

## Teachers' Efforts in Forming the Religious Character of Students at Ketawanggede Elementary School, Malang City

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Thoriqul Islam, <sup>2</sup>Ahmad Wahyulil Albab, <sup>3</sup>Amit Dana Ikmah, <sup>4</sup>Dwiana Novitasari, <sup>5</sup>Fatkul Khabib

<sup>1</sup>*Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Indonesia, <sup>2,4,5</sup> UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, Indonesia, <sup>3</sup>STIT Al-Muslihuun Tlogo Blitar, Indonesia*

<sup>1</sup>[islamthoriqul95@gmail.com](mailto:islamthoriqul95@gmail.com) <sup>2</sup>[ahmadwahyulilbab753@gmail.com](mailto:ahmadwahyulilbab753@gmail.com)

<sup>3</sup>[amitdanahikmah@gmail.com](mailto:amitdanahikmah@gmail.com) <sup>4</sup>[dwiananovitasari602@gmail.com](mailto:dwiananovitasari602@gmail.com)

<sup>5</sup>[razanaqila02@gmail.com](mailto:razanaqila02@gmail.com)

**ABSTRACT:** Education in Indonesia cannot be separated from Islamic values, which have become an integral part of the education system. Ketawanggede Elementary School, located in Malang City, is an example of a school that incorporates Islamic education into its school culture as a means of instilling Islamic values to shape the religious character of its students. Instilling these values from an early age is important so that students not only excel academically but also can practice their religious values in their daily lives. This study aims to: (1) identify the Islamic values instilled through school culture; (2) describe the process of religious character formation; and (3) identify the supporting and inhibiting factors in this process. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing data collection techniques that include interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis is carried out through reduction, presentation, and conclusion, as well as data validation using triangulation of sources and techniques. The results of the study indicate that the instilled Islamic values include faith, sharia, and morals. The formation process is carried out through habituation, advice, and role models. The supporting and inhibiting factors include the role of students, educators, school facilities, and parental involvement. The practical implications of this study emphasize the need for teachers to consistently integrate Islamic values into the learning process, for schools to strengthen a conducive religious culture through adequate facilities and programs, and for parents to actively support character education at home, thereby creating a synergistic partnership in fostering students' religious character.

**Keywords:** Education, Islamic Values, Religious Character, Student, Teacher

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a conscious and systematic effort to create a learning atmosphere and learning process that allows students to actively develop their potential (Islam & Fawaz, 2017; Islam & Syaifudin, 2024; Trisnani, Sari, et al., 2025a). The goal is for them to have spiritual, religious strength, self-control, a well-rounded personality, intelligence, noble morals, and the skills needed for themselves and society (Islam, 2017; Mushaffa et al., 2025; Ulufah et al., 2024). In the study of education, it is essential first to understand two frequently used and often considered similar terms: pedagogy and education

(Azmi, Mushaffa, et al., 2025; Azmi, Oktaviani, et al., 2025). The term "pedagogy" refers to the meaning of "education," while "pedagogy" refers to the "science of education" (Islam, Azmi, et al., 2025). The word "pedagogos" originally meant a servant, but later evolved into a noble profession, namely guiding children in their growth towards independence and responsibility (Ikmah, Al-am, et al., 2025). Thus, educational activities encompass various aspects of human development, including physical development, health, skills, thinking, feelings, will, social development, and even aspects of faith (BP et al., 2022).

According to Imam Al-Ghazali, education is a process carried out by educators to eradicate bad morals and instil noble morals in students, so that they draw closer to God and achieve happiness in this world and the hereafter (Azmi et al., 2024; Islam, Nurdiyanto, et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Ibn Khaldun views education more broadly, namely as a process of human awareness in understanding, absorbing, and experiencing various events throughout the ages, not limited by space and time in the learning process (Firmansyah, 2019).

