

Strategies Used by Islamic Religious Education Teachers to Instil Moral Values in Students at SMAN 5 Pariaman

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Abstract

The instilling of moral values in secondary education plays a strategic role in shaping students' character so that they can develop in a balanced manner across intellectual, moral, and spiritual aspects. During adolescence, students are in a phase of self-discovery that makes them vulnerable to various negative influences, making the potential for moral degradation a serious challenge for the world of education. This situation underscores the urgency of the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as educators who not only impart religious knowledge but also continuously nurture students' moral character and behaviour. This study aims to describe and analyse the strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education teachers in instilling moral values in students at SMAN 5 Pariaman. This study adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. The research subjects include Islamic Religious Education teachers, students, and relevant school officials. Data collection techniques were carried out through classroom observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, whilst data analysis was conducted through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions and verification. The results of the study indicate that the strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education teachers in instilling moral values are implemented through setting a good example, habit formation, the integration of values into learning materials, as well as contextual and reflective learning. These strategies are effective in instilling the values of honesty, responsibility, discipline, tolerance, politeness, and religiosity in students. The findings of this study imply the importance of strengthening the role of Islamic Education teachers and school culture support in developing Islamic Education learning oriented towards character building at the Senior Secondary School level.

Keywords

Islamic Religious Education, Teacher Strategies, Moral Values, Character Education



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INTRODUCTION

National education, in essence, aims to shape Indonesian citizens who are faithful, God-fearing, of noble character, competent, creative, and responsible, as

affirmed in Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System. This formulation of objectives indicates that education is not solely oriented towards academic achievement, but also towards the character development of students. Thus, moral dimensions and values form the primary foundation for the delivery of education at every level.

In the context of globalisation and the development of digital technology, the challenges of character building have become increasingly complex. Adolescents, as the secondary school age group, are in a phase of self-identity formation that is vulnerable to the influence of the social environment and the media. The unfiltered flow of information has the potential to influence students' ways of thinking, communication styles, and behaviour. If not balanced by the reinforcement of moral values, education risks producing a generation that is intellectually intelligent but weak in character. Therefore, character education has become a strategic necessity within the national education system (Tilaar, 2015).

Theoretically, character education is a systematic process of instilling moral values through the integration of cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects. Thomas Lickona (2013) emphasises that good character encompasses moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. This means that students not only understand the value of goodness but also possess an emotional commitment and the ability to put it into practice through concrete actions. In line with this, Urie Bronfenbrenner, through his ecological theory of development, explains that the formation of individual behaviour is influenced by the interaction between family, school, peers, and the wider social environment. A synthesis of these two perspectives indicates that the success of character education depends heavily on the consistency of the values taught in schools as well as the support of the students' social environment.

Within the formal education system, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) holds a strategic position in character development. IRE not only teaches religious rituals but also instils moral values such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and social concern (Muhaimin, 2017). Through integrated learning that combines faith, worship, and ethics, PAI serves as an instrument for the internalisation of universal moral values. Consequently, the effectiveness of PAI teaching strategies is crucial to the success of character education in schools.

Previous studies have shown that teachers' strategies have a significant influence on the character development of students. Rahmawati's (2021) research

found that the exemplary behaviour of PAI teachers contributes to improved student discipline in senior secondary schools. Hidayat's (2022) research demonstrated that a contextual approach in PAI teaching is capable of enhancing students' moral awareness. Meanwhile, research by Pratama (2023) confirms that the integration of school culture with religious education reinforces the internalisation of moral values. However, these studies have not specifically examined PAI teachers' strategies within the socio-cultural context of state schools in Pariaman City, which have a heterogeneous student body. This gap forms the basis for the importance of this study.

Empirically, various reports indicate that at secondary education level, issues of discipline and the decline in adolescent ethics are still prevalent (Lickona, 2013). This phenomenon suggests a gap between the values taught and the actual behaviour of students. Character education has not yet been fully internalised in students' daily lives. Based on the results of initial observations conducted at SMAN 5 Pariaman, a number of symptoms were found that indicate the internalisation of moral values is not yet optimal. Some students still arrive late for school, violate school rules, fail to show respect during lessons, and use impolite language in their daily interactions. Interviews with PAI teachers revealed that these conditions are influenced by diverse family backgrounds, the intensity of social media use, and the strong influence of peer groups. Furthermore, limited parental supervision due to work commitments is also a factor affecting students' behaviour.

