

Development and Practical Application of Character-Based Reading Materials in Junior High School English Instruction

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ABSTRACT

The integration of character values into English instruction is essential for holistic education, yet existing materials often emphasize linguistic skills over moral development. Teachers face challenges in promoting deeper internalization of values beyond the receiving and responding phases. This study addresses the gap by developing character-based English reading materials for junior high school students. The research employed the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, Evaluation) with a mixed-methods approach. Needs analysis was conducted through observations, interviews, and documentation, followed by product development. Practicality and effectiveness were evaluated using questionnaires, observation sheets, and pretest–posttest assessments involving two teachers and 28 students. The developed materials integrated key values such as integrity, responsibility, cooperation, diligence, and compassion into reading activities. Practicality tests showed very positive responses from teachers ($M = 4.34$) and students ($M = 4.54$). Student learning outcomes improved significantly, with scores increasing from a pretest average of 71.96 to a posttest average of 85.17. Classroom observations also confirmed high engagement, responsibility, and collaboration during lessons. The findings demonstrate that character-based reading materials enhance both language proficiency and moral development. The integration of reflective activities and value-based assessment supported students' higher-order thinking and ethical reasoning, aligning with cognitive, affective, and social development theories. Character-integrated English reading materials are practical, effective, and align with curriculum goals. They bridge the scarcity of value-based instructional resources and provide a model for embedding character education in language learning. Future studies should examine long-term impacts and explore broader implementation across diverse educational contexts.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Education serves not only as a means of intellectual development but also as a form of mental and spiritual nurturing. When grounded in accountable academic and moral principles, education can foster resilience, ethical reasoning, and emotional well-being (Lahmi et al., 2022; Ritonga et al., 2023). Character education, in particular, instills core values—such as integrity, responsibility, and compassion—that are essential for shaping individuals who contribute positively to society. Moral development is a fundamental aspect of education, guiding learners in distinguishing right from wrong and embedding virtues that influence lifelong behavior (Rambe, 2022; Basri, Ritonga, & Mursal, 2022). Scholars like Dewey (1909) and Kohlberg have emphasized that moral education must be interwoven into all learning experiences, as it cultivates critical thinking, ethical decision-making, and social responsibility (Dolph, Lycan, & King, 2008).

Learning is defined as the process of interaction between students, teachers, and learning resources in a learning environment. It is considered the actualization of educational goals (Rusticus et al., 2023; Fakhri et al., 2023). Until the learning objectives are met, this procedure must be continued. Teachers serve as the intermediaries who help students develop understanding (Könings et al., 2021; Ritonga et al., 2022), they are the antithesis of those who merely transfer knowledge mechanically. The amount of time a teacher spends instructing students also has a significant impact on the process's effectiveness (Fridberg et al., 2020; Abdulrahman et al., 2020).

Three domains are developed during learning: cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor. The curriculum places a strong emphasis on affectivity as the foundation for graduating with a passing grade. Integrating character education values into all disciplines (Rinaldi Putra et al., 2022; Hakim et al., 2022), including junior high school English classes, is the recommended strategy. As mentioned in the national education goals (Zahraa, Nawawi, & Muttaqin, 2024), this calls for the updating of instructional materials in the form of character development learning. Character education has a values-based approach that is centred on the requirements of the pupils in their culture. Every instructional resource that is incorporated into the character development stage of the curriculum needs to have a learning objective that is focused on moral principles.

Initial research conducted on September 13, 2013, regarding the materials used by teachers at SMP 5 Padangpanjang to teach English revealed that the instructors exclusively used reading texts from the teacher's handbook that were relevant to reading skills. The teacher's skills are limited to reading aloud from the reading book and providing answers to various questions. The results of interviews that the researchers conducted with a number of junior high school English teachers in Padangpanjang about reading text teaching materials used in English language learning reinforced the findings. They said that the four English skills are taught in an integrated way when learning the language. Students only read and respond to questions on the reading text when it comes to reading skills. Additionally, when it comes to reading skills, students only respond to questions that are related to the reading text, according to the findings of a documentation study that was conducted by collecting several junior high school English books. These books included *When English Rings the Bell*, published by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2013, *Buppener English*, published by Erlangga in 2013, and *English in Focus*, published by PT Karsa Mandiri Persada in 2008 for class VIII. Scholars and notable individuals worldwide have also expressed emphatically how important character formation is.