Zuhairi stated that Islamic education is an effort aimed at shaping a person's personality in accordance with Islamic teachings, so that they can think, make decisions, and act based on Islamic values (Ikmah, Neni, et al., 2025; Zuhri et al., 2024). In this view, Islamic education emphasizes the development of Muslim personalities who can actualize themselves in everyday life in harmony with Islamic values (Islam, Habibah, et al., 2025; Islam, Nasution, et al., 2025; Nurmayuli, 2021). Quraish Shihab added that the goal of Islamic education is to shape humans both individually and collectively so that they can carry out their functions as servants and caliphs of Allah, in order to build worldly life in accordance with His will and provisions (Nabila, 2021; Nurdiyanto, Nikmah, et al., 2025; Subir et al., 2024). Thus, Islamic education essentially aims to guide and educate people to understand Islamic teachings and develop intellectual (IQ), emotional (EQ), and spiritual (SQ) intelligence as a foundation for achieving success in this world and the hereafter (Rohman & Hairudin, 2018).

Along with advances in science and technology in the current era of the 5.0 industrial revolution, a variety of information is easily accessible to students at all levels of education, from elementary school (SD/MI) to university. This allows them to see, hear, and witness various events through various print and electronic media, which can have both positive and negative impacts on their behaviour and character (Islam et al., 2023). To address these conditions, the presence of educators with strong faith and piety is essential. Educators act as role models (*Uswatun Hasanah*) who guide, nurture, and set a good example for students from an early age, enabling them to grow into

individuals with noble character and broad knowledge (Islam & Nasution, 2024; Trisnani, Sari, et al., 2025b).

Compared to previous studies, however, most of the literature tends to focus on the normative goals of Islamic education or the philosophical perspectives of classical scholars (Al-Ghazali, Ibn Khaldun) without sufficiently addressing how these concepts are operationalized in contemporary school contexts. Other research emphasizes the challenges of globalization and the industrial revolution 5.0, but pays less attention to practical strategies for integrating Islamic values into school culture and daily educational practices. This study seeks to fill this gap by not only reaffirming the philosophical and theological foundations of Islamic education but also critically examining how these foundations can be actualized through cultural, pedagogical, and institutional practices in schools.

Based on these issues, the author chose Ketawanggede Elementary School in Malang City as the research location to explore teachers' efforts in shaping students' religious character. This school is located at Jalan Kertoleksono No. 93 D, Lowokwaru District, Malang City, just a few meters east of UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang. The author's interest in this topic was motivated by the phenomena described above, as well as a desire to investigate further the processes, methods, and obstacles in teachers' efforts to shape students' religious character.

Through initial observations over several weeks, the author discovered that Ketawanggede Elementary School (SDN Ketawanggede) is unique in fostering a religious school culture. The Islamic values implemented include faith, sharia, and morals or good manners. These values are embodied in various activities, such as welcoming students every morning by teachers at the school gate, accompanied by greetings and saluting the Indonesian flag; reciting the *Asmaul Husana* together in the schoolyard; praying Dhuha in congregation every Friday morning; reciting *Istighosah*, and praying Zuhur in congregation at noon. Furthermore, the school provides an honest cafeteria as a medium for character education. Several educational methods, including role models, advice, and habituation, support these activities.

The instillation of Islamic values at Ketawanggede Elementary School is expected to shape students into individuals with noble morals, diligent worship, discipline, and the ability to apply Islamic values in their daily lives. However, the author also found that some students were still not optimally implementing this religious character. Therefore, the author felt the need for more in-depth research, which is outlined in the title "Teachers' Efforts in Forming Religious Character in Students at SDN Ketawanggede, Malang City."