These findings indicate that PAI teachers' strategies for instilling moral values need to be designed in a contextual and adaptive manner, taking into account the social realities of the students. If PAI teaching remains merely normative and theoretical, the moral values taught risk not being deeply internalised. Therefore, a strategy that is dialogical, reflective, and based on exemplary behaviour is required so that PAI teaching can have a tangible impact on changing students' behaviour. Based on the above, it can be concluded that although character education has become an integral part of national educational objectives, its implementation at senior secondary school level still faces various challenges. The role of Islamic Religious Education teachers is key in bridging the gap between the normative values of religious teachings and the behavioural realities of students within the school environment. However, the effectiveness of the strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education teachers in the local context of SMAN 5 Pariaman has not yet been thoroughly examined.

Therefore, this study focuses on the strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education teachers in instilling moral values in students at SMAN 5 Pariaman. The study focuses on the forms and patterns of the strategies employed, the moral values prioritised, and the supporting and hindering factors in their implementation. The objectives of this study are to comprehensively describe the strategies used by Islamic Religious Education teachers in character development, to analyse their effectiveness in shaping students' attitudes and behaviour, and to formulate practical solutions to enhance the quality of character education within the school environment.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach, as it aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education teachers in instilling moral values in their pupils. The descriptive approach was chosen to systematically and factually depict Islamic Religious Education teaching practices as they occur in the field, without manipulating the variables under investigation. In this context, qualitative research enables the researcher to capture the meaning, patterns, and dynamics of interaction between teachers and students in the process of instilling moral values, so that the data obtained is contextual and comprehensive (Creswell, 2014).

The research was conducted at SMAN 5 Pariaman, as this school possesses characteristics of Islamic Education teaching practices relevant to the research focus. The research subjects included Islamic Education teachers as primary informants, students as those directly experiencing the learning process, and relevant school personnel such as the deputy headteacher or form tutors as supporting informants. The selection of research subjects was carried out purposively, taking into account the informants' direct involvement and understanding of the implementation of character-building strategies, ensuring that the data obtained possesses a high level of credibility (Sugiyono, 2019).

Documentation techniques were employed to obtain written data relating to teachers' strategies for instilling moral values. Documentation in this study included an analysis of teaching modules, Learning Objective Sequences (LOS), and documents from the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5) as part of the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. In addition, the researcher also examined the school code of conduct, the student misconduct register, the guidance

counsellor's case files, the student attendance register, and documentation of habitual activities such as prayer sessions and learning activities that reflect the instilling of character values. This documentation was used to reinforce the data from observations and interviews, thereby enhancing the validity of the research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Profile of Islamic Education (PAI) Teaching at SMAN 5 Pariaman

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching at SMAN 5 Pariaman is conducted in a structured manner, adhering to the current national curriculum and teaching materials prepared by PAI teachers, such as syllabuses and Lesson Plans (RPP). The learning process is not only oriented towards the achievement of students' cognitive competencies but is also directed at strengthening aspects of attitude and behaviour as part of character development. In practice, PAI teachers integrate moral values into the teaching material through conceptual explanations, the provision of concrete examples, and the instilling of the meaning of Islamic teachings relevant to students' daily lives. This approach demonstrates that PAI learning at SMAN 5 Pariaman is not merely normative in nature, but seeks to build students' internal awareness of the importance of practising religious values in social life (Muhaimin, 2017).

In addition to co-curricular activities within the classroom, PAI learning at SMAN 5 Pariaman is also supported by various supplementary activities with a religious flavour and focused on character development. Activities such as the practice of praying before and after lessons, the performance of collective worship, and students' involvement in commemorating major Islamic holidays form part of the PAI learning culture at the school. PAI teachers play an active role in guiding and mentoring students so that these activities are not merely ceremonial but foster religious attitudes, discipline, and responsibility. This integrated learning approach, combining academic activities with these practices, reflects the school's efforts to make PAI an effective means of character development (Mulyasa, 2018).

The researcher's observations indicate that in the PAI learning process, teachers consistently begin activities with a group prayer and reinforcement of values and attitudes before moving on to the core material. Students appear to be actively engaged through question-and-answer sessions and simple discussions linked to everyday experiences. In some sessions, changes in students' attitudes were evident, such as improved discipline during lessons, the use of more polite language, and compliance with the teacher's instructions. This indicates that PAI learning does not merely take place at a cognitive level but also addresses the affective and behavioural aspects of students.

