

The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Shaping Students' Religious Character: Evidence from an Indonesian Islamic Elementary School

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ABSTRACT : This study investigates the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in shaping students' religious character at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 1 Enrekang, Indonesia. Religious character development has become a crucial concern in contemporary education due to increasing moral challenges among young learners and the growing influence of digital culture. Employing a descriptive qualitative design, this study collected data through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis involving IRE teachers, school leaders, and students. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while trustworthiness was ensured through triangulation and member checking. The findings reveal that IRE teachers perform multidimensional roles as educators, role models, motivators, and spiritual mentors. Through classroom instruction, religious habituation programs, exemplary behavior, and continuous guidance, teachers facilitate the internalization of Islamic values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect, and social concern. The study further identifies several supporting factors, including a religious school culture, institutional commitment, adequate facilities, and parental involvement. However, challenges remain, particularly differences in family backgrounds and the influence of social media and external environments. The study concludes that religious character formation is a collaborative and continuous process requiring strong synergy among schools, families, and communities. These findings contribute to the growing literature on character education and provide practical implications for strengthening religious character development in Islamic elementary schools.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education Teacher, Religious Character, Character Education, Islamic Elementary School, Religious Habituation.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a conscious and planned process aimed at developing students' potential so that they become individuals who are faithful, pious, morally upright, and equipped with intellectual and social competencies. Noor (2018) emphasizes that the

goal of national education, as stated in Article 3 of Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, is to develop knowledgeable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizens. Education is not solely oriented toward cognitive achievement but also emphasizes affective and spiritual dimensions. In this context, religious education plays a strategic role in instilling moral values and religiosity among students. Islamic Religious Education (IRE) not only conveys Islamic knowledge but also guides students to internalize and practice Islamic teachings consistently and responsibly in their daily lives.

According to Utari et al. (2020), Islamic Religious Education is a conscious and systematic effort to develop Muslim personalities characterized by faith, piety, and noble character through instruction, habituation, and exemplary conduct. Sofiyannah (2023) argues that the reconstruction of religious education in Indonesia should position Islamic values as the foundation of students' character rather than merely as a formal subject. In practice, students are expected not only to understand religious concepts theoretically but also to apply them in real-life situations. This indicates that IRE serves a dual function: as a source of knowledge and as an instrument for fostering sustainable religious attitudes and behaviors.

Character education has become a central concern within the educational system due to the increasing prevalence of moral degradation among younger generations. Lubis (2024) highlights that bullying, intolerance, misuse of social media, and other deviant behaviors reflect the weak internalization of moral values among students. Globalization and technological advancement have accelerated changes in the mindset and lifestyles of elementary school children. Without a strong foundation of religious values, students become more vulnerable to negative cultural influences. Therefore, religious character education should serve as a core component of the curriculum rather than a supplementary element. Education should not only produce academically competent students but also individuals with strong moral integrity and spiritual awareness.

Religious character reflects the spiritual dimension that guides an individual's attitudes and actions in everyday life. Ramud (2025) explains that religious character is not limited to memorizing religious teachings but involves the internalization and practice of Islamic values such as faith, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and tolerance. From the Qur'anic perspective, Surah At-Tahrim verse 8 commands believers to safeguard themselves and their families from the punishment of Hell. The Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia (2010) interprets this verse as

a theological foundation emphasizing that moral and spiritual education is a primary responsibility of individuals, families, and educational institutions. Consequently, fostering religious character in schools is an essential obligation.

As an Islamic educational institution, the madrasah plays a strategic role in developing students' religious character. At Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri (MIN) 1 Enrekang, religious values are not only taught theoretically but are also internalized through habitual practices such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, collective supplications, and an Islamic school culture. Rahmawati (2023) argues that the development of Islamic character is most effective when implemented consistently through role modeling and habituation within the learning environment. A religious school environment creates a strong moral climate that encourages students to practice Islamic values in their daily lives. Thus, the madrasah serves not only as a center for knowledge transmission but also as a center for moral and character development.

Islamic Religious Education teachers play a crucial role in the process of fostering students' religious character. Irwansyah (2024) states that IRE teachers function as facilitators, motivators, and role models who internalize Islamic values through habituation, exemplary conduct, and moral guidance. Teachers are expected not only to deliver classroom instruction but also to demonstrate Islamic morals through their daily attitudes and behavior. When teachers consistently exhibit honesty, discipline, and courtesy, students naturally emulate these qualities. Therefore, the success of religious character education largely depends on the teacher's personal qualities as a role model within the school environment.

