



From policing to pedagogy: Governance, mechanisms, and outcomes of school, police partnerships in character education a PRISMA guided review

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Article Info

Article history:

Received: March 11, 2026

Revised: April 15, 2026

Accepted: May 10, 2026

Keywords:

Character Education;
Community Policing;
Restorative Practices; School-
Police Partnerships;
Secondary Education in
Indonesia.

Abstract

Background: Character education has become a major educational priority in Indonesia, encouraging secondary schools to collaborate with police institutions and community stakeholders to strengthen discipline, safety, and civic values. Nevertheless, evidence on how school-police partnerships (SPPs) operate and influence character education remains limited and dispersed.

Aims: This PRISMA-guided review investigates the governance models, implementation mechanisms, outcomes, and contextual factors associated with SPPs in character education.

Methods: The review analyzed studies published between 2021 and 2025 focusing primarily on Indonesian secondary schools, with several regional comparisons included where relevant. Literature was identified through major academic databases, screened in two stages following PRISMA procedures, and synthesized using thematic narrative analysis.

Results: The findings show that partnerships supported by formal governance arrangements, such as memoranda of understanding, operational guidelines, joint training, and restorative referral systems, tend to achieve stronger implementation and more positive school climates than informal initiatives. Interventions emphasizing mentoring, dialogue, service learning, habituation, and culturally grounded activities were associated with improvements in prosocial behavior, civic responsibility, and student discipline. Program effectiveness was influenced by school climate, parental participation, community trust, and cultural compatibility. However, inconsistencies remain in reporting validity, implementation fidelity, adaptation processes, and program costs.

Conclusion: SPPs are more effective when governance, pedagogy, and restorative principles are integrated within local educational contexts. Further longitudinal and realist-oriented studies are needed to strengthen the evidence base and improve policy applicability.

To cite this article: Nurhidayati, E., Yensy, N, A., & Danim, S. (2026). From policing to pedagogy: Governance, mechanisms, and outcomes of school, police partnerships in character education a PRISMA guided review. *Journal of Advanced Sciences and Mathematics Education*, 6(2), 214-219.

INTRODUCTION

Concerns about student violence, bullying, disciplinary misconduct, and the weakening of civic responsibility have increased attention toward the importance of Character Education (CE) in Indonesian secondary schools (Fathoni et al., 2024). Schools are not only expected to improve academic achievement, but also to develop students' moral awareness, social responsibility, and respectful behavior within increasingly complex social environments (Bharti & Singh, 2026). These challenges have encouraged educational institutions to seek collaborative and preventive approaches capable of creating safer and more supportive school climates (Bradshaw et al., 2021; Martinsone et al., 2023). As a result, Character Education has become an important component of educational policy and school reform in Indonesia. Alongside curriculum development, schools have

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increasingly involved external stakeholders, including police institutions and community organizations, in efforts to strengthen discipline, civic engagement, and prosocial behavior (Ghavami et al., 2021). In practice, school–police partnerships (SPPs) often include mentoring activities, outreach programs, restorative initiatives, co-curricular engagement, and community service projects intended to support students’ character development through educational rather than punitive approaches.

Previous studies indicate that Character Education contributes positively to student behavior, school climate, civic participation, and social interaction (Alscher et al., 2022; Encina & Berger, 2021). Research on social learning highlights that students tend to internalize values more effectively through direct interaction, role modeling, dialogue, and habitual practice than through one-way instructional methods (Jumatullailah et al., 2025). Similarly, restorative approaches in education emphasize reflection, accountability, empathy, and reintegration as important foundations for developing responsible behavior among students (Mpofu et al., 2024). The literature also shows increasing interest in collaborative and community-based approaches to Character Education. Service learning, local wisdom traditions, mentoring programs, and culturally grounded activities are frequently associated with stronger student engagement and social cohesion (Ahmar & Azzajjad, 2025; Tripon, 2024). In addition, governance mechanisms such as joint training, institutional collaboration, and structured communication systems are considered important in supporting program consistency and implementation quality (“The Effectiveness of Network Systems in Providing Project Maturity of Public Management,” 2021).