## METHOD

This study is entitled "*Teachers' Efforts in Forming Religious Character in Students at Ketawanggede Elementary School, Malang City.*" The researchers used a qualitative descriptive approach in conducting this study. A qualitative approach emphasizes the process of exploration, discovery, interpretation, and meaning of data, both explicit and implicit (Fitriana et al., 2020). Qualitative research is descriptive with a tendency towards in-depth analysis, where process and meaning are the main aspects highlighted. A theoretical foundation is used as a basis to maintain the research focus in line with the realities found in the field (Wekke, 2019). This method aims to comprehensively describe a situation or object in its context and gain a deep understanding of the issue being studied. The data collected in this study are not in the form of numbers as in the quantitative approach, but rather in the form of words, narratives, or images (Moleong, 1989). Through this approach, it is possible to uncover individual behavior, historical background, social life, organizational structures, kinship relationships, and even the dynamics of social movements (Sidiq & Choiri, 2019).

The research subjects consisted of the school principal, teachers, and students at Ketawanggede Elementary School, Malang City. Informants were selected purposively to ensure relevance with the research focus, including 1 school principal, 5 teachers of Islamic and general subjects, and 6 students who were considered able to provide information about the formation of religious character. Researchers conducted direct observations and data collection with these subjects in a natural setting, without any intervention that could compromise the authenticity of the data. Data collection techniques used included interviews, observation, and documentation, all relevant to the focus of the study.

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (Miles et al., 2014), which consists of three concurrent stages: (1) data condensation, (2) data display, and (3) conclusion drawing/verification. This model allows researchers to continuously refine the data and draw conclusions that are valid and grounded in the field findings. Data validity was ensured through triangulation of sources and techniques. With this approach, researchers aim to provide a comprehensive description of teachers' efforts in shaping the religious character of students at Ketawanggede Elementary School in Malang City.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on field findings through observation, interviews, and documentation techniques, the researcher then analyzed and presented the results using a qualitative

descriptive data analysis approach. The data analyzed were relevant to the previously formulated problem statement.

### **Islamic Values Instilled through School Culture at Ketawanggede Elementary School in Malang City**

Instilling values is an effort to instil sound principles in individuals, reflected through attitudes and behaviours consistent with Islamic teachings (Nurdiyanto, Islam, et al., 2025; Rodhiyana, 2022). The process of internalizing Islamic values in children should begin early and involve the family, school, and community. This is crucial because religious character formation is a shared responsibility (Islam, Baqi, et al., 2025; Islam, Rahma, et al., 2024). The main subjects that need to be taught include the values of monotheism, Islamic jurisprudence, and morals. These three aspects must align with the dimensions of Islamic religious education, namely harmony, alignment, and balance in human relationships with God, oneself, others, and the surrounding environment (Nurfalah, 2018).

At SDN Ketawanggede, Malang City, Islamic values developed through school culture encompass the values of faith, Sharia, and morals. These values are realized through various religious customs in the school environment, such as morning assembly followed by a joint prayer and recitation of the *Asmaul Husana*, the implementation of congregational midday prayers by all students from grades 1 to 6 (16 classes), the habit of congregational Dhuha prayers every Friday, monthly *istighosah*, extracurricular Quran reading for grades 1 and 2, and the habit of reading the Quran for 15 minutes before the start of classes for the upper grades. The school also regularly holds celebrations of Islamic holidays such as the Ramadan parade, the Isra Mi'raj commemoration, and the Hijri New Year. Another form of religious culture is the habit of students shaking hands and greeting teachers every morning. Through these activities, Islamic values such as faith, piety, and noble morals are instilled in students' daily lives (Suprihatin, 2023).

These values aim to shape the character of students who are devoted to Allah SWT, disciplined in carrying out His commands, and avoiding His prohibitions. Habits such as congregational Dhuha and Dhuha prayers, *istighosah* (recitation of the Names of Allah), recitation of the *Asmaul Husana* (the Names of Allah), and Quran recitation play a vital role in strengthening students' spiritual aspects. Furthermore, the development of noble morals such as politeness, respect, and humility toward teachers, as well as

maintaining harmonious relationships with peers and the surrounding environment, is also a primary focus (Trisnani et al., 2024).