Numerous studies have demonstrated that role modeling, habituation, dialogue, and religious activities are effective strategies for fostering students' religious character. Rahmawati (2023) found that the *targhib–tarhib* approach and habituation significantly enhanced students' moral awareness. Similarly, Irwansyah (2024) reported that a holistic approach employed by IRE teachers contributed to observable improvements in students' religious attitudes. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including the influence of external environments and digital media. Therefore, character education strategies must be continuous, integrated, and supported through collaboration among schools, parents, and communities.

Although previous studies have examined religious character formation through habituation and exemplary teaching, research specifically investigating the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in enhancing students' religious character at MIN

1 Enrekang remains limited. This study aims to examine comprehensively the roles, strategies, supporting factors, and challenges encountered by IRE teachers in fostering students' religious character. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of character education in madrasahs, particularly in nurturing a generation that is not only intellectually competent but also spiritually and morally mature.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with a field research design. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in fostering students' religious character at MIN 1 Enrekang. According to Moleong (2000), qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words obtained directly from observed individuals. A descriptive qualitative design enables researchers to systematically, factually, and accurately describe phenomena without manipulating variables, thereby allowing a comprehensive and contextual understanding of social realities.

Research Approach

This study utilized three approaches: theological-normative, pedagogical, and psychological. The theological-normative approach was employed to examine Qur'anic teachings, Hadith, and educational regulations related to the development of religious character. The pedagogical approach was used to analyze instructional processes and teachers' roles in educational practices. Meanwhile, the psychological approach focused on understanding students' motivation, attitudes, and subjective experiences in internalizing religious values (Abdullah & Karim, 1996).

Data Sources

The study used both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained directly from key informants, including Islamic Religious Education teachers, the madrasa principal, and students at MIN 1 Enrekang. Secondary data were collected from school documents, archives, books, scholarly journals, and other literature relevant to the research topic. Informants and data sources were selected purposively based on their relevance and ability to provide in-depth information related to the study objectives.

Research Instruments

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument. The researcher was responsible for planning, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting the data. Supporting instruments included interview guides, observation sheets, and documentation forms. These instruments were used flexibly to accommodate field conditions and to ensure that the collected data accurately reflected the social realities under investigation (Moleong, 2009).

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to directly examine learning activities and religious habituation practices within the school environment. Structured and semi-structured interviews were employed to explore the perspectives of teachers, the principal, and students. Documentation was used to collect written records, including school programs, schedules of religious activities, and other supporting documents (Sugiyono, 2019).

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting and focusing on information relevant to the research objectives. Data display was presented in the form of descriptive narratives and thematic tables. Conclusions were drawn gradually and continuously verified through consistent evidence obtained from the data (Miles & Huberman, as cited in Sugiyono, 2019).

Trustworthiness of Data

The trustworthiness of the data was ensured through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. Triangulation was carried out by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Member checking was conducted by confirming the findings with participants to ensure consistency between the reported data and the actual conditions in the field. These procedures enhanced the credibility and scientific rigor of the study findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

A. Forms of the Roles of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Developing Students' Religious Character at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Negeri 1 Enrekang Regency

1. PAI Teachers as Educators and Instructors

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Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play an important role in conveying Islamic values not only in the cognitive domain but also in the affective and psychomotor domains. The learning process at MIN 1 Enrekang is designed to instill values of honesty, discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect through interactive lectures, discussions, exemplary stories, and habituation activities. Interview findings indicate that PAI teachers consistently relate lesson materials to real-life situations so that students can understand religious values in a contextual manner.

Table 1. Interview Results: The Role of PAI Teachers as Educators and Instructors

No.	Informant	Position/Status	Main Statement	Key Finding
1	Rahmat	Qur'an-Hadith Teacher	"I always relate the lesson to real-life examples."	Contextual religious learning
2	Nureda	Aqidah Akhlak Teacher	"Moral values must be practiced, not merely memorized."	Emphasis on affective and psychomotor development
3	Fitriani	Principal	"PAI teachers must integrate faith and morality into learning."	Character-based religious curriculum
4	Fauzi	Student	"Teachers often provide examples during lessons."	Internalization of values through modeling

2. PAI Teachers as Role Models (Uswatun Hasanah)

The exemplary behavior of PAI teachers is one of the strongest factors in developing students' religious character. Teachers demonstrate religious values through disciplined worship practices, polite speech, honesty, and responsibility. Students tend to imitate these behaviors in their daily activities. Observations revealed that students internalize values more effectively when they directly observe positive examples from their teachers.