Although studies on Character Education and community-based educational practices continue to grow, research specifically examining school–police partnerships (SPPs) remains limited and scattered across different fields (Broll & Howells, 2021). Most studies discuss character development, civic education, or community policing separately, with limited attention to how governance structures, pedagogical mechanisms, and institutional collaboration interact within school settings (Adel & HS Alani, 2024; Mulder, 2023). Research focusing on Indonesian secondary schools is also still relatively limited, despite the country’s distinct cultural and educational context. In addition, differences in measurement approaches, reporting standards, and research designs continue to make findings difficult to compare and synthesize systematically (Mohamed Shaffril et al., 2021).

Considering these limitations, a comprehensive review is needed to better understand how school–police partnerships are implemented and how they contribute to Character Education outcomes in secondary schools (Mulder, 2023; Pashiardis & Kafa, 2021). Examining the relationship between governance arrangements, educational mechanisms, and contextual factors may provide clearer insights into the characteristics of effective and sustainable partnership models. This study also seeks to connect perspectives from community policing, social learning, restorative justice, and implementation science within a single analytical framework (April et al., 2023; Hampton et al., 2024). Through this approach, the review aims to provide a more integrated understanding of how collaborative educational partnerships operate in different school contexts.

This PRISMA-guided review aims to: (1) identify and map school–police partnership models used to support Character Education in secondary schools; (2) examine the implementation mechanisms and educational outcomes associated with these partnerships; (3) analyze contextual moderators, risks, and equity considerations influencing program effectiveness; and (4) formulate evidence-based design principles for scalable and context-sensitive partnership models in Character Education.

METHOD

Research Design

This study used a systematic literature review (SLR) approach to examine how school–police partnerships (SPPs) contribute to Character Education (CE) in Indonesian secondary schools. The review was conducted using PRISMA guidelines in order to maintain transparency and consistency during the stages of article identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final selection. The primary focus of the review was Indonesian secondary education, although several international studies were included to provide contextual and conceptual comparisons relevant to partnership-based educational practices. The review covered studies published between 2021 and 2025. The selected literature addressed various forms of collaboration involving schools, police institutions, and community stakeholders, including mentoring programs, restorative initiatives, outreach activities, co-curricular engagement, and civic-oriented educational practices. Searches were conducted through academic databases and educational repositories using keywords related to Character Education, school–police partnerships, restorative practices, community policing, and secondary education. The screening process was completed in two stages. First, titles and abstracts were reviewed to identify studies relevant to the scope of the research. Second, full-text articles were examined using predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. Studies were included if they discussed Character Education and collaborative educational practices involving schools, police institutions, or community actors. Studies unrelated to educational outcomes or lacking empirical evidence were excluded from the review.

