

# Shaping Noble Character: The Impact of Islamic Religious Education on Student Morals at Junior High School

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## ABSTRACT

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a significant role in shaping students' morals by instilling Islamic values, promoting good behavior, and fostering a religious school environment. This study aims to analyze the role of PAI in moral development and identify key factors that support its effectiveness. A qualitative descriptive method was employed using purposive sampling. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, followed by data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing to ensure a comprehensive analysis. Findings indicate that PAI contributes significantly to students' moral development at SMP Yapip Pacet. Teachers serve not only as educators but also as role models in daily life. The success of moral education is influenced by the integration of classroom learning, school-wide practices, and collaboration between the school and family. The study highlights the importance of reinforcing teachers' roles, employing effective learning strategies, and fostering a supportive school environment. The synergy between education, habitual practices, and parental involvement enhances the internalization of Islamic values in students' daily lives. PAI is essential in shaping students' character, requiring continuous strengthening through effective teaching, role modeling, and school-family collaboration. Future research should explore innovative approaches to further enhance moral education in different educational settings.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic religious education plays an important role in shaping the noble character and morals of students, especially at the Junior High School (SMP) level. In this developmental phase, students experience a transition from childhood to adolescence, where moral and spiritual values begin to be embedded more deeply. Islamic religious education not only aims to provide knowledge about Islamic teachings, but also to instill noble ethical values, morals, and personality. Islamic religious education

has a significant influence in shaping students' character, especially in developing honest, disciplined, and responsible attitudes (Judrah et al., 2024; Muzaini & Salamah, 2023).

The development of globalization and technological advances have brought positive and negative impacts on the morals of the younger generation. On the one hand, technology makes it easier to access information, but on the other hand, it also brings challenges in the form of moral degradation, such as increased bullying behavior, dishonesty, and lack of respect for others. Islamic religious education is one solution to overcome this problem by instilling strong spiritual and moral values. Through religious learning, students are expected to be able to fortify themselves from negative environmental influences (Khusnia, 2023; Parnawi & Ridho, 2023).

Islamic religious education in schools is not only limited to cognitive aspects, such as memorizing verses of the Qur'an or understanding Islamic laws, but also includes affective and psychomotor aspects. The affective aspect is related to the formation of attitudes and emotions, while the psychomotor aspect involves real practice in everyday life. According to Jasman (2016) shows that a holistic approach in Islamic religious education can increase students' moral awareness and encourage them to apply Islamic values in social interactions.

Schools as formal educational institutions have a big responsibility in shaping the character of students. Islamic religious education teachers play a key role in this process, because they not only teach, but also become role models for students. Hazami (2017), The effectiveness of Islamic religious learning is greatly influenced by the competence and personality of the teacher. Teachers who are able to integrate Islamic values in every aspect of learning will be more successful in instilling good morals in students. In addition, the Islamic religious education curriculum also needs to be designed comprehensively to ensure that students not only understand the theory, but are also able to apply it in everyday life. According to Helandri (2024), curriculum based on Islamic values and contextual to modern life can improve students' understanding of the importance of morality in facing global challenges. This is in line with the need to equip students with values that are relevant to the times.

Islamic religious education also has a role in shaping the personality of students with noble morals. Noble morals do not only cover the relationship between humans and God, but also the relationship between humans and their environment. According to Ningsih (2024), Students who receive intensive Islamic religious education tend to have higher attitudes of empathy, tolerance, and social concern compared to students who are less exposed to religious education. This shows that Islamic religious education contributes to forming students' characters that are not only good individually, but also beneficial to society.

However, challenges in implementing Islamic religious education in schools still exist. One of them is the lack of learning time allocated for religious subjects, so that the material delivered is often limited. In addition, monotonous and less interesting learning methods can also reduce students' interest in religious lessons. According to Nasution (2024), The use of innovative learning methods, such as group discussions, social projects, and technology integration, can increase student engagement in Islamic religious learning. On the other hand, the role of the family and community environment should not be ignored in the process of forming student character. Islamic religious education in schools needs to be supported by a conducive environment at home and in the community. Research by Firmansyah (2024) shows that students who receive moral and spiritual support from their families tend to have better character than students who receive less support. Therefore, collaboration between schools, families, and communities is very important to create an environment that supports the formation of noble character.

In a global context, Islamic religious education also has a role in forming students who are able to face multicultural challenges. Islamic values such as tolerance, justice, and universal brotherhood can be a foundation for students to interact with diverse communities. According to Nuraya (2024), Islamic religious education that integrates multicultural values can improve students' understanding of the importance of respecting differences and living harmoniously in a pluralistic society. Thus, Islamic religious education has a strategic role in shaping the noble character and morals of students at the

junior high school level. Through a holistic approach, relevant curriculum, and support from various parties, Islamic religious education can be a strong foundation for the formation of a young generation with noble morals and ready to face the challenges of the times. Further research is needed to explore effective strategies and methods in improving the quality of Islamic religious education in schools.