Table 2. Interview Results: The Role of PAI Teachers as Role Models

No.	Informant	Position/Status	Main Statement	Key Finding
1	Nureda	Aqidah Akhlak Teacher	"I try to be a role model through my words and actions."	Moral exemplification
2	Rahmat	Qur'an-Hadith	"Children imitate their	Modeling religious

		Teacher	teachers' habits."	behavior
3	Salwa	Student	"We perform prayers because our teachers always pray first."	Imitation of positive behavior
4	Syafiq	Student	"The teachers are friendly and patient."	Islamic attitudes emulated by students

3. PAI Teachers as Motivators

PAI teachers motivate students through praise, rewards, advice, and inspirational stories. Motivation is provided both collectively and individually, particularly for students who lack self-confidence or discipline in worship practices. Interview results indicate that teacher motivation significantly enhances students' enthusiasm for engaging in religious activities.

Table 3. Interview Results: The Role of PAI Teachers as Motivators

No.	Informant	Position/Status	Main Statement	Key Finding
1	Rahmat	PAI Teacher	"I give praise to encourage students."	Positive reinforcement
2	Nureda	Akhlak Teacher	"Personal advice is more effective."	Individualized approach
3	Fauzi	Student	"When I receive praise, I want to pray more diligently."	Motivation enhances worship practices
4	Salwa	Student	"Small rewards make us happy to learn religion."	Rewards stimulate enthusiasm

4. PAI Teachers as Religious Guides and Mentors

PAI teachers guide students through various religious habituation activities, such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, collective supplications, and other religious programs. Teachers also provide assistance to students who experience difficulties in performing worship or demonstrating appropriate moral behavior. This guidance fosters sustainable religious habits among students.

Table 4. Interview Results: The Role of PAI Teachers as Religious Guides and Mentors

No.	Informant	Position/Status	Main Statement	Key Finding
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1	Rahmat	PAI Teacher	“We encourage students to perform congregational prayers every day.”	Routine worship habituation
2	Fitriani	Principal	“Religious guidance is carried out systematically.”	Supportive school policy
3	Syafiq	Student	“Teachers guide us whenever we make mistakes in prayer recitations.”	Technical guidance in worship
4	Salwa	Student	“We are accustomed to praying before lessons begin.”	Daily religious habits

The findings demonstrate that PAI teachers at MIN 1 Enrekang perform multiple interconnected roles as educators, role models, motivators, and religious mentors. These roles collectively contribute to the development of students’ religious character through learning activities, exemplary conduct, motivation, and continuous religious guidance. As a result, religious values are not only understood cognitively but are also internalized and practiced in students’ daily lives.

B. Religious Character Development of Students at MIN 1 Enrekang Regency

1. General Overview of Students’ Religious Character

Students at MIN 1 Enrekang generally demonstrate a relatively good level of religious awareness through their daily attitudes and behaviors within the madrasa environment. Values such as discipline in worship, respect for teachers and peers, honesty, and responsibility have gradually been internalized through consistent habituation programs. The exemplary conduct of teachers and the madrasa’s religious culture play significant roles in shaping these attitudes. However, the level of religious awareness varies among students, indicating the need for continuous guidance and reinforcement to ensure the equitable development of religious character among all learners.

Table 5. Interview Results: General Overview of Religious Character

No.	Informant	Position/Status	Main Statement	Key Finding
1	Rahmat	Qur’an-Hadith Teacher	“Students have developed religious awareness, although at different levels.”	Religious awareness is beginning to develop

2	Nureda	Aqidah Akhlak Teacher	“Most students demonstrate good behavior, but continuous habituation is still necessary.”	Need for consistent reinforcement
3	Sahera	Grade II Homeroom Teacher	“Students are obedient, respectful to teachers, and actively participate in religious activities.”	Religious attitudes and politeness
4	Fitriani	Principal	“Students demonstrate religious awareness, although they still require guidance.”	Religious character exists but is not evenly developed

The interview findings indicate that students have begun to develop religious awareness through various religious and moral practices. Nevertheless, differences in students’ levels of understanding and commitment suggest that sustained guidance remains essential.