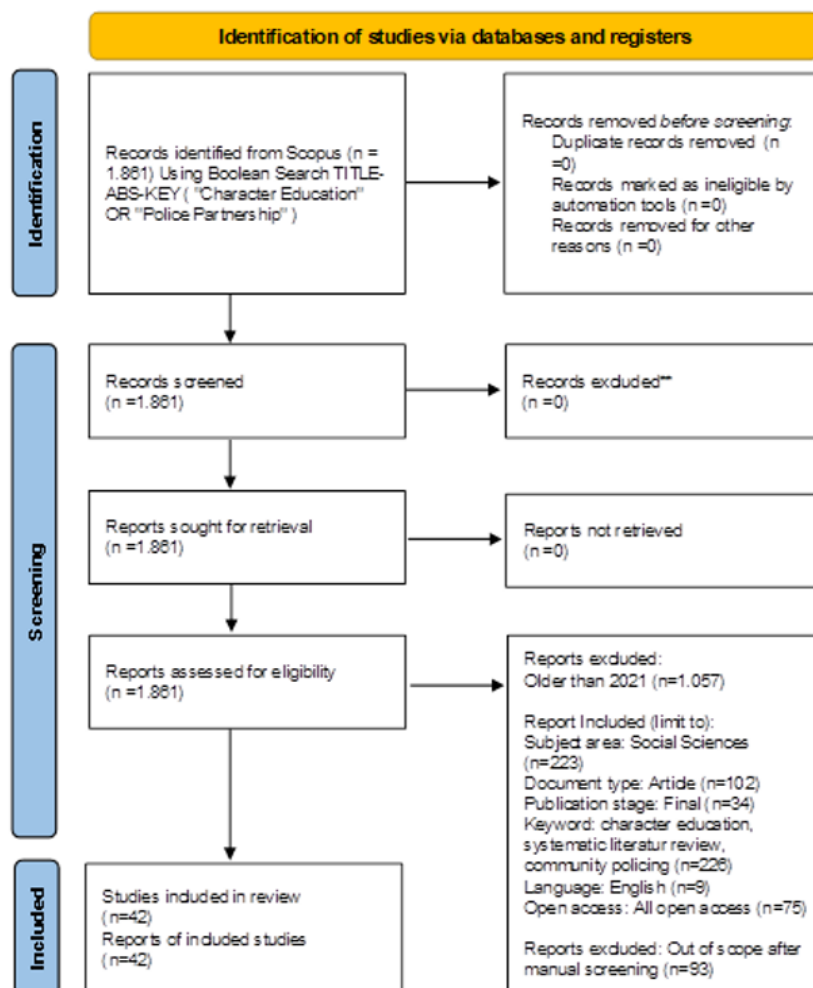


Figure 1. PRISMA Flow Diagram

The PRISMA diagram presents the process of study identification, screening, eligibility evaluation, exclusion, and final inclusion.

Participants

Because this study was based on a systematic literature review, no direct participants were involved. Instead, the analysis focused on published studies, implementation reports, and empirical research related to school-police partnerships and Character Education.

Most of the reviewed studies were conducted in junior and senior secondary school settings, including SMP, SMA, and SMK institutions in Indonesia. Several comparative studies from regional and international contexts were also included when they provided insights relevant to collaborative educational practices, restorative approaches, or community policing frameworks. The literature reviewed in this study represented a wide range of educational stakeholders, including students, teachers, school leaders, police officers, parents, and community organizations involved in partnership-based educational activities.

Instrument

Data were collected using a structured extraction framework developed to organize information consistently across the selected studies. The extraction process focused on study characteristics, educational settings, partnership models, pedagogical mechanisms, implementation processes, outcome indicators, contextual factors, and ethical considerations. To improve the credibility of the review, the methodological quality of the included studies was examined using design-appropriate appraisal procedures. Attention was given to issues such as implementation fidelity, validity reporting, contextual adaptation, and potential bias within the reviewed literature. The extraction process also considered governance arrangements, restorative and mentoring practices, school climate indicators, civic and prosocial outcomes, and implementation safeguards related to Character Education programs.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed through narrative synthesis and thematic analysis. Since the included studies differed in design, context, and measurement approaches, statistical meta-analysis was not considered appropriate. Instead, the analysis focused on identifying recurring themes, implementation patterns, educational mechanisms, and contextual influences across the reviewed studies. The findings were organized into four major thematic areas: school-police partnerships and community alliances; religion- and local wisdom-based models; pedagogical and educational technology interventions; and measurement, theoretical perspectives, and evidence quality. Comparisons among studies were made based on governance structures, pedagogical approaches, implementation consistency, contextual moderators, and reported educational outcomes. In addition, the review adopted a Context-Mechanism-Outcome (CMO) perspective to understand how specific partnership arrangements and educational practices contributed to Character Education outcomes in different school environments. This approach helped identify patterns of effectiveness, implementation challenges, and context-sensitive principles relevant to future partnership models.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

School–Police Partnerships & School Community Alliances (Most Relevant)