The development of moral principles is crucial to the execution of education, as it plays a fundamental role in shaping individuals' beliefs about what is right and good compared to what is wrong or bad (Rambe, 2022). Moral education involves the continuation, construction, and transformation of moral and social norms (Basri, Ritonga, & Mursal, 2022), impacting the process by which educators transmit social thoughts and virtue ethics concepts to students. This process is essential for fostering character development and guiding conduct in social activities and exchanges (Chen, Liu, Dai, & Wang, 2023). Moral reasoning, as outlined by scholars like Kohlberg, is a necessary standard of learning in today's education systems. Implementing moral education using theoretical frameworks like Kohlberg's model directly teaches moral reasoning, which is crucial for producing an

educated citizenry capable of grappling with moral dilemmas and making ethical decisions (Dolph, Lycan, & King, 2008).

John Dewey emphasizes the importance of indirect and vital moral education, highlighting that moral principle should be integrated into all aspects of school life to influence behavior positively. He argues that moral principles are inherent in community life and the structure of the individual, emphasizing the need for educators to recognize the real impact of moral education on character formation (Dewey, 1909).

Hence, the integration of moral principles into education is vital for nurturing individuals' moral development, guiding their behavior, and instilling values of fairness, justice, and care. This integration ensures that students not only acquire knowledge but also develop a strong moral compass to navigate ethical challenges in society.

Despite the recognized importance of character education, existing English teaching materials often lack systematic integration of moral values. An initial observational study at SMP 5 Padangpanjang revealed that reading instruction primarily focuses on mechanical comprehension tasks, such as answering text-based questions, without deliberate emphasis on character development (Documentation Study, 2013). Similarly, widely used textbooks—including *When English Rings the Bell* (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2013) and *English in Focus* (PT Karsa Mandiri Persada, 2008)—prioritize linguistic skills over ethical reflection. This gap underscores the need for redesigned instructional materials that align reading content with value-based learning objectives.

Character values were mostly developed through the teacher's capacity to enhance English language learning in the classroom (Heriansyah, 2018; Syandri et al., 2018; Thoyyibah et al., 2019). Furthermore, the implementation of moral education by foreign language teachers underlines the significance of discussing morals, values, and ethics in language teaching. It points out that language teaching and moral education are interrelated, with topics like family, society, and community promoting social and emotional learning while instilling moral virtues in students (Ferková & Zacharová, 2023). Moreover, including moral principles into English language instruction is necessary for students' learning experiences and needs to be done through a variety of activities (Susilawati & Dewi, 2016). To accomplish learning objectives, teachers must, however, highlight students' active participation in their English language education while also encouraging their inventiveness.

2. METHODS

This study employed a research and development (R&D) approach to design and validate educational products. According to Borg (1987), R&D in education involves developing not only tangible products such as textbooks, instructional films, or software, but also intangible outputs such as teaching strategies and training programs. Similarly, Richey and Klein (2005) define developmental research as the systematic process of designing, developing, and evaluating instructional programs, processes, and products that must demonstrate internal consistency and effectiveness. Building on these perspectives, the present study followed an R&D procedure to produce and test character-based English reading materials for junior high school students, ensuring that the final product met pedagogical standards and practical needs.

The process for creating reading instruction materials that incorporate character values in English courses was implemented by the author by following the steps involved in creating the ADDIE model, which consists of five stages: analysis, design, development, implementation, and evaluation. Figure 1 is one way to represent this ADDIE paradigm.