Based on the researcher's observations, it was evident that the students at SMA 5 Pariaman generally exhibited a diversity of social backgrounds and individual characters, which in turn influenced their attitudes and behaviour within the school environment. A school culture emphasising the values of discipline, courtesy, and mutual respect was a key

factor in supporting PAI learning. Although there are still some students who require further guidance regarding their attitudes and behaviour, overall the school culture provides a conducive environment for instilling moral values. The synergy between PAI teachers, students, and the school administration creates an educational climate that supports the continuous internalisation of moral and religious values.

Forms of Strategies Employed by PAI Teachers in Instilling Moral Values

The strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SMAN 5 Pariaman in instilling moral values are implemented in a structured, conscious, and contextually relevant manner, particularly aligned with the developmental characteristics of senior secondary school students. At this stage, adolescents are in a phase of identity formation, tend to question authority, and are highly influenced by their social environment and digital media (Santrock, 2016). Therefore, the strategies applied are not merely normative, but are specifically designed to foster self-discipline, behavioural control, and moral responsibility.

One of the primary strategies is deliberate and targeted pedagogical role modelling. PAI teachers consistently demonstrate positive behaviours such as punctuality, polite communication, and professional responsibility. This exemplary conduct is not incidental but intentionally performed as a means of shaping students' behaviour. Observational findings indicate that students tend to imitate teachers who exhibit consistency between words and actions, particularly in aspects of discipline and respectful interaction. This suggests that role modelling functions as an effective mechanism for value internalisation through imitation, especially for adolescents who respond more readily to concrete examples than to verbal instruction alone (Hasan, 2019).

In addition, habituation strategies play a significant role in developing students' self-control and behavioural stability. Teachers consistently encourage practices such as praying before and after lessons, greeting others, and adhering to school rules. These habits are reinforced not only within the PAI classroom but also through the broader school culture, creating a supportive environment for value formation. Continuous repetition of positive behaviours enables students to gradually internalise these values, transforming them from external obligations into personal awareness. This approach is particularly important in managing the emotional and behavioural fluctuations characteristic of adolescents.

Another important strategy is the integration of moral values into the PAI curriculum in ways that are contextualised to students' daily lives. Teachers connect religious teachings to relevant issues such as peer relationships, academic honesty, social media ethics, and student responsibilities. This integration ensures that moral values are not presented abstractly, but are directly applicable to real-life situations. Classroom observations reveal that the use of discussions and case studies enhances students' engagement and encourages them to actively participate in moral reasoning. This approach effectively bridges normative religious teachings with the social realities faced by adolescents, making learning more meaningful and impactful (Muhaimin, 2017).

Furthermore, reflective learning is employed as a key strategy to deepen the internalisation of moral values. Through guided discussions and question-and-answer sessions, students are encouraged to critically evaluate their own behaviour and consider the moral consequences of their actions. This strategy positions students as active participants in the character-building process, fostering independent thinking and self-awareness. Findings indicate that students are more receptive to moral values when they are involved in reflective processes rather than simply receiving directives. This confirms that character education for adolescents is most effective when it is dialogic, participatory, and oriented towards internal awareness (Sanjaya, 2017). Overall, these strategies demonstrate that effective moral education in PAI requires a combination of role modelling, habituation, contextual integration, and reflection, all of which work synergistically to support the holistic development of students' character.

Moral Values Instilled

The value of honesty is one of the main focuses instilled by Islamic Religious Education teachers in students. Honesty is understood as a vital moral foundation in shaping trustworthy and responsible individuals. In Islamic Religious Education lessons, the value of honesty is instilled through conceptual explanations of Islamic teachings that emphasise the importance of speaking and acting in accordance with the truth, as well as through concrete examples in daily life. Islamic Education teachers also instil honesty in an academic context, such as prohibiting cheating, honesty in completing assignments, and openness in expressing opinions. It is hoped that instilling the value of honesty will help shape students who possess integrity and consistency between their words and actions (Lickona, 2013).