Table 1. School–Police Partnerships & School–Community Alliances

Study / Year	Partnership Actors	Partnership Type	CE Mechanism	Context	Outcomes	Risks & Safeguards
(Prendeville et al., 2023)	Education leaders	Professional development (PD)	Dialogue/reflection	Urban	Increased educator expectations & skills	Inclusive access to PD
(Aziz et al., 2023)	Teachers/Parents	Co-teaching	Mentorship	Online/Remote	Improved student character	Balancing authority in co-teaching
(Fernández González & Surikova, 2022)	Schools/Community	Outreach	Service	Latvia	Increased civic responsibility	Potential conflict with community norms
(Naufal & Maksum, 2024)	Schools	Liaison	Role modeling	Lower secondary (SMP)	Improved discipline & behavior	Risk of misinterpreting modeling
(Sartika et al., 2024)	Police/Schools	Co-teaching	Restorative	Urban	Improved school climate; reduced conflict	Anti-profiling; restorative referrals
(Hatchimonji et al., 2022)	Teacher leadership	Community of Practice	Reflection/collaboration	Urban–Rural	More positive teacher & student attitudes	Balance of power relations
(Santoso et al., 2025)	Police/Community	Partnership	Service/community policing	Urban	Improved community relations & perceived safety	Sustained community engagement
(García-Álvarez et al., 2023)	NGOs/Schools	Collaborative model	Service	Rural	Increased prosocial behavior	External community pressures
(Suciati et al., 2023)	Schools/Community	Joint training	Dialogue	Lower secondary (SMP)	Increased implementation fidelity	Ethics training & student rights
(Curren, 2023)	Police/Community	Civic engagement	Service	Urban	Increased civic engagement	Diverse participant representation

The synthesis of studies in Table 1 indicates that school police partnerships (SPPs) and allied community alliances constitute a critical architecture for implementing Character Education (CE) in secondary schools. These partnerships extend beyond conventional safety programs to encompass pedagogical and civic dimensions aligned with the theories of community policing, social learning, and restorative justice outlined in Section 3. Structured collaborations such as formal memoranda of understanding (MoUs), standard operating procedures (SOPs), joint professional development (PD), and restorative referral pathways consistently enhance implementation fidelity, strengthen student discipline, and promote safer school climates (Santoso et al., 2025; Sartika et al., 2024).

Empirical evidence from Prendeville et al. (2023) and Aziz et al. (2023) underscores the importance of co-teaching and dialogic professional development as mechanisms for building educator competence and character-based classroom practices. Similarly, Surikova and González (2022) show that community outreach fosters civic engagement, while Naufal and Maksum (2024) highlight the role of liaison officers in shaping behavioral discipline through credible role modeling. Partnerships grounded in service-oriented and restorative practices, as observed by Sartika et al.

(2024) and Santoso et al. (2025), yield measurable gains in prosocial behavior and collective trust outcomes consistent with restorative justice frameworks.

Cross-context analyses indicate that success is highly contingent on contextual moderators such as school climate, community trust, and parental engagement (Aisyah et al., 2024). García-Álvarez et al. (2023) and Suciati et al. (2023) further identify the value of collaborative training and civic projects in fostering inclusion and sustaining engagement. However, consistent with implementation science perspectives, risks remain particularly role imbalances, potential profiling, and authority asymmetries necessitating safeguards such as ethical oversight, anti-profiling policies, and explicit protections for student rights (Hatchimonji et al., 2022).

Collectively, this evidence positions SPPs and school community alliances as dynamic co-production systems that advance civic responsibility, empathy, and discipline through multi-mechanistic approaches, including mentoring, dialogue, service learning, and restorative interactions. These findings reinforce the Context Mechanism Outcome (CMO) theoretical model presented in Section 3, affirming that successful partnerships operate at the intersection of governance, pedagogy, and social ecology, guided by trust, legitimacy, and shared accountability.