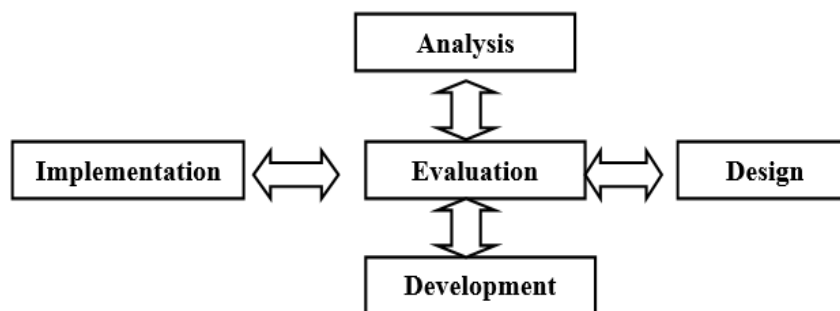


Figure 1. ADDIE Development Model

Evaluation of the reading instruction resources that have been used in certain classes. One goal of the summative evaluation process for English reading teaching resources is to determine how useful the materials are in practice. There are two ways to administer the practicality test: (1) the teacher fills out the practicality questionnaire for the teaching materials, and (2) students fill out the practicality questionnaire. Quantitative information about how well students learn using English reading teaching materials is gathered from the answers to questions answered by teachers and students, as well as the completion of observation sheets by three observers.

The purpose of the practicality test is to determine whether or not the developed reading teaching materials can be used and executed in the classroom. The application of learning utilising teacher and student books—as well as other English reading teaching materials—is tested as part of the practicality test of reading instruction.

Teachers and students complete a learning practicality assessment questionnaire as one of the instruments used to evaluate the usefulness of reading instructional resources.

Questionnaire for teacher, the purpose of this questionnaire is to get feedback on the usefulness of English reading teaching resources from two (2) English teachers. The Likert scale was used to create alternate responses and assessments for this questionnaire, which came in the following formats: strongly agree (SS), agree (S), neutral (CS), disagree (KS), and strongly disagree (TS). The following values are assigned to each option answer scale: SS=4, S=3, CS=2, KS=1, TS=0. The following table displays factors and metrics for evaluating how useful educational materials are:

Table 1: Elements and metrics for evaluating how useful instructional materials are for learning

No	Assessment aspect	Indicators
1	Range	Utilising instructional resources is quite beneficial.
		Teaching materials help in conveying learning
2	Leaning Methods	The material is very systematic and clear
		The educational resources align with the scientific method of learning.
3	Evaluation	Character development steps are included in teaching materials.
		Character is connected with assessment and has its own assessment concept.
4	Integration of character values	The evaluation tool adheres to the guidelines for instrument creation.
		Provide educational comments and have clear character values in teaching materials

Questionnaire for student, The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out how 28 (twenty-eight) English class students feel about the usefulness of the teaching resources for English reading. The Likert scale was used to create alternate responses and assessments for this questionnaire, which came in the following formats: strongly agree (SS), agree (S), neutral (CS), disagree (KS), and strongly disagree

(TS). The following values are assigned to each option answer scale: SS=5, S=4, CS=3, KS=2, TS=1. The following table displays factors and metrics for evaluating how useful educational materials are:

Table 2. Practicality indicators for student

No	Assessment aspect	Indicators
1	Activity	Contentment with engaging in learning
		Eager to take part in the learning process.
2	Motivation	Facilitating learning is simple.
		Working together in groups
3	Responsibility	Make an effort to pay attention to the lessons.
		carrying out the task effectively
4	Opt-in Value	Utilising instructional resources
		Interested in using teaching materials
		Instructional resources can aid in students' comprehension of the subject matter.
5	Social Value	Acquire new things
		promotes cooperation
		Current activities can aid in students' learning.

Using data frequency analysis approaches, data on the usefulness of learning with instructional materials (teacher and student books) were analysed using the following formula:

$$P = \frac{R}{SM}$$

P = Practicality value

R = Score obtained

SM = Maximum score

The following standards validate the obtained average: A category is considered highly practical if the average is less than 4.20; practical if the average is between 3.40 and 4.20; fairly practical if the average is between 2.60 and 3.40; less practical if the average is between 1.80 and 2.60; and not practical if the average is less than 1.80.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Findings

The analysis of student characteristics in this study focused on psychological dimensions directly relevant to the development of character-based reading materials: cognitive, moral, affective, and social aspects.

Cognitive characteristics. Adolescents (ages 13–19) experience significant cognitive growth, enabling them to reason abstractly, plan strategically, solve problems, and test hypotheses. At this stage, students also begin to engage in introspection and broaden their perspectives on religion, justice, morality, and identity (Gunarsa, 2008). These abilities provide a strong foundation for learning that requires critical and analytical thinking, including English reading comprehension.

