

The Effectiveness Of Character Education Based On Islamic Values

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Abstract: Character education based on Islamic values is an important necessity in responding to the challenge of moral degradation among elementary school students. Elementary schools, as the foundation of formal education, have a strategic role in instilling moral, spiritual, and social values in an integrated manner. This study aims to analyze the implementation and effectiveness of Islamic values-based character education at SD Negeri No. 107463 Paya Pasir. The study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data collection techniques include observation, in-depth interviews with the principal and teachers, and documentation studies. Data analysis was carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing with source triangulation to ensure data validity. The results showed that character education based on Islamic values was implemented in an integrated manner through classroom learning, habit-forming activities, school culture, and extracurricular programs. This implementation is quite effective in shaping students' character, especially in terms of religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, social awareness, leadership, and ethical decision-making skills in everyday life. The success of the program is supported by teachers' exemplary behavior, consistent religious habits, reinforcement of rules and behavior monitoring, and a conducive school climate. However, the study also found challenges in the form of differences in the family backgrounds of students, which affected the consistency of character behavior. These findings confirm that Islamic values-based character education in public elementary schools has strong potential to shape ethical and responsible behavior, provided that there is continuous synergy between schools and families.

Keyword: Character Education, Islamic Values, Elementary School

Abstrak: Pendidikan karakter berbasis nilai-nilai Islam menjadi kebutuhan penting dalam menjawab tantangan degradasi moral peserta didik di sekolah dasar. Sekolah dasar sebagai fondasi pendidikan formal memiliki peran strategis dalam menanamkan nilai moral, spiritual, dan sosial secara terintegrasi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi dan efektivitas pendidikan karakter berbasis nilai-nilai Islam di SD Negeri No. 107463 Paya Pasir. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Teknik pengumpulan data meliputi observasi, wawancara mendalam dengan kepala sekolah dan guru, serta studi dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan dengan triangulasi sumber untuk menjamin keabsahan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendidikan karakter berbasis nilai-nilai Islam dilaksanakan secara terintegrasi melalui pembelajaran di kelas, kegiatan pembiasaan, budaya sekolah, dan program ekstrakurikuler. Implementasi tersebut cukup efektif dalam membentuk karakter peserta didik, terutama dalam aspek religiusitas,

kejujuran, disiplin, tanggung jawab, kepedulian sosial, kepemimpinan, serta kemampuan pengambilan keputusan etis dalam kehidupan sehari-hari. Keberhasilan program ditopang oleh keteladanan guru, pembiasaan religius yang konsisten, penguatan aturan dan monitoring perilaku, serta iklim sekolah yang kondusif. Namun, penelitian juga menemukan tantangan berupa perbedaan latar belakang keluarga peserta didik yang memengaruhi konsistensi perilaku karakter. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pendidikan karakter berbasis nilai-nilai Islam di sekolah dasar negeri berpotensi kuat membentuk perilaku etis dan bertanggung jawab, dengan catatan memerlukan sinergi berkelanjutan antara sekolah dan keluarga.

Keywords: Character Education, Islamic Values, Elementary School

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Introduction

Character education has become a central concern in contemporary elementary education due to increasing challenges related to student discipline, moral awareness, and social behavior in school environments. Schools are no longer viewed solely as institutions for academic instruction but also as strategic spaces for cultivating ethical values and responsible behavior from an early age. Within the Indonesian educational context, the integration of religious values, particularly Islamic values, has been widely promoted as an approach to strengthening students' moral development and social responsibility. (Nucci et al., 2014).

From an Islamic educational perspective, character building (akhlaq al-karimah) is the main objective of education. Islamic education does not separate intellectual development and moral guidance, but rather views them as a single, integral whole (Selamat, Syamsul Arifin, ABdul Haris, Muhammad Qorib, 2023; Ainiyah et al., 2025; Azizah et al., 2023; Hasan, 2024). Islamic values such as honesty (shiddiq), responsibility (amanah), discipline, social awareness, and exemplary behaviour are the main foundations in shaping the personality of students (Halstead, 2004) (Amin et al., 2023). International research shows that religious-based education contributes significantly to the formation of positive character and behaviour control among students, especially at the primary education level (Nurhidayati & Sentosa, 2024) (Mahfud & Zahriyah, 2025).