Religion- and Local Wisdom-Based Models (Pesantren, Tradition, Literature)

Table 2. Religion and Local Wisdom Based Models

Study / Year	Tradition / Framework	Setting	Target Values	Modality	Design & Evidence	Context & Equity Notes
(Saepudin et al., 2023)	Sufistic	Pesantren	Moderation, Tolerance	Ritual, Dialogue	Qualitative, Action Research	Extension of moderation values in local contexts
(Huda et al., 2024)	Islamic boarding school	Lower-Upper Secondary (SMP-SMA)	Responsibility, Care	Co-/Extracurricular Service	Qualitative	Addressing disparities in access and family support
(Taja et al., 2021)	Qur'anic	Community	Religiosity, Moderation	Literary/Narrative Literacy	Qualitative/Mixed	Support for inclusivity and religious literacy
(Hasibuan et al., 2025)	Sufistic	Pesantren	Moral character, Tolerance	Ritual, Role modeling	Qualitative	Integration of Sufistic approaches into curriculum and school culture
(Parmini & Wardhani, 2025)	Local/Regional	Lower-Upper Secondary (SMP/SMA)	Care, Tolerance	Social Service	Qualitative	Emphasis on local values, affordability, and inclusivity
(Asror et al., 2024)	Gusjigang	Pesantren	Local wisdom, Identity	Habituation	Qualitative	Local contextual relevance and student participation
(Ramadhana et al., 2023)	Mandar Tradition (Malaqbiq)	Lower-Upper Secondary (SMP-SMA)	Religiosity, Tolerance	Ritual	Qualitative	Preservation of traditional values and cross-group acceptance
(Huda et al., 2024)	Qur'anic	Pesantren	Responsibility, Care	Role modeling	Qualitative	Role of parents/fathers in value narratives
(Safilisyah et al., 2024a)	Qur'anic Literature	Community	Moral character, Moderation	Service/Social action	Qualitative	Linking sacred texts with civic action

(Tamjidnor et al., 2025)	Youth Traditions	Pesantren	Engagement character	Service learning	Qualitative	Safety and inclusivity of student activities
(Brooks et al., 2024)	Dharmagita (Balinese Hindu)	Community	Care, Tolerance	Ritual/Performativity	Qualitative	Strengthening identity and social harmony

The findings summarized in Table 2 indicate that local wisdom and religious frameworks in character education employ rituals, habituation, role modeling, and service-based learning as dominant pedagogical mechanisms for cultivating moral and civic values. Studies in pesantren contexts emphasize Sufistic approaches (Hasibuan et al., 2025; Saepudin et al., 2023), particularly through tazkiyah al-nafs and reflective rituals that integrate spirituality with ethical behavior. Huda et al. (2024) and Tamjidnor et al. (2025) show that extracurricular and community service initiatives grounded in Islamic and youth traditions enhance empathy, discipline, and responsibility.

Meanwhile, local and regional traditions including Dharmagita, Malaqbiq Tau Mandar, and the Gusjigang ethos translate customary values of moderation, tolerance, and collective care into structured learning experiences (Asror et al., 2024; Brooks et al., 2024; Parmini & Wardhani, 2025). These models align with the ecological and CMO frameworks discussed in Section 3, wherein contextual mechanisms (ritual, dialogue, service) activate observable outcomes in the civic and moral domains. Despite their contextual richness, equity and inclusion challenges remain, particularly regarding gender representation and cultural diversity within traditional learning environments (Safrihsyah et al., 2024; Taja et al., 2021).