Moral characteristics. Teenagers' moral reasoning becomes less tied to immediate situations and more grounded in universal principles. Entering the formal operational stage, they can think abstractly about ethical dilemmas and internalize values that shape their behavior. This development underscores the importance of embedding character values—such as honesty, responsibility, and cooperation—into learning materials.

Affective characteristics. Emotional intensity increases sharply during adolescence, with students experiencing a wide range of emotions such as pride, shame, affection, anger, and fear. These emotions

influence classroom dynamics and highlight the need for teaching materials that not only stimulate cognition but also foster emotional maturity and empathy.

Social characteristics. Adolescents develop stronger social cognition, recognizing individual differences and the perspectives of others. Peer influence also grows, leading to conformity pressures. Instruction that incorporates collaboration and moral discussion can guide students toward responsible social interaction.

Based on these characteristics, the development of English reading materials integrated with character values is highly appropriate. First, adolescents' cognitive capacity supports the use of a scientific learning approach that promotes reasoning, problem-solving, and value-based reflection. Second, English learning contributes to identity formation and prepares students to engage with diverse cultures, in line with the 2013 curriculum. Third, existing English reading materials lack systematic integration of character values, leaving a gap in moral and affective development.

To address these needs, the development stage produced four key outputs: (1) a Teacher's Book with character-integrated reading content and pedagogical guidance, (2) a Student's Book featuring value-based reading texts and activities, (3) a syllabus aligned with the curriculum, and (4) a lesson plan (RPP) designed to implement value-based instruction. These products were structured according to Krathwohl's (1964) affective domain taxonomy, ensuring that character values progress from initial awareness to internalization.

Table 3. Character Values-Integrated Reading Learning Design

Scientific Approach	Character Value Development Stages	Learning Process	
		Teacher activities	Student activities
Observing	<i>Receiving</i>	The teacher begins the class by discussing a few points pertaining to the assigned reading.	Students listen intently and take note of what the teacher says about the assigned reading.
Asking Questions	<i>Responding</i>	The teacher provides sample questions for the class to ask regarding the story's topic. After reading the novel, students are invited to write on the character values—discipline, caring, teamwork, hard work, and responsibility—that they have come to understand from it. Subsequently, instruct pupils to read and respond to questions derived from a similar but distinct theme text.	Based on the teacher's exemplification of the story's content, students pose questions. After reading the text and dividing into groups to reproduce its main ideas, students write the character values they have learned—discipline, caring, cooperation, hard work, and responsibility—and respond to questions derived from various readings.
Gathering Information	<i>Valuing</i>	The teacher requests that the students go over the material again, comprehend its meaning, and pay close attention to its language components, text structure, and social purposes. After that, students are required to complete a moral statement form designed to gauge their comprehension of the character values—discipline, honesty, caring, hard work, and responsibility—that they have learned from the text's content.	Students pose questions regarding linguistic components, text structure, and social functions after reading the book again and comprehending its content. Students next complete a form on moral principles to determine the degree to which these statements align with the character values—discipline, honesty, cooperation, hard work, and responsibility—that they already know.

<i>Associating</i>	<i>Associating</i>	Using the given tasks, the teacher invites the students to compile the information they debate regarding language features, text structure, and social functions. Next, analyse how the text relates to the character values of discipline, honesty, caring, cooperation, and responsibility. Then, have groups complete the form.	Through the assigned exercises, students gather information regarding social functions, text structure, and language features that they then discuss. After that, students analyse textual examples of character values (honesty, discipline, cooperation, and responsibility) and complete the form in groups.
<i>Communicating</i>	<i>Characterization</i>	The teacher invites group members to discuss language components, text structure, and social functions while also giving comments on what was learnt. After reading the two works, students are invited to draw conclusions regarding the moral principles they have learned—which include being kind, honest, helpful, disciplined, cooperative, hardworking, and responsible. The students are required to complete an I'm a Champion journal.	A teacher explains the subjects being studied while representative student groups discuss the social function, text structure, and language features. Students draw conclusions regarding the values of character (helpful, cooperative, disciplined, honest, caring, and responsible) that they have learnt from the two books. Students keep a journal called "I'm a Champion."

The reading teaching material design (teacher's book) for class VIII included two chapters of reading material pertaining to narrative, recount, and descriptive texts. For teachers who will implement the curriculum (K-13) to carry out the learning process, Chapter I provides general guidelines. The teacher's book, which is now under development, is written in Indonesian and has a bibliography at the end for references.