SMP Yapip Pacet, as one of the Islamic-based educational institutions, has a great responsibility in shaping the noble character and morals of students through Islamic religious education. A conducive school environment supported by Islamic values is an important factor in the process of forming students' character. At SMP Yapip Pacet, Islamic religious education is not only taught as a formal subject, but is also integrated into daily activities, such as congregational prayer, Al-Qur'an recitation, and other religious activities. SMP Yapip Pacet also faces the same challenges as other schools in the era of globalization, where the negative influence of technology and social media can erode students' morals. However, with a holistic Islamic religious education approach, this school strives to fortify students from these influences. For example, through moral development programs and religious extracurricular activities, students are taught to develop attitudes of discipline, honesty, and responsibility.

Previous research has discussed a lot about the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in forming students' morals in certain schools, such as SMPN 24 Surakarta (Anggreani & Ali, 2024) and SMPN 2 Diwek Jombang (Mbagho et al., 2021). Some studies focus more on the role of teachers in improving students' character (A. R. Nasution, 2023), while others attribute it to the challenges of the digital era (Febrianto & Shalikhah, 2021). However, there is a gap in this study because there has been no study that specifically examines the role of PAI on student morals on a broader scale. This study has the potential to provide new contributions to analyzing factors that influence the effectiveness of PAI, as well as highlighting the challenges of globalization in the formation of student character in the modern era. There is a problem formulation that is the focus of this, namely: 1) what is the role of Islamic religious education in fostering students' morals?, and 2) what are the supporting factors of Islamic religious education in developing students' morals?.

## 2. METHODS

The method used in this study is a qualitative descriptive method. The selection of this method aims to describe social phenomena in the field and explain the variables studied in depth. This approach is very appropriate for research that focuses on the impact of Islamic Religious Education on student morals at SMP Yapip Pacet. With this method, researchers can explore experiences, perceptions, and environments that directly influence the development of student character.

The object of this study is Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMP Yapip Pacet, with a focus on student character formation. The research population includes all students enrolled in the school, because they have characteristics that are relevant to the research objectives. However, given the limitations of time and resources, this study uses a sampling technique to represent the population effectively.

The sampling technique used is purposive sampling, which is the selection of samples based on certain considerations in order to provide relevant and in-depth information. The sample selection criteria include students who are active in PAI learning, come from diverse backgrounds, and teachers who teach related subjects. The sample size is determined based on the sufficiency of information until it reaches the point of saturation or no new findings are found.

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely observation, interviews, and documentation. Observations were carried out by directly observing the Islamic Religious Education learning process in the classroom, interactions between teachers and students, and the teaching methods used. Interviews were conducted with students and teachers to explore their understanding of Islamic Religious Education, the challenges faced in the learning process, and the effectiveness of the teaching methods applied. Documentation includes data collection from various

written sources, such as curriculum, syllabus, teaching materials, and academic records that support this research. Data analysis in this study used qualitative analysis techniques that included three main stages: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data reduction was carried out by sorting and filtering information that was relevant to the focus of the research. Data presentation was carried out in the form of descriptive narratives that systematically described the research findings. Conclusions were then drawn by interpreting the data that had been collected to answer research questions and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of Islamic Religious Education on the formation of student morals at SMP Yapip Pacet.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. *The Role of Islamic Religious Education in Developing Students' Morals*

Based on the results of interviews with several Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SMP Yapip Pacet, it was found that the PAI subject has an important role in shaping students' morals. This role can be described as follows:

a. Instilling Islamic Values

PAI teachers provide an understanding of Islamic values through teaching materials such as faith, worship, and morals. Through this understanding, students are expected to be able to internalize attitudes and behaviors that are in accordance with Islamic teachings. As conveyed by Mrs. SA, "We always try to instill Islamic values in every material we teach so that students not only understand the theory, but also apply it in their daily lives." Mr. AF added, "We also provide direct examples by applying Islamic teachings in everyday actions, so that students can see and imitate good behavior."

b. Guiding Daily Behavior

PAI teachers not only teach theory, but also guide students in daily practices, such as getting used to greeting, speaking politely, and showing respect to teachers and parents. Mrs. RM stated, "Every morning before entering class, we get students used to praying together and giving brief advice on the importance of behaving well." Mr. YH added, "We also often hold group discussions on moral dilemmas so that students can understand how to deal with social situations with the right attitude."

c. Becoming a Role Model for Students

Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Yapip Pacet strive to be role models in their attitudes and behavior. Based on observations, students find it easier to imitate and apply good morals when they see real examples from their teachers. "We are aware that students learn more from real examples. Therefore, we as teachers must provide good examples in our speech and daily behavior," said Mr. AF. Mrs. SA added, "We also often interact directly with students outside the classroom, such as during breaks or extracurricular activities, to ensure that they apply Islamic values in various situations."

d. Building a Religious School Environment

Islamic Religious Education also plays a role in creating a conducive school environment for moral development, such as congregational prayer activities, religious studies, and programs to familiarize themselves with reading the Qur'an before starting lessons. "We hold routine activities such as congregational prayer and religious studies every week to strengthen religious values in the school," explained Mr. YH. Mrs. RM added, "We also invite students to get involved in religious-based social activities, such as community service and charity for orphans, so that they can understand the meaning of caring in Islam."

