strategies, both institutions aim to produce graduates who are not only technically skilled but also possess a strong character and are ready to face professional challenges.

3.2 Organizing Character Education Management in Midwifery

The character education management organisation in the DIII Midwifery Study Program at Universitas Faletehan Banten is designed in a structured and integrative manner, involving various stakeholders, including the Program Coordinator, lecturers, character development team, and Practicum Coordinator. Collaboration with external institutions such as hospitals and community health centres ensures that character strengthening becomes an integral part of midwifery education, encompassing technical competencies, professionalism, and student character. The Curriculum Development Committee plays a crucial role in designing and updating the curriculum to meet the evolving needs of the midwifery field, involving lecturers, practitioners, and student representatives, while ensuring relevance to the industry and current clinical practices.

Additionally, the Curriculum Development Committee places significant emphasis on character strengthening through the development of soft skills, such as communication, leadership, and professional ethics. The curriculum not only teaches technical midwifery skills, but also shapes midwives who can adapt, communicate effectively, and demonstrate high levels of empathy and work ethics. The Quality Assurance Unit (UPM) plays a vital role in ensuring the quality of education through continuous evaluation of teaching, curriculum, facilities, and practicum activities. Through academic audits and the development of teaching staff competencies, the UPM ensures ongoing improvements and the relevance of practical experiences with the latest developments in midwifery.

At STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang, the organisation of character education is more focused on midwifery specialisation, emphasising clinical skills and character development directly relevant to midwifery practice. The head of the study program is directly responsible for the management of education and character strengthening, collaborating with lecturers and practitioners to ensure that the curriculum is of high quality, and supports the development of student character. The curriculum development team at STIKes involves experienced lecturers and practitioners to design a curriculum that aligns with the needs of the workforce and prevailing standards of midwifery practice.

In both institutions, the organisation of character education management goes beyond the curriculum, incorporating practical experiences that reflect real-world challenges in midwifery practice. By fostering partnerships with healthcare facilities such as hospitals and community health centres, students gain direct exposure to clinical settings where they can apply technical skills while simultaneously reinforcing the values of empathy, professionalism, and ethical conduct. This hands-on experience

is essential in shaping future midwives who not only excel in their technical capabilities, but also understand the importance of interpersonal skills in providing compassionate care. Additionally, continuous collaboration between academic staff and healthcare practitioners ensures that the character education framework remains relevant to the current demands of the profession, helping students develop a holistic understanding of their roles as health professionals. Through these organised efforts, both universities are creating an environment in which character education is seamlessly integrated into the academic and clinical aspects of midwifery, ultimately producing graduates who are well equipped to meet both the technical and ethical demands of the profession.

Table 2. Organization of Character Education Management in Midwifery Services at UFB and WDH

No	Organization of Character Education Management (CES) in Midwifery Services	UFB	WDH
1	Organizational Team	Involves the Program Study Coordinator, lecturers, and character development team.	Managed by the Program Study Head, lecturers, and practitioners.
2	Curriculum Committee Role	Focuses on curriculum development that integrates soft skills and technical skills	Focuses on a curriculum based on clinical skills and midwifery practice.
3	External Collaboration	Collaboration with hospitals and health centers for practicum.	Collaboration with healthcare facilities for in-depth clinical experience.
4	Evaluation and Quality Assurance	UPM oversees the overall quality of education.	Evaluation focuses on clinical skills and professional ethics.

Source: Data processed by the researcher.

Collaboration with healthcare facilities such as hospitals and clinics is a critical element in the organisation of the midwifery program at STIKes. These partnerships provide students with direct, hands-on experience in real clinical situations. The STIKes also has a performance evaluation unit that regularly monitors students' clinical skills and behaviour, including professional ethics and interactions with patients, to ensure that students meet high standards in both skills and character. The faculty development program at STIKes focuses on enhancing teaching abilities in the context of midwifery and interpersonal skills relevant to clinical teaching and the formation of student character.

The organisation of CES management in midwifery at the Universitas Faletahan Banten and STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang involves good coordination among various units to ensure the integration of character education throughout the learning process. According an organisation is the process of arranging and coordinating resources to achieve established objectives. At Universitas Faletahan Banten, the organisation is carried out by forming a team consisting of academic advisors, program coordinators, and quality assurance representatives. Each team member plays a specific role in designing the curriculum, monitoring program implementation, and conducting periodic evaluations to ensure that character

strengthening is systematically integrated into both the curriculum and the practicum. This aligns with research, which emphasises the importance of organizational structure in supporting character education in health education curricula.

At STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang, the organisation also involves effective coordination between the curriculum and character development units to ensure that character values are taught not only in classrooms but also applied in field practice. A clear task division based on each team member's competency is essential in this organisation. Mentions that proper task allocation optimizes available resources. At STIKes Widya Dharma Husada, faculty members with expertise in character education develop training modules, whereas field mentors ensure that students apply character values in clinical practice. This task division allows character education to be efficiently integrated into midwifery technical skills.

Organizational planning for CES in midwifery includes establishing standards and evaluation systems to measure goal achievement. highlights that evaluation ensures program effectiveness. At Universitas Faletahan Banten, evaluations are based on field observations and student-patient questionnaires that assess character in practice. STIKes Widya Dharma Husada uses indicators like empathy and ethical adherence, observed during practice. Both institutions use structured evaluations for continuous improvement in their midwifery CES programs, as emphasised by [13] in the context of ongoing improvement in midwifery education.

3.3 Implementation of Character Education Management in Midwifery

The DIII Midwifery Program at Universitas Faletahan Banten focuses on producing technically skilled and professionally responsible graduates. The curriculum integrates character values, such as empathy, responsibility, and collaboration, with practicum sessions that emphasise professional behaviour through direct patient interactions. Students gain real-life experiences in clinics and hospitals, and character development is supported by ethics classes, community services, leadership training, and mentorship programs.

Table 3. Implementation of Character Education Management in Midwifery Services at UFB and WDH

No	Implementation of CES in Midwifery Services	UFB	WDH
1	Curriculum Approach	Integration of character in a multidisciplinary curriculum focusing on managerial and professionalism aspects.	Focus on direct clinical skills and character development relevant to midwifery practice.
2	Focus on Practicum	Practicum in clinics and hospitals to apply professional character.	Intensive practicum with simulations and reflections to build interpersonal skills.

3	Character Development Program	Character development through ethics classes, leadership training, and community service.	Character training with role-playing and more applicable reflections.
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Source: Data processed by the researcher

The implementation of CES at STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang focuses more on developing clinical skills and characters directly relevant to midwifery practice. The curriculum is designed to provide students with hands-on experiences through intensive practice in hospitals and clinics, with character development programs involving simulations, role-playing, and reflection sessions to build interpersonal skills. Competency evaluations were conducted separately to assess the students' clinical skills and professional attitudes. Lecturers and clinical mentors provide assessments to ensure that students are not only technically competent, but also empathetic and ethical in their interactions with patients.

Although both institutions have different approaches, they emphasise character development and clinical skills in alignment with the needs of the midwifery profession. Universitas Faletehan Banten integrates character education into a multidisciplinary curriculum with an emphasis on managerial aspects, whereas STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang prioritises direct clinical practice with interpersonal skill training. Both approaches aim to ensure that graduates are prepared to face the challenges of the midwifery profession with a balance between technical competence and strong character.

The implementation of CES management in midwifery at Universitas Faletehan Banten and STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang involves the execution of curricula that integrate both technical education and the development of student characteristics. Various teaching methods such as case-based learning and simulations have been used to enhance students' practical skills and character. Faculty members are responsible for implementing the established curriculum and regular monitoring to ensure that students actively engage in the learning process. This aligns with theory, which states that effective organisations must include activities that enhance both skills and character in real-life situations.

The program also integrates clinical experiences, in which students have the opportunity to interact directly with patients and practitioners. With these opportunities, students not only develop midwifery technical skills but also receive valuable direct feedback on the application of character values in clinical situations. This program specifically includes professional ethics training and communication skills, which are crucial in the healthcare field. The application of character education in clinical practice strengthens the role of faculty and mentors as facilitators who guide students in applying theory to practice, which is consistent with Terry's principles regarding the importance of leadership and motivation in achieving goals.

At both institutions, faculty and mentors play a vital role in creating an environment conducive to the development of student characteristics. Through activities such as discussions, practicum experiences, and direct interactions, they inspire students to internalise character values in their professional work suggests that motivating members of an organization requires a well-implemented approach, which is effectively applied by faculty and mentors to encourage students to develop

outstanding character. Thus, the implementation of CES management in midwifery at both institutions reflects the application of effective motivational leadership in creating graduates who are not only technically competent but also possess strong and professional character

3.4 Evaluation of Character Education Management in Midwifery

The evaluation of Character Education Management at Universitas Faletahan Banten was conducted through a comprehensive approach, including the evaluation of the curriculum, teaching, practicum, and field experience. The curriculum is regularly evaluated to ensure that the material being taught is relevant to the evolving fields of midwifery and character education. Practicum assessments involve observations by clinical mentors and feedback from partner healthcare facilities to ensure that students can apply midwifery skills and demonstrate a professional character.

At STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang, the evaluation system focuses more on students' clinical competency and character in midwifery practice. Evaluation is conducted through direct observation in clinical practice, assessment of professional ethics, and interactions with patients. Feedback from clinical practitioners plays a crucial role in evaluating student progress, while program and faculty performance evaluations are conducted regularly to ensure the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching methods. Certification and accreditation processes also play an important role in evaluating midwifery education quality to ensure it meets national and international standards

Table 4. Evaluation of Character Education Management in Midwifery Services at UFB and WDH

No	Evaluation of CES Management in Midwifery Services	UFB	WDH
1	Evaluation Approach	Comprehensive evaluation (curriculum, teaching, practicum, feedback).	Focus on evaluating clinical competencies and student character.
2	Curriculum Evaluation	Routine evaluations for curriculum relevance.	Focus on midwifery practice standards.
3	Practicum Assessment	Mentor observations and feedback from healthcare facilities.	Practical field assessments.
4	Role of Feedback	Feedback from students and external stakeholders.	Feedback from clinical practitioners.
5	Certification and Accreditation	Not focused on certification.	Certification and accreditation are part of the evaluation process.

Source: Data processed by the researcher

Both institutions adopt different yet complementary evaluation approaches. The Universitas Faletahan Banten uses a more comprehensive and multidimensional evaluation method that covers the curriculum, practicum, and feedback from various

stakeholders. In contrast, STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang placed more emphasis on practical evaluations of clinical competence and student character, with assessments directly aligned with field needs. Both approaches aim to ensure that graduates possess not only technical skills, but also the characteristics required by the midwifery profession.

The evaluation was comprehensive at Universitas Faletahan Banten, covering assessments of the curriculum, teaching methods, and student learning outcomes. Assessments were conducted through examinations, final projects, and practical evaluation. Feedback from students, lecturers, and stakeholders was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and implementation of character education. Ramli (2024) reinforces the integration of character education into health education curricula, including midwifery. Evaluations at Universitas Faletahan Banten provided a clear picture of the effectiveness of character education integration in the midwifery learning process. This evaluation aligns with theory, which emphasises evaluation as a systematic process for assessing effectiveness, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and providing feedback for continuous improvement.

At STIKes Widya Dharma Husada, the evaluation is competency-based and covers both technical skills and student characteristics. This assessment was conducted by lecturers, clinical mentors, and feedback from patients to ensure that students met the necessary competency standards for midwifery practice. This competency-based evaluation supports principle, which views evaluation as a tool to ensure goal achievement and continuous improvement in organisations. The evaluation results at STIKes Widya Dharma Husada provide insights into how competency-based assessments reflect the development of both character and practical skills.

Control of CES management at both institutions involves the continuous evaluation of student character development. At Universitas Faletahan Banten, control is integrated into academic evaluations, whereas at STIKes Widya Dharma Husada, a more experience-based approach is used, as observed by mentors during practical training. Continuous evaluation enables both institutions to monitor the effectiveness of their CES programs and make the necessary adjustments. Research by Armiyanti (2022) also supports the notion that effective organisation in midwifery education is crucial for achieving character education and competency goals.

3.5 Barriers in Character Education Management in Midwifery

At Universitas Faletahan Banten, challenges in Character Education Management involve several key issues, including instructors' limited competency in teaching character values such as communication, empathy, and professional ethics. This is exacerbated by a dense curriculum, often sidelining character education in favour of technical instruction. Additionally, the integration of character education into the midwifery curriculum remains suboptimal, with unclear links between theory and field practices. Inconsistent evaluations that focus more on technical aspects hinder the measurement of students' character development. Furthermore, on-the-ground challenges, such as overemphasis on technical tasks during practicums, often neglect important character aspects such as communication and empathy. To address these issues, closer collaboration between educational institutions and field placement

facilities, along with more structured evaluations of character applications in real-world settings, are needed.

At STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang, the primary barrier is the strong focus on clinical skills within the midwifery curriculum, which results in less attention paid to character development, including empathy and professional ethics. Limited collaboration with healthcare facilities and a restricted number of practicum cases reduce the variety of experiences available to students, impacting their practical skill development. Evaluations of character and professional ethics are often subjective, complicating objective assessments and hindering the growth of professional attitudes. Moreover, a lack of faculty training in character education and assessment techniques affects the quality of mentorship provided. The challenge of balancing urgent clinical needs with character development also arises, as heavy clinical focus sometimes overshadows the importance of character education.

Challenges in implementing CES in the Midwifery Study Programs at Universitas Faletahan Banten and STIKes Widya Dharma Husada include several obstacles that affect the program's effectiveness. One major barrier is a lack of understanding and awareness among lecturers regarding the importance of character education in the learning process. Research by Nurhayati and Irawati (2021) revealed that limited training for lecturers on CES significantly affects their ability to integrate character values into teaching. At both institutions, many lecturers were uncertain about incorporating character values into the curriculum, leading to the suboptimal implementation of CES. This aligns with findings from which show that lecturers feel unprepared to integrate character education, resulting in a focus on technical aspects and a neglect of critical character development in midwifery education.

Another barrier is the misalignment between character education goals and the academic culture within institutions. Ramli (2024) indicated that students often view character education as non-essential, prioritising academic grades and professional competencies over character development. Academic culture overly focuses on exam results, and technical competencies tend to neglect character aspects, making it difficult for students to apply values such as empathy, effective communication, and social responsibility in daily healthcare practice. A more holistic educational approach that integrates character values into both academic and extracurricular activities could help to address this barrier. Mentoring programs, community services, and extracurricular activities focused on character development could help balance academic education and character strengthening.

The lack of support from management poses a significant challenge for implementing CES. According to the success of character education programs depends heavily on support from institutional leadership, including resources, such as funding, time, and facilities. At the Universitas Faletahan Banten and STIKes Widya Dharma Husada, limited funding for character education activities such as workshops and seminars led to fewer opportunities for lecturers and students to deepen their understanding of the importance of character education. Without adequate support, the implementation of character education programs has been hindered. This corresponds with Kotter theory, which emphasises the importance of commitment and involvement from all organizational members in creating a successful change. Therefore, better communication among management, lecturers, and students is necessary to ensure sufficient support for the CES programs.

Strategies involving regular lecturer training, changes in academic culture, and strong management support are essential for overcoming these barriers. Training programs focusing on practical experience and case studies in midwifery practice could enhance lecturers' understanding of character education's integration into teaching. Additionally, to ensure the success of CES programs, students should be actively involved in designing and implementing these programs. With these measures, it is expected that barriers will be minimised, and the effectiveness of character education programs will increase.

3.6 Solutions for Strengthening Character Education Management in Midwifery

To address the barriers to character education management at Universitas Faletahan Banten, solutions include providing soft skills training for faculty, such as effective communication, empathy, and professional ethics. This could involve regular workshops, certifications, and collaborations with psychology experts. Furthermore, revising the curriculum to integrate character values into every technical course using case-based approaches and multidisciplinary collaborations is crucial. Character education can also be reinforced through practicums and simulations, with evaluations of both technical skills and character. Continuous evaluation through portfolio-based assessments and 360-degree methods can provide a comprehensive view of students' character development, while post-practicum reflections support more effective character learning.

At STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang, solutions to strengthen character education in midwifery services included integrating character education with clinical aspects through modules on professional ethics, interpersonal skills, and stress management. Case-based and simulation-based learning methods can help students develop characters according to their field needs. Diversifying practicum experiences through partnerships with various healthcare facilities is also important to provide a wider range of clinical experiences. Structured and objective competency-based evaluations, along with faculty training in integrating character and clinical skills into the curriculum, will improve the accuracy of competency and character assessments. Close collaboration between faculty and clinical practitioners, including regular feedback sessions, will enhance students' practical skills and professional attitudes.

To address the barriers to implementing CES in the Midwifery Study Programs at Universitas Faletahan Banten and STIKes Widya Dharma Husada, the solutions focus on developing a structured curriculum and relevant clinical experiences. The Universitas Faletahan Banten prioritises the integration of a comprehensive curriculum with a focus on character education and improving facilities to support learning. Additionally, regular training of lecturers is crucial for enhancing their understanding of the importance of character education. showed that structured training can improve lecturers' ability to integrate character education into teaching, ultimately strengthening CES implementation.