Pedagogical & EdTech Interventions for Character Education

Table 3. Pedagogical & EdTech Interventions for Character Education

Study/Year	Intervention Type	Duration & Intensity	Instrument & Validity	Direction/Magnitude of Effect	Resources/Cost	Fidelity & Replicability Notes
(Suma et al., 2024)	Augmented Reality (AR) Comics	6 weeks, weekly sessions	Validated AR comic assessment tool	ES \approx +0.65; \sim 30% change	Moderate (AR development)	High fidelity engagement; customizable contexts
(Hasbiyallah et al., 2023)	Multiple Intelligences Reading	4 weeks, intensive workshops	MI assessment tool validity reported	\sim 25% increase in engagement	Low (minimal added resources)	Easily replicable across schools
(Prendeville et al., 2023)	Service-Learning	1 semester, bi-weekly	Validated service project tool	$p < 0.01$; civic engagement \uparrow	Moderate (logistics/community)	Requires partnership management
(Adnan et al., 2023)	STEAM (local wisdom)	Full academic year, integrated	Validated STEAM assessment tool	ES \approx +0.72; significant gains	Variable (materials dependent)	Adaptable to culture/context
(Winterbottom & Schmidt, 2022)	Traditional Games (engklek)	3 months, regular sessions	Play/social skill tool	\sim 40% \uparrow in social skills	Low (local equipment)	Highly replicable; cultural identity
(Naufal & Maksum, 2024)	Values-based Expressive Drawing	5 weeks, weekly projects	Art evaluation rubric	ES \approx +0.50; EI \uparrow	Low (art supplies)	Simple replication; student agency
(González-Llopis, 2024)	Service-Learning (ECE/PAUD)	1 semester, project-based	SL impact assessment tool	ES \approx +0.60; multi-competency \uparrow	Moderate (community work)	Works best in community-integrated programs
(Prayitno et al., 2021)	Neuroscience-based AR media	2 months, daily interactions	AR validity measures	$p < 0.02$; focus \uparrow	Moderate (content dev.)	Scalable with content adaptation

(Safrihsyah et al., 2024)	Wayang Ethnomathematics (Android)	4 weeks, multi-session	Ethnomath evaluation tool	~35% ↑ in math understanding	Low (local materials)	Replicable; strengthens cultural learning
(Beaumont & Pernsteiner, 2021)	MANDALIKA Friday Program	Full year, weekly meetings	Program evaluation instrument	ES ≈ +0.55; cultural awareness ↑	Moderate (admin/coordination)	Needs community & school alignment

As summarized in Table 3, pedagogical and technology-based interventions demonstrate substantial potential to improve Character Education (CE) outcomes through multimodal mechanisms role modeling, dialogue, habituation, and service. Studies on augmented reality (AR) comics and neuroscience-informed media (Prayitno et al., 2021; Suma et al., 2024) highlight strong effects on attention, empathy, and prosocial behavior, validating AR as an interactive moral learning tool. Multiple Intelligences approaches (Hasbiyallah et al., 2023) and STEAM models (Adnan et al., 2023) promote interdisciplinary learning, while traditional and culturally grounded methods such as engklek games and ethnomathematics (Safrihsyah et al., 2024; Winterbottom & Schmidt, 2022) strengthen social responsibility through local wisdom. Service-learning initiatives (González-Llopis, 2024; Prendeville et al., 2023) show consistent gains in civic engagement aligned with the Context Mechanism Outcome framework. These findings indicate that interventions with higher implementation fidelity and explicit instrument validation yield stronger effects, reinforcing the theoretical model presented in Section 3.

Measurement, Theory, & Evidence Quality (Most Common)

Table 4. Measurement, Theory, & Quality of Evidence

Study / Year	Focus	Sample / Context	Key Findings	Implications for SPPs	Limitations & Bias
(Prendeville et al., 2023)	Systematic review (SLR)	Diverse educators	Need for an integrated, multi-indicator CE assessment framework	Use comprehensive assessment frameworks in SPPs	Publication bias; article coverage
(Khadijah et al., 2021)	Character-academic outcome instruments	Senior secondary students	Character values positively correlate with mathematics achievement	Character strengthening aligns with SPP academic goals	Contextual nuances obscured at meta level
(Hasbiyallah et al., 2023)	Teacher PD (pedagogical competence)	Senior secondary teachers	PD improves competence and CE enactment	Joint school-police PD strengthens fidelity	Small sample; limited generalizability
(Naufal & Maksum, 2024)	Character instrument validation	Lower secondary (SMP)	High reliability/validity for character assessment	Reliable measures enhance trust & feedback in SPPs	Instrument development costs
(Beaumont & Pernsteiner, 2021)	Teacher attitude survey	Madrid schools	Positive attitudes toward value integration in curricula	Align training and institutional support	Self-report bias
(Sartika et al., 2024)	Community-based CE framework	Boarding/Islamic schools	Strength of communal approaches & civic responsibility	Strengthen community roles in SPPs	Generalizability across diverse settings
(Aziz et al., 2023)	SLR on friendship & CE	Diverse schools	Peer friendship linked to character outcomes	Friendship programs support SPP success	Context heterogeneity
(Saepudin et al., 2023)	Teacher efficacy	Diverse educators	Higher efficacy → more consistent CE implementation	Target efficacy gains in SPP PD	Efficacy instruments may miss classroom dynamics