Previous studies have demonstrated that religious-based schools and madrasahs tend to implement character education more systematically because religious instruction is institutionally embedded within their curricula and organizational culture. Research findings generally report positive outcomes in students' discipline, responsibility, and moral behavior. However, these studies predominantly focus on Islamic schools, leaving public elementary schools relatively underexplored. Existing research in public-school contexts largely

examines learning outcomes or general moral education programs rather than investigating how religious character education is operationalized, institutionalized, and sustained within non-religious institutional structures. (Sandarse, 2013) (Amini et al., 2018).

This gap becomes significant considering that public elementary schools face different structural and sociocultural conditions compared with religious-based institutions. Public schools typically accommodate students from diverse religious and socio-economic backgrounds, allocate limited instructional time for religious activities, and operate under administrative systems that do not prioritize religious programming. Consequently, religious character education in public schools is often implemented in fragmented or incidental ways rather than through systematic institutional strategies. Despite these constraints, preliminary observations conducted at SD Negeri No. 107463 Paya Pasir indicate the existence of structured religious habituation practices integrated into daily school activities, suggesting a potentially effective model of character education within a public-school setting.

The present study, therefore, focuses on examining the implementation effectiveness of religious character education at SD Negeri No. 107463 Paya Pasir. In this study, effectiveness is conceptually defined as the extent to which religious character education programs can (1) foster consistent student participation in religious practices, (2) promote observable positive behavioral changes such as discipline, self-control, and respectful interaction, and (3) sustain value internalization through institutional support and teacher role modelling. Effectiveness is thus evaluated not merely through program existence, but through observable behavioral outcomes and implementation processes compared with initial student behavioral conditions identified at the beginning of the study.

From a theoretical perspective, this research adopts the character education framework proposed by Thomas Lickona, which emphasizes the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action as interconnected dimensions of character formation. This framework enables the evaluation of effectiveness beyond ritual participation by examining whether religious values are internalized and manifested in students' daily behavior. Previous studies, however, often emphasize program outcomes without sufficiently explaining the processes through which values are translated into sustained behavioral change, resulting in limited understanding of implementation mechanisms.

Accordingly, this study addresses two main gaps in existing literature. First, it provides empirical evidence regarding process-based implementation of religious character education in public elementary schools. Second, it examines how institutional culture, teacher role modelling, and religious habituation interact to produce measurable behavioral transformation among students. By focusing on SD

Negeri No. 107463 Paya Pasir as a case study, this research seeks to explain how religious character education can function effectively within a public-school environment characterized by structural limitations and heterogeneous student backgrounds.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to answer the following research questions: (1) How is religious character education implemented through the integration of Islamic values at SD Negeri No. 107463 Paya Pasir? (2) What institutional strategies support the effectiveness of the program? (3) How does the program influence observable student behavioral development? (4) What challenges affect the sustainability of religious character education in the school? Through addressing these questions, this study is expected to contribute theoretically by strengthening the conceptual understanding of effectiveness in religious character education and practically by providing an applicable model for public elementary schools seeking to institutionalize character education programs.

Method

The research methodology was revised to ensure alignment between the research objective and the qualitative case study approach used to examine the effectiveness of Islamic values-based character education at SD Negeri No. 107463 Paya Pasir. In this study, effectiveness is not interpreted statistically but conceptually defined as the extent to which character education programs generate observable and sustained behavioral changes among students. To address previous methodological limitations, clear qualitative effectiveness indicators were established, including students' discipline, honesty, responsibility, participation in religious activities, social awareness, and ethical behavior. These indicators served as analytical benchmarks that enabled the study to evaluate effectiveness through behavioral evidence rather than merely describing program implementation. (Creswell, 2015).

Furthermore, the research procedures were clarified by specifying the research setting, duration, participant selection, and data collection process. The study involved 19 purposively selected participants, consisting of the school principal, Islamic Education teachers, classroom teachers, and students who were directly engaged in character education activities. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, participatory observations conducted regularly during school religious and learning activities, and documentation analysis of institutional and behavioral records. Prolonged field engagement allowed comparisons between initial behavioral conditions and ongoing student practices, thereby providing a qualitative basis for assessing program effectiveness. The research subjects consisted of school principals, Islamic Education teachers, classroom teachers, and senior students. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, taking into account

their direct involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of character education. This technique is commonly used in qualitative research to obtain rich and in-depth information in line with the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2016).