This was reinforced through an interview with the Principal of Ketawanggede Elementary School in Malang City, Dra. Suci Suprihatin stated that, in addition to strengthening cognitive aspects, the school also instils religious and character values, such as courtesy, cooperation, and concern for the environment. Through activities such as classroom cleanliness competitions and Friday clean-ups, students are guided to understand that cleanliness is an integral part of their faith. These activities aim to shape students' faith and obedience to Allah SWT through practicing His commands and avoiding His prohibitions (Suprihatin, 2023).

Islamic Religious Education teacher, Moch. Maftuch, S.Pd.I, added that values such as noble character and an understanding of the Asmaul Husna (the Beautiful Names of Allah). Students are trained not only to memorize but also to understand their meaning. Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) lessons, such as the procedures for ablution and the requirements for valid prayer, are also taught so that students understand the correct practice of worship. Habitual greetings and handshakes, as well as respectful interactions with teachers and peers, are part of developing noble character (Maftuch, 2023).

In line with this, another Islamic Religious Education teacher, Binti Nurhamidah, S.Pd, stated that the religious values instilled include aspects of faith, piety, Islamic brotherhood, and morality. All of these values are instilled through various religious activities in schools as part of Islamic culture (Nurhamidah, 2023). Mira Rizkyah, S.Pd.I, also stated that the values emphasized include discipline in congregational prayer, participation in religious activities in the community, and the habit of reciting dhikr, *shalawat*, and other readings. The recitation of *Asmaul Husna* is also intended to help students understand the attributes of Allah SWT, thereby growing faith and piety within them (Rizkyah, 2023).

Thus, it can be concluded that the internalization of Islamic values through school culture at Ketawanggede Elementary School in Malang City aims to shape students who are faithful, pious, and have noble morals, as well as possessing respect and good manners, and can establish good social relationships with teachers, parents, and the community. These values are not only taught but also practiced in daily life to become firmly embedded in the students.

### **The Process of Forming Religious Character in Students at Ketawanggede Elementary School, Malang City**

### **The Role Modeling Process**

The three domains of human quality; cognitive, affective, and psychomotor are the result of the learning process. In the context of role modeling, the affective domain is the most important aspect to consider in this era. Ki Hajar Dewantara's educational ideals, namely "ing ngarso sung tulodo, ing madyo mangun karso, tut wuri handayani," remain highly relevant as guidelines. This philosophy emphasizes the strategic position of teachers as role models for students, builders of independence, and drivers of their progress in facing the future (Hamid, 2020; Islam, 2023). Teachers are role models. Their students often imitate every word and action of teachers. Therefore, teacher role modeling is a crucial aspect of the learning process (Trisnani, Sari, et al., 2025a). An ideal teacher not only masters the teaching material but is also able to educate and be a real example for students (Islam, Qodari, et al., 2024). Thus, teachers play a role not only as a conveyor of information, but also as a motivator, inspirator, dynamic, facilitator, evaluator, and role model in social life (Karso, 2019). Exemplary behavior is believed to be one of the effective ways to shape, foster, and strengthen students' spirituality, as it has a significant influence on the formation of their religious character (Trisnani, Islam, et al., 2025). Everything seen, heard, and done by teachers will have a positive impact on increasing the enthusiasm and motivation of students. Therefore, teachers at SDN Ketawanggede consistently condition, monitor, guide, direct, teach, and provide good examples to students in various activities based on Islamic culture. These activities include congregational Dhuha prayers, Dhuha prayers, monthly *istighosah* (religious gatherings), morning roll call, communal recitation of prayers, and the Asmaul Husana (*Asmaul Husna*) in the field, and commemoration of major Islamic holidays such as Isra Mi'raj, Muharram, Eid al-Adha, Eid al-Fitr, the Prophet's Birthday, and Halal Bihalal (gatherings). The presence and guidance of teachers and parents are essential in this process. Teachers play a crucial role in shaping Islamic character because they serve as role models for students. When teachers set a good example, students will imitate them and behave accordingly.