The student book, which is divided into three chapters in accordance with the curriculum (K-13), is used as practice material for pupils learning to read English in class VIII. The student book that was created is written in English and includes reading passages and activities that are infused with moral principles. English teachers Mrs. Zulma, and Syawal, implemented the training utilising materials for teaching English reading (Interview, 2017). The teacher and the researcher discussed how to implement the learning materials in the classroom, and this served as an explanation before the items were really used. In addition, instructors receive all the tools needed to understand how to effectively apply the usage of learning teaching materials, which include student and teacher books, syllabuses, and lesson plans. For class VIII.I, which comprised 28 pupils, special student books were provided. A pre-test was conducted on May 15, 2017, with a score of 71.96, prior to the product being applied on class VIII.1 junior high school students at SMP Negeri 5 Padangpanjang. The dates of the meetings were as follows: Saturday, May 16, 2017; Monday, May 18, 2017; Tuesday, May 19, 2017; Wednesday, May 20, 2017; Thursday, May 21, 2017; Friday, May 22, 2017 was the sixth meeting. With an 85.17 score, the most recent post-test was conducted on Tuesday, May 23, 2017.

The researcher and two observers watched the English teacher conduct the class and recorded observations throughout. This observation attempts to make sure that learning occurs in accordance with the developed materials as well as to conduct practicality tests. An observation sheet on the application of English learning teaching materials was given to the researcher and the observing teacher during the observation process.

Six times, observations of the application of learning were conducted. With an average value of 3.28 for descriptive material, 3.42 for narrative material, and 3.49 for recount material, the first three

observations were made for the respective types of material. In order for the observing instructor to conduct observations effectively, the researcher must first provide them with a comprehension of the elements that need to be observed and how to provide an observation sheet checklist. Teachers and students are given a questionnaire to complete in order to assess the practicality of applying English learning instructional materials in a scientific manner. Two teachers and twenty-eight students from class VIII.1 SMPN 5 administered the assessment. The following factors are taken into consideration by teachers when evaluating the applicability of their lesson plans: (1) coverage of the lesson plan; (2) learning strategies; (3) evaluation; and (4) incorporation of character values.

Additionally, among the practical characteristics of students' assessment replies are: (1) involvement; (2) motivation; (3) accountability; (4) respect; and (5) students' social attitudes. Teacher and student responses to reading teaching materials that are integrated into character values in English language acquisition through the use of a scientific approach comprise the practical data in this study.

By asking teachers and students in class VIII.1 SMP to complete surveys, the usefulness of reading instructional materials for English language learning was evaluated. Two teachers and twenty-eight students responded to the questionnaires. One (1) coverage of teaching materials, two (2) learning approaches, three (3) assessments, and four (4) integration of character values are among the aspects evaluated. Table 4 below summarises the data.

Table 4. Practicality Analysis of Teacher Responses

No		Teacher's Response		
		Average	SD	Category
1	Topics Covered for Teaching Materials			
	Instructional materials based on indicators	4	0	Practical
	Makes learning easier	4.5	0.7	Very Practical
	Enjoy using teaching materials	4	0	Practical
	The time is right to put it into practice.	4.5	0.7	Very Practical
	The entirety of the instructional resources	4.5	0.7	Very Practical
	can aid in learning because character development happens in stages.	4.5	0,	Very Practical
	Boost learning focus	4	0	Practical
	Average	4.3	0.38	Very Practical
2	Learning Approach			
	Accuracy of learning approach	4.5	0.7	Very Practical
	Learn new stuff by utilising instructional resources.	4.5	0.7	Very Practical
	Learn how to evaluate students' responses.	4	0	Practical
	Resolving learning challenges for teachers	4.5	0.7	Very Practical
	Average	4.4	0.35	Very Practical