The data analysis process was also strengthened by applying the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña through systematic coding, thematic categorization, and pattern matching analysis. Observational findings, interview data, and documentation were triangulated to ensure credibility and consistency of interpretation. This analytical strategy enabled the researcher to identify how Islamic values were internalized in daily school practices and how behavioral transformations occurred over time, ensuring that conclusions regarding effectiveness were grounded in transparent and verifiable qualitative evidence. (Milles, 2014). The main themes that emerged were analysed based on the theoretical framework of character education and Islamic values, so that the research results had a strong conceptual foundation.

Result And Discussion

Result

Religious Habituation as the Foundation of Character Formation

The findings indicate that Islamic values-based character education at SD Negeri No. 107463 Paya Pasir is primarily implemented through structured religious habituation integrated into daily school routines. These activities include collective morning prayers, Qur'an recitation before lessons, congregational midday prayers, and religious reflection sessions conducted regularly.

Participatory observations conducted over four months showed changes in students' behavioral participation. During the initial observation phase, several students required repeated teacher reminders to participate in religious activities. However, by the third month of observation, 10 out of 12 observed students attended congregational prayers independently without direct instruction. Attendance documentation from school religious activity logs also demonstrated increased consistency in participation.

One Islamic Education teacher explained:

"At the beginning of the semester, students often delayed joining prayers, but now most of them go directly to the prayer area when the bell rings."

This behavioral consistency suggests that repeated habituation contributed to the internalization of religious discipline rather than temporary compliance. According to Lickona's character education framework, such repetition supports the transition from moral knowing to moral action, indicating early stages of character consolidation.

Nevertheless, observations also revealed that two students continued to demonstrate inconsistent participation, particularly those receiving limited parental

supervision at home. This variation indicates that character formation is influenced not only by school programs but also by external social environments.

Observations in the classroom and school environment show that religious activities have become part of the daily routine. Every morning before lessons begin, students are accustomed to praying together, and at certain times they perform congregational prayers. In addition, verses from the Qur'an are read regularly. This habit creates a religious atmosphere in the school and gradually fosters students' awareness to perform their prayers in an orderly and sincere manner.

Honesty is evident in students' behaviour when completing assignments, taking tests, and in their daily interactions with teachers and peers. Based on observations, most students complete their assignments independently and try to avoid cheating. On the few occasions when mistakes occur, students are encouraged to admit their actions. Teachers give praise to students who are honest and provide educational reprimands to those who break the rules.

Student discipline is evident in their compliance with school rules, punctuality, and adherence to learning activities. From observations, students generally arrive on time, follow lessons in an orderly manner, and obey the rules that apply in the classroom. Teachers are also seen to be consistent in enforcing rules, but with a persuasive and nurturing approach, so that students do not feel pressured but still understand the importance of discipline.

The value of responsibility is reflected in the students' willingness to complete school assignments, maintain classroom cleanliness, and take turns performing cleaning duties. Based on observations, students are becoming accustomed to cleaning the classroom without always having to be reminded by the teacher. In interviews, teachers said that responsibility is instilled gradually, starting with small tasks so that students become accustomed to recognising their obligations to themselves and their surroundings.

The results of the observation also show the development of social awareness among students. Students are seen helping each other when a friend is having difficulties, both in understanding lessons and in daily activities. For example, students help lend stationery to their friends or help friends who are behind in completing their assignments. This attitude shows that the values of togetherness and empathy are beginning to grow in their social interactions at school. In terms of leadership, some students were seen to be able to take on roles in coordinating their friends, both during class activities and in extracurricular activities. From the observations, students were allowed to lead prayers, organise lines, or become group leaders in group work. Teachers said that giving them such responsibilities was aimed at training their courage, self-confidence, and simple leadership skills appropriate for their age.

Interviews with teachers also showed that students were beginning to make simple ethical decisions in their daily school life. For example, students chose to return lost property to its owner or report problems in the classroom to their teacher. Observations showed that some students were beginning to consider what was right and wrong before acting, albeit in simple matters.

From the students' perspective, the interview results showed that they felt a change in their daily behaviour. Some students said that they had become more disciplined, more polite to teachers and friends, and more accustomed to performing religious rituals. In addition, some students also admitted that they had started to apply the good habits they had learned at school to their lives at home.

However, the study also found obstacles in implementing character education, particularly related to differences in the family backgrounds of students. Teachers reported that not all students were taught the same values at home, so the consistency of character behaviour at school sometimes differed between students. This was evident in the fact that some students still needed more intensive guidance in terms of discipline and responsibility.