### **The Habituation Process**

Habituation is the process of forming consistent and automatic attitudes and behaviours through repeated learning experiences. Attitudes that become habits are usually permanent and do not require complex thought processes (Islam, Miftah, et al., 2024). The essence of habituation is repetition, namely, actions carried out continuously until they become habits. Habituation needs to be implemented in children's daily lives, as it can foster responsibility and discipline that will eventually become part of their personality (Anggraeni et al., 2021; Islam, Habibah, et al., 2025).

One effective method of instilling religious character is through habituation. This is the oldest educational method, which involves doing something deliberately and repeatedly to ingrain it into a habit (Islam, Nasution, et al., 2025). Through direct and consistent experience, children will more easily understand and remember what is taught, thus forming a profound inner experience (Akhyar & Sutrawati, 2021). At SDN Ketawanggede, habituation is carried out to shape students' Islamic thinking, actions, and attitudes in their daily lives. This habituation requires patience and perseverance. Some routine activities include morning assembly, group prayer, recitation of the Asmaul Husana, congregational Zuhur prayer for all classes from grades 1 to 6, congregational Dhuha prayer every Friday, monthly *istighosah*, and extracurricular Quranic recitation activities. For lower grades (grades 1 and 2), Quranic recitation is carried out specifically, while for higher grades, it is carried out 15 minutes before the start of classes. In addition, the school also regularly holds commemorations of Islamic holidays such as the Ramadan Parade, Isra Mi'raj, and the Hijri New Year, and cultivates the culture of students shaking hands with teachers every morning. Through these various habits, students are formed into faithful individuals, pious and noble, who respect and exhibit humility towards teachers, and establish harmonious relationships with friends, parents, and the community.

### **The Process of Providing Advice**

*Al-Mau'idhah al-hasannah*, or giving advice, is a form of good teaching and guidance, delivered in the form of moral messages from an early age (Arkiang & Adwiah, 2019). This method is one of the approaches to da'wah used by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) and his companions. Allah SWT commands that da'wah be carried out gently and touchingly (Islam, Amelia, et al., 2025). Advice delivered with gentleness can soften hard hearts and touch restless souls (Pratiwi et al., 2024). Advice plays a crucial role in developing noble character. Advice is a form of education and warning delivered based on truth to build and improve a person with good intentions. Advice always contains elements of moral education (Umam et al., 2022). At Ketawanggede Elementary School, teachers regularly provide advice to students to foster faith, piety, and noble character. Advice is delivered politely, easily understood, and non-offensively, and is tailored to the age and circumstances of the students. Teachers also consider the appropriate timing and situation when providing advice to ensure it is well-received. Through this approach, teachers provide evaluation and guidance to students to encourage them to be more diligent and consistent in performing the Dhuhr prayer, Dhuha prayer, istighotsah prayer, morning roll call, reciting prayers, and the Asmaul Husana (The Names of Allah), and participating in the commemoration of Islamic

holidays. Teachers serve as primary motivators in developing students' religious character to ensure they grow into individuals who are pious, obedient to Allah SWT, and possess noble morals.

### **Factors Supporting and Inhibiting the Formation of Students' Religious Character at Ketawanggede Elementary School, Malang City**

The process of developing students' religious character at Ketawanggede Elementary School in Malang City has proceeded smoothly and, as expected, thanks to several supporting factors (Maftuch, 2023). These factors include: (1) student enthusiasm in participating in various religious and cultural activities organized by the school, (2) active support from teachers who are consistently involved in implementing religious programs and providing motivation and guidance, and (3) the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure to support the implementation of religious activities at school. These three factors demonstrate good synergy and cooperation between all elements of the school, both students and educators. This provides a strong foundation for shaping students' religious character optimally.