2. Religious Character in Daily Life

Students’ religious character is clearly reflected in their social interactions and daily activities within the madrasa. They regularly remind one another to perform good deeds, respect teachers, maintain proper manners in communication, and demonstrate concern for cleanliness and order. Helping one another is also a visible manifestation of the religious values that have been cultivated among students. These behaviors indicate that religiosity extends beyond ritual worship and has developed into social attitudes reflecting noble character.

Table 6. Interview Results: Religious Character in Daily Life

No.	Informant	Position/Status	Main Statement	Key Finding
1	Rahmat	PAI Teacher	“Students remind one another to pray and maintain proper manners.”	Positive social control
2	Nureda	Aqidah Akhlak Teacher	“They help one another and respect their teachers.”	Social concern and ethical behavior

3	Sahera	Grade II Homeroom Teacher	"Students are disciplined in prayer and religious activities."	Discipline in worship
4	Salwa	Student	"We perform congregational prayers and help our friends."	Practical application of religious values

These findings suggest that students' religious character has become integrated into their daily interactions, contributing to a positive and supportive social environment within the madrasa.

3. Religious Character through Worship Practices

Regular worship activities, such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, and prayers before and after lessons, serve as important indicators of students' religious character development. These activities are conducted consistently and systematically, fostering positive spiritual habits among students. Many students have also begun practicing these worship activities at home, demonstrating the successful transfer of religious values from school to their personal lives.

Table 7. Interview Results: Students' Worship Practices

No.	Informant	Position/Status	Main Statement	Key Finding
1	Rahmat	PAI Teacher	"Students are disciplined in congregational prayer and Qur'anic recitation."	Routine school worship practices
2	Sahera	Grade II Homeroom Teacher	"They pray before and after learning activities."	Spiritual habituation
3	Fauzi	Student	"We pray and read the Qur'an every morning."	Daily worship habits
4	Syafiq	Student	"Teachers remind us to continue worship at home."	Transfer of religious values to home life

The results indicate that regular worship practices have become an effective medium for strengthening students' spiritual awareness and reinforcing religious values beyond the school environment.

4. Social Attitudes as a Reflection of Religious Character

Students' social attitudes, including honesty, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and cooperation, represent tangible manifestations of their religious character. During learning activities, students demonstrate seriousness, respect for others' opinions, fairness, and openness. The moral values taught through Islamic Religious Education and reinforced through teacher role modeling are reflected in students' social behaviors. This finding confirms that religious character not only strengthens the relationship between individuals and God but also promotes harmonious relationships among people.

Table 8. Interview Results: Religious Social Attitudes

No.	Informant	Position/Status	Main Statement	Key Finding
1	Rahmat	PAI Teacher	"Students are honest, disciplined, and responsible."	Internalized moral values
2	Nureda	Akhlak Teacher	"Most students demonstrate positive attitudes."	Positive social character
3	Sahera	Grade II Homeroom Teacher	"They are tolerant and willing to cooperate."	Tolerance and collaboration
4	Salwa	Student	"We are taught to be honest and disciplined."	Understanding of moral values

These findings illustrate that religious character development contributes significantly to students' social competence and interpersonal relationships.

5. The Impact of PAI Teachers' Guidance on Religious Character Development

The guidance provided by PAI teachers has had a positive impact on students' religious character development. Improvements can be observed in worship discipline, social concern, participation in religious activities, and mutual respect among students. Routine, structured, and exemplary-based guidance has made religious values easier for students to understand and internalize. Consequently, PAI teachers play a significant role in shaping students into individuals who are faithful, morally upright, and responsible in their daily lives.

Table 9. Interview Results: Impact of PAI Teachers' Guidance

No.	Informant	Position/Status	Main Statement	Key Finding
1	Fitriani	Principal	“There has been an improvement in students’ discipline and social concern.”	Positive impact of guidance
2	Sahera	Grade II Homeroom Teacher	“Students are more active in religious activities.”	Increased participation
3	Rahmat	PAI Teacher	“Regular guidance strengthens students’ character.”	Effective habituation process
4	Nureda	Akhlak Teacher	“Students show greater respect toward their peers.”	Strong religious social values

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the guidance provided by PAI teachers has significantly contributed to the development of students’ religious character. Through continuous mentoring, habituation, and exemplary conduct, students have become more disciplined in worship, socially responsible, and committed to practicing Islamic values in their daily lives.

C. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of Religious Values-Based Character Development

1. Supporting Factors for the Role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers

The interview findings indicate that the role of PAI teachers in fostering students’ religious character is supported by several key factors, namely habituation programs, the availability of facilities and infrastructure, and strong institutional policies accompanied by committed human resources. Habituation programs such as congregational prayers, Qur’an recitation, and collective supplication serve as essential foundations for instilling religious values in a structured and continuous manner. Furthermore, adequate religious facilities, including a prayer room (musalla) and copies of the Qur’an, facilitate the implementation of religious activities and create a supportive learning environment. School policies and teachers’ commitment to promoting a religious culture also contribute significantly to the success of character development programs.

Table 10. Interview Results on Supporting Factors

No.	Informant	Position	Main Statement	Factor Category
1	Rahmat	Qur'an- Hadith Teacher	Habituation programs such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, and collective supplication greatly support the development of religious character.	Habituation Program
2	Nureda Kadang	Akidah Akhlaq Teacher	Facilities such as the musalla and Qur'an copies strongly support religious activities.	Facilities and Infrastructure
3	Fitriani	Principal	Teachers' commitment, school policies, and a shared religious culture are the main factors contributing to success.	Policy and Human Resources

2. The Role of the Madrasah Environment

The madrasah environment plays a strategic role in supporting the development of students' religious character. Daily religious practices, such as greetings, prayers, and collective worship, create a consistent religious atmosphere within the school. The exemplary behavior demonstrated by teachers and all school members encourages students to imitate positive conduct in their daily lives. In addition, school rules and traditions grounded in Islamic values strengthen the internalization of character values. Consequently, students not only understand religious teachings cognitively but also embody them through their attitudes and behaviors.

Table 11. Interview Results on the Role of the Madrasah Environment

No.	Informant	Status	Main Statement	Environmental Role
1	Rahmat	Teacher	Students are accustomed to greetings, prayers, and collective worship every day.	Religious Habituation
2	Nureda Kadang	Teacher	A religious environment makes it easier for students to imitate positive behavior.	Role Modeling
3	Syafiq	Student	The madrasah creates a religious	School Culture and

environment through its rules and Regulations
daily practices.

Parental support is an important factor in the success of students' religious character development, although the level of involvement varies among families. Some parents actively guide and support their children at home, while others are less involved. Therefore, the madrasah seeks to maintain close communication with parents to ensure that religious character education implemented at school continues within the family environment. Collaboration between the madrasah and parents is essential for sustaining and strengthening the religious values instilled in students.

Table 12. Interview Results on Parental Support

No.	Informant	Position	Main Statement	Type of Support
1	Rahmat	Teacher	Most parents are supportive, although their level of involvement varies.	General Support
2	Nureda Kadang	Teacher	Some parents are actively involved, while others participate less frequently.	Parental Participation
3	Fitriani	Principal	The madrasah maintains communication with parents to ensure that character development continues at home.	School-Parent Partnership

The implementation of religious character development also faces several challenges originating from both family and external environments. Differences in family backgrounds, parenting styles, and home environments that are not consistently religious may hinder the continuation of values taught at school. In addition, media influences and external social environments sometimes expose students to values and behaviors that are inconsistent with religious character education. These challenges highlight the need for a more integrated approach involving schools, families, and community supervision to ensure the effectiveness of religious character development.

Table 13. Interview Results on Inhibiting Factors

No.	Informant	Position	Main Statement	Type of Barrier
1	Rahmat	Teacher	Differences in family backgrounds and home habits that are not strongly religious present challenges.	Family-Related Factors
2	Rahmat	Teacher	Media influences and external social environments are sometimes inconsistent with religious values.	External Environmental Factors

The findings demonstrate that the success of religious character development depends not only on teachers and school programs but also on support from families and the broader social environment. Therefore, effective collaboration among schools, parents, and communities is essential to strengthen students' religious character in a sustainable manner.

DISCUSSION

A. The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Developing Students' Religious Character

The findings indicate that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at MIN 1 Enrekang play a strategic role in developing students' religious character. Their role extends beyond delivering instructional content to serving as educators, role models, motivators, and spiritual mentors. Through the integration of Islamic values into classroom instruction, teachers promote honesty, discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect among students. This finding is consistent with Lickona's (2013) character education theory, which emphasizes the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action in the character development process.

Role modeling emerged as one of the most influential factors in shaping students' religious character. Teachers consistently demonstrate religious behavior through worship practices, ethical conduct, honesty, and discipline, providing students with concrete examples to emulate. This finding supports Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, which explains that individuals acquire behaviors through observation and imitation of significant role models. Within the madrasah environment, teachers function as influential figures whose actions directly affect students' attitudes and behaviors.