The findings of this study indicate that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a very important role in fostering the morals of students at SMP Yapip Pacet. Based on interviews with several PAI teachers and observations made, it was found that PAI teachers not only teach theory, but also instill Islamic values through materials on faith, worship, and morals, which are expected to be applied in

everyday life. In addition, PAI teachers also guide students in practicing good behavior, such as praying together, saying hello, speaking politely, and respecting teachers and parents. The role of teachers as role models is very important, because students tend to imitate the behavior they see, both inside and outside the classroom. In addition, Islamic religious education at SMP Yapip Pacet also plays a role in creating a religious school environment through routine activities such as congregational prayer, religious studies, and the habit of reading the Qur'an. Overall, the findings of this study illustrate that Islamic religious education at this school contributes greatly to shaping students' morals, both in terms of learning, behavioral habits, personal examples, and creating an environment that supports religious values.

Character education is an approach that emphasizes the importance of forming moral and ethical values in individuals. In this context, Islamic Religious Education plays a role as an effective medium for instilling Islamic values that shape students' morals. Zakiyah Daradjat (2000) in his theory of character education states that character is built through two main processes: learning and role models. Teachers as educators not only provide theoretical religious knowledge but also provide examples in the form of real actions that students can imitate. This is in line with research findings that show that Islamic Religious Education teachers at Yapip Pacet Middle School try to be role models for students in all aspects of life, both inside and outside the classroom.

Habituation is a method used to form good habits in students. This is very relevant to the formation of morals taught through Islamic Religious Education. This study shows that Islamic Religious Education teachers at Yapip Pacet Middle School not only teach theories about morals, but also guide students through habits that are carried out every day, such as praying together, greeting, speaking politely, and respecting teachers. This habituation creates an environment that supports the formation of positive morals in students, which is in line with the opinion expressed by Zainur (2023), which states that habituation as part of the religious education curriculum is an effective way to instill Islamic values in everyday life.

In Albert Bandura's social learning theory (1977), the concept of "modeling" or imitation of the behavior of individuals who are considered models is known (Firmansyah & Akbar, 2023). Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Yapip Pacet serve as role models for students, with their behavior reflecting Islamic values. Students tend to imitate the actions of teachers whom they consider to be authority figures. In this case, teachers are not only educators, but also living examples who show how good morals can be applied in everyday life. Students who see their teachers performing Islamic behavior such as speaking politely, helping others, and performing worship solemnly, will be more likely to imitate these behaviors in their own lives.

The theory of a supportive learning environment is also very relevant in this context. According to research by Meiliza (2023) and Jannah (2023), a religious educational environment can have a significant impact on the formation of students' character. Activities such as congregational prayer, religious studies, and the habit of reading the Qur'an held at SMP Yapip Pacet, create an atmosphere that supports religious values and provides space for students to interact with Islamic values in everyday life. This environment, full of religious activities, allows students to experience the application of religious values directly, which strengthens the formation of their morals.

The theory of constructivism, initiated by Piaget and Vygotsky, is also relevant in Islamic Religious Education learning. In this context, students are not only given religious knowledge passively, but are invited to build their own understanding of morals through experience and social interaction (Syafii & Purnomo, 2024). Islamic Religious Education teachers at SMP Yapip Pacet invite students to discuss moral dilemmas and how to act appropriately in certain situations. This approach provides space for students to construct their own meaning of morality in accordance with the values taught in Islam.

Overall, Islamic religious education at SMP Yapip Pacet shows a holistic approach in fostering students' morals. Theories of character education, habituation, social learning, learning environment, and constructivism support each other in creating meaningful and sustainable learning experiences for students. Moral development does not only occur in the classroom, but also in every interaction and

habit built in the school environment. Teachers play an important role in instilling and strengthening Islamic values, which are then applied to students' daily lives.