3	Assessment in learning			
	The necessity of journal-based evaluation for affective assessment	The necessity of journal-based evaluation for affective assessment	The necessity of journal-based evaluation for affective assessment	The necessity of journal-based evaluation for affective assessment
	Effectiveness of learning using teaching materials	Effectiveness of learning using teaching materials	Effectiveness of learning using teaching materials	Effectiveness of learning using teaching materials
	able to put assessment principles into practice	able to put assessment principles into practice	able to put assessment principles into practice	able to put assessment principles into practice
	Appropriate instruments and assessment guidelines are selected	Appropriate instruments and assessment guidelines are selected	Appropriate instruments and assessment guidelines are selected	Appropriate instruments and assessment guidelines are selected
	suitability of the method and phases for establishing moral principles.	suitability of the method and phases for establishing moral principles	suitability of the method and phases for establishing moral principles	suitability of the method and phases for establishing moral principles
	Average	4.2	0.38	Practical
4	Integration of character values			
	Provide educational comments when doing practice check	Provide educational comments when doing practice check	Provide educational comments when doing practice check	Provide educational comments when doing practice check
	Instilling character values in learning	Instilling character values in learning	Instilling character values in learning	Instilling character values in learning
	Average per character	4.5	0.7	Very practical
	Final Average	4.34	0.45	Very practical

Table 4 shows the average score of 4.34 with a standard deviation of 0.45 for the feasibility of applying learning by reading instructional materials in English language acquisition using a scientific approach. Therefore, it can be said that reading instruction resources that incorporate moral principles into language learning are created in a highly useful way so that they can be applied to the study of English.

The following section presents the findings of the students' evaluation regarding the practicality of applying the knowledge and skills they acquired through reading instruction. This evaluation aimed to assess various aspects of their learning experience, including their engagement, motivation, sense of responsibility, and perceived value—both personal and social—of the instructional activities. The results, as summarized in Table 5, reflect students' perceptions of how feasible and meaningful it was to implement what they had learned in practice.

Table 5. Practicality Analysis of Student Response

No			Standard Deviation	Category
1	Activity	4.72	0.35	Very practical
2	Motivation	4.42	0.39	Very practical
3	Responsibility	4.53	0.35	Very practical
4	Opt-in Value	4.46	0.28	Very practical
5	Social Value	4.55	0.22	Very practical
Total		4.54	0.32	Very practical

Based on the data presented in Table 5, the evaluation of the practicality of using English reading instructional materials received an overall average score of 4.54, with a standard deviation of 0.32. This high mean score indicates a strong consensus among students that the materials are highly practical for supporting English language learning. The consistently high ratings across all assessed aspects—such as activity, motivation, responsibility, opt-in value, and social value—suggest that the materials are not only engaging but also effectively encourage student responsibility and foster both individual and collaborative learning. The low standard deviation further reinforces the consistency of positive responses, implying minimal variation in students' perceptions. These findings point to the conclusion that the instructional materials, when applied in a structured and scientifically informed manner, are highly feasible for classroom implementation. They provide learners with meaningful opportunities to apply their reading skills in ways that are perceived as relevant and beneficial. As such, these teaching resources can be considered a valuable asset for English instruction, aligning well with pedagogical goals and enhancing the overall learning experience. The results support the use of these materials as a practical tool for promoting English literacy in diverse educational settings.

Furthermore, the high practicality rating reflects the students' positive reception of the instructional design and content relevance of the English reading materials. Their responses suggest that the materials are well-aligned with their learning needs and preferences, offering clear instructions, meaningful tasks, and opportunities for active engagement. This alignment is crucial in fostering intrinsic motivation, as learners are more likely to invest effort in activities they perceive as purposeful and beneficial to their language development. In addition, the strong scores in aspects such as motivation and social value indicate that the materials not only support individual learning but also promote collaborative interaction and communication among peers. These elements are essential in language acquisition, particularly in fostering communicative competence and critical thinking.

Overall, the evaluation results confirm that the materials are not only theoretically sound but also practically effective, reinforcing their potential for widespread adoption in English language classrooms.

3.2 Discussion

The study's findings further demonstrate the usefulness of reading instruction resources for English language learners. This indicates that both the teacher and the students have fulfilled their learning responsibilities in compliance with the guidelines for using the instructional resources. The findings of the observations demonstrate that the students have behaved as active participants in a variety of activities, thinking critically about the stimulus given, having group discussions, and responding to the viewpoints of other groups. Teachers have contributed to learning in the interim by serving as inspirers, motivators, and facilitators. The roles that instructors and students play in this learning resource align with the scientific method paradigm that guided the creation of this reading resource. According to the scientific method, learning activities involve students actively improving their own spiritual, social, intellectual, and skill development.