In addition, PAI teachers act as motivators and spiritual guides through various religious habituation activities, including congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, and collective supplications. These activities provide students with direct experiences in practicing religious values. Consistent habituation enables students to internalize these values and transform them into enduring personal characteristics. This finding aligns with Muhaimin's (2015) view that Islamic education should focus not only on cognitive achievement but also on the development of religious attitudes and behaviors.

Students' Religious Character

The religious character of students at MIN 1 Enrekang is reflected in both their worship practices and social behaviors. Religious values are evident in students' discipline in performing prayers, regular Qur'an recitation, respect for teachers, honesty, responsibility, and concern for others. These findings suggest that the educational and character-building efforts implemented by the madrasah have successfully integrated spiritual values with students' daily social conduct.

The development of religious character is not an instantaneous process but rather the result of continuous habituation and guidance. According to Berger (1967), religious values become internalized through socialization processes involving interaction and supportive environments. In this study, the religious atmosphere of the madrasah provides students with opportunities to practice Islamic values regularly, enabling these values to become embedded in their daily habits and personal identities.

The findings further demonstrate a strong relationship between religious character and positive social behavior. Students who exhibit stronger religious values tend to demonstrate greater honesty, cooperation, tolerance, and social responsibility. This finding supports Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral development, which argues that moral growth is shaped through social experiences and value-based interactions. Consequently, religious character not only strengthens students' relationship with God but also fosters harmonious relationships with others.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Development of Religious Character

The effectiveness of PAI teachers in fostering students' religious character is influenced by several supporting factors. These include structured religious habituation programs, supportive school policies, adequate religious facilities, a positive religious school environment, and teachers' commitment to serving as role models. Together, these factors create an educational ecosystem that facilitates the

internalization of religious values. This finding is consistent with Muhaimin (2015), who emphasizes the importance of a supportive educational environment in promoting religious character development.

Parental involvement also plays a significant role in reinforcing students' religious character. Parents contribute through supervision, religious guidance, and the cultivation of religious practices at home. Collaboration between the madrasah and families helps ensure consistency in the values taught to students across different environments. Such cooperation strengthens the sustainability of character development efforts and reinforces the religious values instilled at school.

Despite these supporting factors, several challenges remain. Differences in family backgrounds, parenting styles, and levels of religious commitment at home can limit the effectiveness of character education. In addition, social media, digital technology, and peer influences outside the school environment may expose students to values and behaviors that conflict with religious teachings. These findings suggest that religious character development is a complex process influenced by interactions among schools, families, and broader social environments. Therefore, successful character education requires strong collaboration among educational institutions, parents, and the community to ensure the consistent reinforcement of religious values in students' daily lives.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion of this study, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at MIN 1 Enrekang Regency play a strategic role in fostering students' religious character. Their role extends beyond delivering instructional content and includes serving as role models, mentors, supervisors, and coordinators of various religious activities within the madrasah. Through structured religious learning and habituation programs—such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation (tilawah), and collective prayers—PAI teachers make a significant contribution to the internalization of Islamic values in students' daily lives.

The religious character of the students generally reflects an awareness of behaving in accordance with Islamic values, although the level of understanding and consistency varies among individuals. This is evident in their worship practices, honesty, discipline, responsibility, politeness, and mutual respect. Therefore, religious character development in the madrasah contributes not only to students' religious knowledge but also to the formation of positive attitudes and social behavior.

The effectiveness of PAI teachers in fostering religious character is supported by several factors, including the integration of religious habituation programs, the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure, supportive madrasah policies, teachers' commitment, and students' awareness and participation. However, several obstacles were identified, such as differences in family backgrounds, limited reinforcement of religious values at home, and the influence of social media and external environments that may not always align with religious character education. These findings highlight that the development of religious character is a holistic process requiring collaboration among the madrasah, families, and the broader social environment.

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers continue to strengthen their roles as educators, role models, mentors, and supervisors of students' religious behavior through meaningful instruction and consistent religious habituation programs. The madrasah administration should further support these efforts by providing appropriate policies, facilities, infrastructure, and a religiously supportive school culture.

Parents are encouraged to actively collaborate with the madrasah in nurturing their children's religious character at home to ensure continuity between school-based and family-based character education. Furthermore, future researchers are encouraged to explore more innovative approaches to religious character development, including the positive utilization of digital media, in order to address the challenges posed by social media and external environmental influences on students' character formation.

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