### 3.2. *Supporting Factors of Islamic Religious Education in Developing Students' Morals*

From the results of documentation and observation, there are several factors that support the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education in developing students' morals at Yapip Pacet Middle School, including:

- a. **Support from the School.** The school provides full support for the implementation of religious education, such as by providing adequate worship facilities and holding religious programs regularly. "The school is very supportive of us in fostering students' morals by providing various facilities and programs that support religious activities," said Mrs. SA. Mr. AF added, "We also get support in the form of training to improve teaching skills with a more interactive approach."
- b. **The Role of the Family in Moral Education.** The results of the interview showed that students who received good religious education at home tended to have better morals at school. Parents who are active in educating their children with Islamic values are an important factor in the formation of students' character. "We often communicate with the parents of students to ensure that they also provide religious education at home," said Mr. YH. Mrs. RM added, "We also hold seminars for parents so that they understand the importance of consistency between religious education at school and at home."
- c. **Interactive and Applicative Teaching Methods.** Islamic Religious Education teachers use various interesting learning methods, such as moral case discussions, role-playing, and technology integration in learning to improve understanding and application of Islamic morals. "We try various learning methods so that students are more interested and active in understanding and practicing Islamic values," said Mr. AF, who has been teaching for more than 10 years. Mrs. SA added, "We also often use digital media, such as educational videos and interactive learning applications, to make the material more interesting for students."
- d. **Supportive School Environment.** The existence of religious communities in schools, such as Rohis (Islamic Spirituality), provides a place for students to explore Islamic values more deeply and apply them in their daily lives. "We are greatly helped by the Rohis activities which are a place for students to be more active in religious activities," said Mr. YH. Mrs. RM added, "We also formed a mentoring group, where senior students who already have a better understanding of religion can guide their juniors."

From this study, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education has a very important role in forming and developing the morals of students at SMP Yapip Pacet. Success in moral development does not only depend on teaching in the classroom, but is also supported by the school environment, family, and innovative and applicable learning methods.

The findings of this study indicate several important factors that support the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in developing students' morals at SMP Yapip Pacet. First, full support from the school, which provides adequate worship facilities and organizes religious programs regularly, is an important factor in strengthening students' moral development. Second, the role of the family in moral education is very significant, where parents who actively educate their children with Islamic values at home contribute to the development of students' character at school. Third, the use of interactive and applicable teaching methods, such as moral case discussions, role-playing, and technology integration in learning, improves students' understanding of Islamic morals and how to practice them in everyday life. Finally, a supportive school environment, especially with the presence of religious communities such as Rohis and mentoring groups, provides a forum for students to explore and apply Islamic values. Overall, these findings indicate that the success of fostering students' morals at SMP Yapip Pacet does not only depend on classroom teaching, but is also supported by the role of the family, a religious school environment, and innovative and applicable teaching approaches.

Analysis of the factors supporting the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in developing students' morals at SMP Yapip Pacet shows alignment with the findings in the latest educational literature. First, support from the school is a crucial factor in fostering students' morals (Safana & Andriyani, 2024). The provision of adequate worship facilities and regular religious programs create a conducive environment for the development of student character. According to research published by the Ministry of Education and Culture, religious education in schools aims to improve students' religious understanding, faith, piety, and noble morals.

Second, the role of the family in students' moral education is very significant (Bahri, 2021). Parents who actively educate their children with Islamic values at home contribute to the development of students' character at school. Research by Rahayu (2023) shows that families, schools, and communities have important roles in improving the quality of learning and character building of students. Third, the use of interactive and applicable teaching methods, such as moral case discussions, role playing, and technology integration in learning, improves students' understanding of Islamic morals and how to practice them in everyday life. Research by Bitu (2024) shows that interactive learning is successful in making students more active and involved in the learning process, which in turn improves their understanding of the subject matter.

Finally, a supportive school environment, especially with the presence of religious communities such as Rohis and mentoring groups, provides a forum for students to explore and apply Islamic values. Research by Subianto (2013) stated that the role of family, school, and community in the formation of quality character is very important, where family and household, school environment, and community interact to improve the quality of learning and character formation of students. Overall, these findings indicate that success in fostering student morals at SMP Yapip Pacet does not only depend on classroom teaching, but is also supported by the role of the family, a religious school environment, and innovative and applicable teaching approaches.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMP Yapip Pacet plays a significant role in shaping students' morals through learning that focuses not only on theory, but also on the practice of Islamic values in everyday life. PAI teachers act as educators and role models, guiding students in cultivating good behavior such as praying, speaking politely, and respecting teachers and parents. In addition, a religious school environment, with activities such as congregational prayer, religious studies, and reading the Qur'an, also supports the development of students' character. Success in shaping morals does not only depend on classroom learning, but is also influenced by innovative methods, consistent habits, and support from families and a conducive school environment. The limitations of this study lie in the scope, which is still limited to one school, so the results cannot be generalized widely. In addition, this study focuses more on the perspectives of teachers and students without considering external factors such as the influence of the wider social environment. As a recommendation, further research can expand the scope by comparing several schools, involving more variables such as the role of parents and the community, and using a longitudinal approach to see the long-term impact of Islamic Religious Education on the formation of student character.

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