STIKes Widya Dharma Husada, on the other hand, focuses more on enhancing relevant clinical experiences for students related to character education in midwifery. Through broader cooperation with healthcare facilities, STIKes aims to provide more in-depth competency-based practical experience. Research by Ferry shows that involving students in extracurricular activities focused on characters can strengthen

their understanding of the importance of characters in midwifery. Through mentoring programs, community services, and panel discussions, students are expected to better apply character values in their daily practice.

Moreover, a deeper change in academic culture is required to address the challenge of balancing academic achievement and character development. An academic culture that overly emphasises exam results and technical competencies often makes students view character education as an additional, less important aspect. Research shows that students often prioritise the academic aspects of character development, which leads to a misalignment between character education goals and academic culture. Therefore, extracurricular activities focusing on characters should be increased to involve students actively in the character development process.

Strong management support is crucial for CES success. Management must allocate sufficient resources such as funding, time, and facilities to prioritise character education. According policies that support character education development and incentives for lecturers are required to create a conducive environment. Research-based evaluations are important for continuous improvement. Through these steps, graduates are expected to develop both professional skills and a strong character to face challenges in midwifery practice.

3.7 Improving Graduate Quality in Character Education Strengthening

Improving graduate quality in Character Education Management at the Universitas Faletehan Banten can be achieved through strategies such as continuous faculty training, integrating character-based curricula, and comprehensive evaluations. Faculty training focused on soft skills such as communication and empathy will enhance teaching quality, while integrating character values into every technical course ensures that students possess both practical skills and a strong character. Portfolio-based evaluations and personal reflections allow for a thorough assessment of students' character development, supported by feedback from faculty members, field mentors, and alumni. Character-based practicums with field mentors are essential to ensure that students can apply character values in real-world situations, and recognising outstanding students for their characters can motivate others to improve themselves.

On the other hand, STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang focuses on in-depth clinical experiences and situational character education with a competency assessment system that involves evaluating both technical skills and character in clinical settings. STIKes has developed planned strategies to improve graduate quality, including offering diverse clinical experiences through partnerships with healthcare facilities and practical rotation programs. Character education is also integrated into clinical experience through professional ethics, communication, and stress management training. Intensive faculty training and collaboration with clinical practitioners ensures high-quality teaching and assessment. Using this approach, STIKes Widya Dharma Husada Tangerang ensures that graduates are not only technically proficient but also possess the professional character necessary for midwifery practice.

To strengthen the management of Character Education Enhancement in the Midwifery Study Programs at Universitas Faletehan Banten and STIKes Widya Dharma Husada, a systematic and integrated strategy is essential. A key strategy is to establish a clear vision and mission for character education. A vision such as

"Producing midwifery graduates who are not only professionally competent but also have outstanding character' provides a clear direction for all stakeholders, including lecturers, students, and management. This aligns with Terry's (2000) management theory, which emphasises the importance of setting specific and measurable goals as the first step in achieving organizational effectiveness.

Another strategy is to integrate character education into every aspect of a curriculum. Revising and developing a curriculum that prioritises character education, not just as an addition but as an integral part of courses, is crucial. Research shows that integrating character education into the curriculum can increase students' awareness of the importance of characters in midwifery. Therefore, lecturers need to be trained to incorporate character values into their teaching so that students can internalise these values in their everyday learning processes.

Increasing students' involvement in character development activities is also a vital strategy. Programs such as social activities, community services, and student organisations provide students with opportunities to apply character values to real-world contexts. Research shows that active student involvement in such activities can enhance their understanding and application of character values in daily life. Thus, institutions should facilitate and support activities that encourage student participation in character development, thereby allowing students to experience the benefits of character education.

4. Conclusion

An analysis of the findings on the management of Character Education Enhancement (CES) in the DIII Midwifery Study Programs at Universitas Faletehan Banten and STIKes Widya Dharma Husada shows that implementing systematic and well-planned CES management improves graduate quality. Strategies such as a clear vision and mission, integrating character education into the curriculum, encouraging active student involvement, and strong management support create a learning environment conducive to character development. Principles of effective management, such as planning, organising, implementing, and evaluating, are crucial for the application of CES. Thorough planning sets clear goals, organising ensures optimal resource allocation, implementation provides opportunities for character value application, and continuous evaluation supports program improvements. However, challenges such as limited resources, resistance to character education, and a lack of comprehensive evaluation need to be addressed. Ongoing improvements in CES management will support these institutions in producing graduates who are excellent, ethical, and meaningfully contribute to the midwifery profession and society.

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