Learning is a process of changing individual behaviour through interaction with the environment. It is a lifelong, complex process that happens to everyone, from the time they are infants until they pass away. A behavioural shift is one indication that someone has gained knowledge (Hamalik, 2002; Susilawati & Dewi, 2016). This shift in behaviour affects values and attitudes (affective) as well as understanding (cognitive), abilities (psychomotor), and behaviour (cognitive). Russell claims that using instructional materials will increase learning's effectiveness, efficiency, and relevance (Wena, 2009). In addition, suitable methods result in meaningful and intentional learning for pupils (Miarso, 2004). In order to attain learning effectiveness, the focus will be on the teaching strategies employed by teachers and the proof of students' learning.

The development of reading teaching materials integrated with character values aligns with several psychological and educational theories. First, Piaget's theory of cognitive development highlights that adolescents (ages 13–19) are in the formal operational stage (Hollarek & Lee, 2022), where they develop abstract reasoning, hypothetical thinking, and problem-solving skills (Gunarsa, 2008). This supports the design of learning materials that challenge students to analyze texts critically while reflecting on moral values. Second, Kohlberg's moral development theory suggests that adolescents begin to internalize societal values and develop a deeper understanding of justice and ethics (Walrath, 2011). The integration of character values in reading materials helps students engage in moral reasoning, reinforcing ethical behavior through reflective learning.

Third, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory emphasizes social interaction in cognitive development (Crain, 2011). The structured group discussions and collaborative tasks in the learning design facilitate peer learning and social cognition, which are crucial for adolescent development. Finally, Krathwohl's affective domain taxonomy guides the sequential integration of character values—starting from receiving and responding to valuing and internalization (Ramdani, Fahmi, Nadya, & Indahsari, 2022). The learning process (observing, questioning, associating, communicating) ensures that students not only understand moral concepts but also apply them in real-life contexts.

Previous studies have shown that integrating character education into language learning enhances both academic and moral development. For instance: Yusoff et al found that embedding moral lessons in academic subjects fosters ethical reasoning and prosocial behavior (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2022). Zhou demonstrated that narrative texts with moral dilemmas improve students' empathy and decision-making skills (Zhou, 2022). Research by Sabir et al confirmed that structured character education programs lead to better academic engagement and social responsibility (Sabir, Sembiring, Yani, Surbakti, & Juliadilla, 2025). The current study reinforces these findings, showing that character-based reading materials improve learning outcomes (pre-test: 71.96 → post-test: 85.17) while fostering values like responsibility and cooperation. The high practicality ratings from teachers (avg. 4.34) and students

(avg. 4.54) further validate the effectiveness of this approach, consistent with prior research on value-integrated pedagogy.

The data strongly supports the effectiveness and practicality of character-integrated reading materials for junior high school students. Key strengths include: 1) Cognitive Alignment: The materials match adolescents' abstract reasoning abilities, encouraging higher-order thinking. 2) Moral Internalization: Structured activities ensure character values are not just taught but internalized. 3) Engagement and Practicality: high student motivation (avg. 4.54) and teacher approval (avg. 4.34) indicate that the materials are user-friendly and impactful. However, challenges remain: 1) Implementation consistency: teachers need training to effectively deliver character-integrated lessons. 2) Cultural relevance: texts should reflect diverse moral contexts to ensure inclusivity.

4. CONCLUSION

This study developed and evaluated character-integrated reading materials for junior high school English learning using the ADDIE model (Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation). The findings revealed a clear gap in existing materials, which often focus on linguistic skills while neglecting moral development, and demonstrated that the newly designed resources effectively embedded values such as integrity, responsibility, and cooperation into reading tasks. The materials proved highly effective in enhancing both language proficiency and character formation, with structured activities like reflective discussions and ethical dilemmas fostering active engagement and higher-order thinking. These results underscore the importance of value-integrated pedagogy in language education, highlighting the need for curriculum designers to advocate for character-based resources, teacher training to support their implementation, and student-centered approaches that link language acquisition with moral growth. Future research should investigate the long-term effects of such materials on students' ethical behavior and academic performance, explore cross-cultural adaptations, examine the role of digital technologies in delivering value-based instruction, and assess teacher and student perceptions of character education in EFL/ESL contexts.

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