Observations of extracurricular activities show that activities such as scouting, recitation groups, and school social activities help strengthen students' character building. Students who are active in these activities appear to be more accustomed to working together, more disciplined in following activity rules, and more responsible for the tasks assigned to them. These out-of-class activities are an important means of training students' character through direct experience.

The physical and cultural environment of the school also contributes to the success of character education. From observations, the school has a relatively clean, orderly, and child-friendly environment, creating a comfortable atmosphere for students to learn and interact. Teachers and other school staff also strive to maintain a conducive atmosphere so that character values can be more easily instilled in students' daily lives.

Overall, the results of interviews, observations, and documentation show that Islamic values-based character education at SD Negeri No. 107463 Paya Pasir is quite effective and has a positive impact on student behaviour. Although there are still several obstacles, particularly those related to family factors, the implementation of character education at this school has shown positive results and has the potential to be further developed through strengthened cooperation between the school, teachers, and parents.

The overall findings of the study can be seen in the table based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings are as follows:

Table 1 Research Findings

No	Character Education Indicators	Research Findings	Evidence Observation/Interview
1	Honesty	Students demonstrate honest behaviour in classwork and social interactions.	Teacher observations; student diaries
2	Responsibility	The children complete their tasks on time and take responsibility for the class property.	Teacher interviews and daily observations
3	Discipline	Students assist friends who are experiencing difficulties and participate in social activities.	Class observation
4	Empathy and social	Siswa membantu teman yang kesulitan dan berpartisipasi dalam kegiatan sosial	Observation of group activities
5	Leadership	Children lead classroom and extracurricular activities fairly	Observation of extracurricular activities; teacher interviews
6	Internalisation of Islamic values	Students apply Islamic values in prayer, worship, and interaction.	Observation of worship in class; teacher interviews
7	Decision-making ability	Students are able to choose ethical actions in simple problems.	Case studies; student interviews
8	Consistency of behaviour	Children who are accustomed to character assessment at school demonstrate consistent behaviour.	Long-term observation
9	Extracurricular participation	A clean, orderly, and child-friendly environment reinforces the internalisation of character values.	Observation of extracurricular activities

No	Character Education Indicators	Research Findings	Evidence Observation/Interview
10	School environment	Lingkungan bersih, tertib, dan ramah anak memperkuat internalisasi nilai karakter	School observation
11	Learning motivation and morale	Children who are not accustomed to doing chores at home tend to be less consistent.	Teacher interviews; classroom observations
12	Challenges arising from family background	Anak yang kurang mendapat pembiasaan di rumah cenderung kurang konsisten	Teacher interview
13	Storytelling and Islamic role models	The use of stories about prophets and moral tales enhances character understanding.	Learning observation
14	Behavioural assessment	Daily notes and regular monitoring reinforce character building	Teacher observation and documentation
15	Overall ethical behaviour	Students demonstrate ethical, responsible, and caring behaviour.	Comprehensive observation

The findings of this study also provide empirical contributions to the study of Islamic character education in public primary schools, which has been relatively limited. Thus, this study enriches the international literature on religious values-based character education in the context of public schools.

Discussion

Research findings indicate that Islamic values-based character education at SD Negeri No. 107463 Paya Pasir is implemented in an integrated manner through learning, school culture, and daily habits. This pattern reinforces the view that effective character education is not sufficient when placed as a subject or additional programme, but must be part of everyday life at school. This integrated approach is in line with the idea that character is formed through a continuous and contextual process in the educational environment.

Research findings indicating the absence of specific documents, but rather the integration of values into the school's vision, mission, and programmes, show that schools apply an institutional cultural approach to character education. This is in line with the whole-school approach concept, which emphasises that character values must be brought to life through school policies, learning practices, and social interactions among the entire school community (Pike et al., 2021; Dabdoub et al., 2024; Arfah & Wantini, 2023; Azizah, Jariah, et al., 2023; Rambe et al., 2023).

The central role of teachers in the implementation of character education also reinforces the importance of role modelling in values education. Teachers function not only as educators, but also as moral models for students. This finding is consistent with the view that role modelling is one of the most effective strategies in character education, because students learn values not only from what they are taught, but also from what they see and experience every day (Sanderse, 2013).

Regular religious practices, such as communal prayer, congregational prayer, and recitation of the Qur'an, demonstrate that the internalisation of values occurs through repeated practice. This pattern supports the theory of value internalisation, which emphasises the importance of habituation in character formation, whereby consistently practised good behaviour will shape lasting attitudes and habits (McCauley, 2017).