(Fernández González & Surikova, 2022)	Culturally responsive pedagogy models	Islamic education	Adaptability is key to acceptance	Localize SPP design to culture	Limited comparative data
(Hafina et al., 2022)	Teacher survey on CE	Multi-context	Gaps in training on CE principles	Bridge training gaps for SPPs	Responder representativeness
(Aisyah et al., 2024)	Community impact networks	Urban/Rural	Community participation sustains programs	Engage local stakeholders in SPPs	Few longitudinal studies

As shown in Table 4, studies on the measurement and theory of character education highlight increasing sophistication in psychometric validation and conceptual frameworks. Prendeville et al. (2023) and Aziz et al. (2023) emphasize the need for integrated assessment models that combine moral, civic, and pedagogical dimensions, while Naufal and Maksum (2024) validate high-reliability instruments adaptable for evaluating school police partnerships (SPPs). Research on teacher efficacy and professional development (Hasbiyallah et al., 2023; Saepudin et al., 2023) indicates that educator capacity and positive psychology informed training significantly enhance CE implementation fidelity.

However, limitations persist, including small sample sizes, cross sectional designs, and inconsistent reporting of psychometric validity. Collectively, these findings reinforce the ecological framework in Section 3, underscoring the need for multi-level mixed indicators to strengthen inferential quality and guide evidence mapping for SPPs.

Discussion

The results of this review indicate that school–police partnerships (SPPs) have the potential to support Character Education (CE) when they are implemented through educational collaboration and preventive engagement rather than through punitive or enforcement-oriented practices. Across the studies reviewed, partnerships were more effective when schools, police institutions, and community actors shared common educational objectives and worked within clearly organized structures (Douglas & Ansell, 2021). This suggests that the effectiveness of SPPs is closely connected to the quality of collaboration, communication, and institutional trust developed among stakeholders (Grunwald et al., 2024; Malaeb & Hamzeh, 2021).

A recurring pattern identified in the literature concerns the importance of governance arrangements in sustaining partnership implementation (Endo et al., 2023; Lopes & Farias, 2022). Programs supported by formal coordination mechanisms such as institutional agreements, shared responsibilities, joint training activities, and restorative referral procedures generally demonstrated stronger implementation consistency and more positive school environments (Mas-Expósito et al., 2022). In many cases, these arrangements helped clarify the role of police officers within educational settings and reduced the risk of partnerships being perceived solely as disciplinary interventions. As a result, collaborative governance appeared to strengthen both institutional legitimacy and program continuity.

The review also shows that the educational mechanisms used within partnership programs strongly influence student outcomes (Nieminen et al., 2025). Approaches centered on mentoring, dialogue, role modeling, habituation, service learning, and restorative interaction were commonly associated with improvements in empathy, discipline, civic participation, and prosocial behavior. These findings reflect the broader understanding that character development is shaped more effectively through active social interaction and meaningful participation than through rigid instruction or punishment-based strategies. In several studies, students responded more positively when police officers participated as facilitators, mentors, or collaborative partners within educational activities (Estorcien, 2024).

Another important finding relates to the influence of socio-cultural context on program effectiveness. Studies involving local wisdom traditions, religious values, and community-based activities demonstrated that culturally relevant approaches often strengthened student engagement

and social cohesion (Hanapi et al., 2025). Educational programs that incorporated familiar cultural practices and community participation appeared to create a stronger sense of belonging and collective responsibility among students. This indicates that partnership models cannot be implemented uniformly across different settings without considering local social and cultural conditions (Nummi et al., 2023).