To provide a more detailed overview, the following explains several key factors supporting the formation of religious character at SDN Ketawanggede, Malang City (Nurhamidah, 2023): (a) Student factors: students demonstrate support for the implementation of Islamic culture at school, as reflected in their enthusiasm and discipline in regularly and consistently participating in religious activities. (b) Educator factors: teachers at SDN Ketawanggede are actively involved in all religious activities, providing role models, motivation, guidance, and evaluating students. (c) School environmental factors: The school provides facilities that support the implementation of religious activities, including: (1) a prayer room used for congregational prayer, reading the Qur'an, istighotsah, and reciting prayers; (2) a multi-purpose stage to commemorate Islamic holidays such as the Prophet's Birthday, Isra' Mi'raj, and Nuzulul Qur'an; (3) a library with an adequate collection to broaden students' Islamic knowledge; and (4) other supporting facilities.

However, in every program implementation, there are certainly obstacles. In the context of this religious character formation, several inhibiting factors need to be considered, including (Rizkyah, 2023): (1) some students are still less enthusiastic about participating in Islamic cultural activities at school. Therefore, teachers continue to strive to provide motivation, guidance, and reminders. (2) less than optimal support and involvement of parents at home, especially in guiding their children to continue performing worship and applying Islamic values as they have been taught at school. Lack

of parental attention can lead to inconsistencies in the formation of religious character within the family environment. (3) Internal factors of each student, such as differences in character, personality, and diverse family backgrounds, also pose challenges in the formation of religious character. Therefore, a gradual, systematic, and consistent process is needed so that Islamic values can be accepted and practiced comprehensively both in the school environment and at home.

To overcome these various obstacles, several solutions that can be implemented include (Suprihatin, 2023): (1) Teachers consistently provide reminders, motivation, and guidance to students to remain enthusiastic and consistent in carrying out religious activities at school. (2) Active involvement of teachers in all series of religious activities and providing continuous motivation to students. (3) Schools continue to equip and improve the quality of facilities that support the implementation of religious culture. (4) Holding meetings and socialization with parents both directly at school and through WhatsApp groups, in order to increase cooperation, synergy, and support in forming the religious character of their children at home. (4) Homeroom teachers play an active role in guiding students every day regarding the implementation of worship and the consistent application of other Islamic values.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the research and analysis conducted, it can be concluded that instilling Islamic values in students at SDN Ketawanggede, Malang City, encompasses three main dimensions: faith, sharia, and morals. The formation of students' religious character is carried out through three strategic stages: role models, habituation, and providing advice, which are implemented continuously by educators. The supporting factors in this process include: (1) high enthusiasm of students in participating in religious activities at school; (2) active involvement of teachers in providing examples, motivation, guidance, and evaluation of students' religious behavior; and (3) the availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure, such as prayer rooms, stages for religious activities, and libraries that support Islamic literacy. On the other hand, the process of forming religious character also faces several obstacles, including: (1) some students do not show active participation in religious activities; (2) less than optimal support and guidance from parents in the home environment in instilling worship habits; and (3) internal student factors, such as differences in character and family background, which influence the acceptance and practice of religious values. To overcome these various obstacles, schools have attempted several solution strategies, including: (1) increasing the role of teachers in providing consistent guidance and motivation to students; (2) strengthening teacher involvement in all

religious culture programs; (3) providing facilities to support religious activities at school; (4) building effective communication with parents through regular meetings and online media such as WhatsApp groups; and (5) encouraging homeroom teachers to provide daily support regarding the implementation of worship and strengthening students' noble morals.

Practical implications of this research highlight that: (1) teachers need to consistently act as role models and integrate Islamic values in both classroom teaching and extracurricular activities; (2) schools must strengthen institutional support through facilities, structured programs, and collaboration with external stakeholders; and (3) parents are expected to play an active role in supporting and reinforcing religious character education at home, thereby ensuring synergy between school and family environments.

Suggestions for further research include the need for quantitative studies to measure the level of effectiveness of school culture in shaping students' religious character, as well as comparative studies involving different schools or regions to identify patterns, similarities, and contextual differences. This would enrich the understanding of Islamic values education and its practical implementation across various educational settings.

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