Findings regarding the development of honesty among students show that reinforcing values through consistent rules and guidance can shape students' integrity. This is in line with Lickona's view that honesty is at the core of moral character and needs to be instilled through role modelling, habit formation, and continuous reinforcement in school life.

The discipline evident in students' compliance with rules and activity schedules shows that the persuasive and religious approach applied by the school is capable of fostering internal awareness in students, rather than mere compliance due to fear of punishment. This finding is in line with research stating that effective character education emphasises the formation of moral awareness, not just external behavioural control (Al Farabi et al., 2023) (Nucci et al., 2014).

In terms of responsibility, the habit of completing tasks, maintaining cleanliness, and carrying out guard duty shows that students are beginning to understand the meaning of trust in daily practice. This is in line with the view that responsibility is one of the main values in Islamic character education that needs to be trained through real tasks and direct experiences in the school environment (Halstead, 2004)(Amini, 2025).

The development of social awareness and empathy among students shows that character education not only shapes individuals' relationships with God, but also harmonious social relationships. These findings reinforce the view that good

character education must be able to foster social sensitivity and prosocial behaviour in students (Curren, 2016).

The emergence of leadership attitudes through the assignment of simple roles to students shows that character education also contributes to the development of leadership virtues. This is in line with the findings of Pike et al., who state that leadership experiences in a school context can be an effective means of fostering responsibility, fairness, and moral courage in students (Pike et al., 2020).

Students' ability to make simple ethical decisions shows that the internalisation of values does not stop at compliance with rules, but begins to touch on aspects of moral reasoning. This is in line with the virtue ethics approach, which emphasises that good character is reflected in an individual's ability to choose the right action in concrete situations (Curren, 2016).

The perception of students who feel a change in behaviour for the better shows that the character education implemented by schools is not only normative in nature, but also has an impact on the subjective experiences of students. This change is in line with the view that one indicator of the success of character education is the transformation of attitudes and habits in students' daily lives. (Jeynes, 2019). However, findings regarding differences in family backgrounds as obstacles indicate that character education cannot be solely entrusted to schools. This reinforces Epstein's view on the importance of partnerships between schools and families in building consistency in moral values between school and home environments (Epstein, 2018).

The role of extracurricular activities in strengthening students' character shows that character education needs to involve all of students' learning experiences, both inside and outside the classroom. These findings are in line with the results of studies stating that extracurricular activities have a significant contribution in strengthening the values of discipline, responsibility, and cooperation (Sandarse, 2013) (Rahayu & Dong, 2023). A clean, orderly, and child-friendly school environment has been proven to support the process of internalising character values. This is in line with research confirming that a positive school climate has a significant influence on the success of character education programmes and the moral development of students (Durlak et al., 2011) (Hummel et al., 2022).

Overall, the findings of this study reinforce that Islamic values-based character education in public primary schools has strong potential to shape students who are religious, honest, disciplined, responsible, socially aware, and capable of making ethical decisions. This is in line with various studies that emphasise the importance of integrating values into all aspects of school life as the key to successful character education (Lickona, 2015)(Pike et al., 2021) (Dabdoub et al., 2024).

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion, it can be concluded that Islamic values-based character education at SD Negeri No. 107463 Paya Pasir is implemented in an integrated manner through classroom learning, habit-forming activities, school culture, and extracurricular programmes. This implementation has proven to be quite effective in shaping the character of students, particularly in terms of religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, social awareness, leadership, and the ability to make ethical decisions in simple everyday situations.

The success of character education is supported by several key factors, namely the exemplary behaviour of teachers as moral role models, consistent religious practices, reinforcement through rules and behaviour monitoring, and the creation of a conducive, orderly, and child-friendly school environment. In addition, Islamic-based extracurricular activities such as scouting, recitation of the Qur'an, and social activities also strengthen the internalisation of character values through real and meaningful social experiences for students.

However, this study also found challenges, particularly related to differences in the family backgrounds of students, which affect the consistency of character behaviour at school. This shows that the effectiveness of character education does not only depend on schools but also requires continuous support and synergy with the family environment. Thus, it can be asserted that Islamic values-based character education in public primary schools has strong and relevant potential to shape ethical, responsible, and socially conscious behaviour in students, provided that it is implemented consistently, integrated, and supported by collaboration between schools and parents.

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