Despite these positive findings, the review also identified several weaknesses within the existing body of research. Many studies relied on descriptive or short-term designs, making it difficult to assess long-term program impact. Variations in measurement instruments, reporting procedures, and validity standards also limited consistency across studies (Flake et al., 2022). In addition, issues related to implementation fidelity, ethical safeguards, sustainability, and potential unintended consequences were often discussed only briefly, even though these factors are important in collaborative programs involving educational institutions and police organizations.

The findings further suggest that contextual conditions such as school climate, parental involvement, institutional support, and community trust significantly influence the success of partnership initiatives (Garcia et al., 2023). Programs implemented in schools with strong stakeholder engagement and supportive communication patterns tended to report more positive outcomes. In contrast, unclear institutional roles and limited community participation often weakened implementation quality and reduced participant confidence in the program (Mahmoodi et al., 2023).

Overall, this review demonstrates that school–police partnerships can contribute positively to Character Education when they are grounded in restorative principles, collaborative governance, and culturally responsive educational practices. The findings also indicate that police involvement in schools becomes more constructive when positioned within mentorship, civic engagement, and community partnership frameworks rather than solely within disciplinary functions (Fine et al., 2021). Nevertheless, stronger methodological approaches particularly longitudinal, comparative, and mixed-methods research are still needed to strengthen the evidence base and support future educational policy development (‘Pandey,’ 2025).

Implications

This review shows that school–police partnerships (SPPs) may support Character Education more effectively when they are designed as collaborative and preventive initiatives rather than as disciplinary mechanisms. Programs built on communication, shared responsibility, and community participation appear to create more supportive learning environments and encourage positive student behavior. The findings also suggest that approaches such as mentoring, restorative interaction, service learning, and culturally relevant activities can strengthen students’ sense of responsibility, empathy, and civic awareness. These results highlight the importance of developing educational policies and partnership programs that emphasize trust, participation, and social engagement within school communities.

Limitations

The findings of this review should be interpreted with several limitations in mind. The studies included in the review varied in research methods, educational settings, and reporting quality, making comparisons across studies challenging. Most of the available research used descriptive or short-term approaches, which limited the ability to evaluate long-term impacts and causal relationships. In several cases, information related to implementation consistency, ethical safeguards, and sustainability was reported only briefly. In addition, because the review mainly focused on Indonesian secondary school contexts between 2021 and 2025, the conclusions may not fully represent experiences from other educational systems or broader international contexts.

Suggestions

Further studies are needed to provide stronger evidence regarding the long-term impact of school–police partnerships on Character Education outcomes. Future research would benefit from using longitudinal, comparative, and mixed-methods designs to capture both educational processes and student development over time. More consistent reporting standards and clearer measurement procedures are also needed to improve the quality and comparability of future studies. From a practical perspective, schools and policymakers should consider partnership models that prioritize restorative values, mentorship, civic participation, and community collaboration while remaining sensitive to local cultural conditions and student protection concerns.

CONCLUSION

This review demonstrates that school–police partnerships (SPPs) have the potential to strengthen Character Education (CE) in secondary schools when they are implemented through collaborative, preventive, and restorative approaches rather than through punitive practices. The findings show that programs supported by clear governance arrangements, shared responsibilities, and active community participation are generally associated with better implementation and more positive outcomes related to student discipline, civic responsibility, empathy, and prosocial behavior. Educational activities emphasizing mentoring, dialogue, service learning, habituation, and culturally relevant practices also appear to contribute to stronger student engagement and safer school environments. In addition, the review highlights the importance of contextual factors such as school climate, parental involvement, community trust, and local cultural values in influencing program effectiveness and sustainability. Despite these positive findings, limitations related to methodological variation, implementation reporting, and long-term evaluation remain evident within the existing literature. Overall, the review suggests that police involvement in schools can play a constructive educational role when integrated within restorative, community-oriented, and ethically grounded partnership models designed to support Character Education in Indonesian secondary schools.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Evi Nurhidayati contributed to the conceptualization of the study, literature search, data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, and preparation of the manuscript. Nurul Astuti Yensy contributed to the research design, methodological review, data validation, and manuscript revision. Sudarwan Danim contributed to the supervision of the study, theoretical development, critical review of the manuscript, and final approval of the submitted version. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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