In addition to honesty, the value of responsibility is also an important part of the character developed in PAI lessons. Responsibility is instilled by encouraging students to fulfil their duties as learners, such as attending lessons diligently, completing assignments on time, and adhering to school rules. PAI teachers link the value of responsibility to Islamic teachings which emphasise that every individual will be held accountable for their actions. Through this approach, students are guided to realise that responsibility is not only related to academic obligations but also encompasses moral and social responsibilities in community life (Muhaimin, 2017).

The value of discipline is also a moral quality consistently instilled in students at SMAN 5 Pariaman. Discipline is understood as an attitude of compliance with rules and an awareness of managing time and behaviour in an orderly manner. PAI teachers instil discipline through setting a good example, such as arriving on time, starting and ending lessons according to the timetable, and consistently enforcing classroom rules. Furthermore, students are encouraged to be disciplined in their worship, to dress in accordance with school regulations, and to maintain order during lessons. The instilling of this value of discipline aims to shape students who possess self-control and are prepared to face the demands of life in the future (Mulyasa, 2018).

The value of tolerance is also emphasised in Islamic Education (PAI) lessons as part of character development for students. Tolerance is taught as an attitude of mutual respect for differences, whether in opinions, social backgrounds, or individual personalities. PAI teachers instil the value of tolerance by emphasising Islamic teachings on the importance of living in harmony, mutual respect, and avoiding discriminatory behaviour. During the learning process, pupils are encouraged to discuss and work together in heterogeneous groups, so that they learn to respect their peers' views and characters. The instilling of this value of tolerance is highly relevant in the context of a pluralistic and dynamic social life (Zubaedi, 2015).

Values of good manners and religiosity complement the moral values instilled by PAI teachers. Good manners are demonstrated through the habit of speaking politely, respecting teachers and fellow pupils, and maintaining proper conduct when interacting within the school environment. Meanwhile, religiosity is instilled through the strengthening of religious awareness, such as cultivating the habit of praying, performing religious rituals in an orderly manner, and applying Islamic teachings in daily life. Islamic Education teachers view good manners and religiosity as two interrelated values, as courteous behaviour reflects a genuine understanding and practice of religious values. Through the instilling of these two values, students are expected to grow into individuals of noble character and strong spiritual awareness (Hamalik, 2017).

Supporting and Hindering Factors

Support from the school and the wider environment is one of the key supporting factors in the implementation of Islamic Education teachers' strategies for instilling moral values. This support is reflected in school policies that integrate character development into the school culture, such as the consistent application of school rules, the creation of a religious atmosphere, and the provision of religious activities that support Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning. A conducive school environment, characterised by harmonious relationships between teachers, students, and school staff, further strengthens the process of internalising moral values. When the values taught in PAI lessons align with the school's culture and rules, pupils find it easier to understand and practise behaviour that reflects noble character in their daily lives (Zubaedi, 2015).

Documentation in the form of PAI lesson plans shows that teachers explicitly include the reinforcement of religious and social attitudes in the learning objectives. Furthermore, school regulations and religious habit-forming programmes serve as supporting documents that reinforce the implementation of character-building strategies within the school environment. Teachers' competencies are also a crucial supporting factor determining the success of character development. PAI teachers possessing strong pedagogical, professional, personal, and social competencies are able to design and deliver learning that is not only informative but also transformative. Teachers' ability to select appropriate learning strategies, establish effective communication with pupils, and serve as role models in attitude and behaviour has a significant influence on the success of character development.

However, limitations in teachers' competencies, such as a lack of variety in teaching methods or difficulties in understanding pupils' characteristics, can act as barriers to the implementation of character education strategies (Mulyasa, 2018).

In addition to internal school factors, challenges also arise from students and external factors outside the school environment. Differences in family backgrounds, peer influence, and exposure to social media—which do not always align with educational values—present unique challenges for PAI teachers. Some pupils show resistance to character development due to a lack of support from their family environment or the influence of popular culture, which tends to be permissive. This situation requires PAI teachers to work harder and collaborate with parents and relevant parties so that the instilling of moral values can proceed sustainably and have an optimal impact on pupils' moral development (Santrock, 2016).

Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SMAN 5 Pariaman position PAI not merely as a medium for transmitting religious knowledge, but as a holistic process of internalising moral values aligned with the developmental characteristics of secondary school students. This reinforces the perspective that effective character education must integrate cognitive, affective, and behavioural dimensions in a balanced manner (Lickona, 2013). In the context of adolescence, a stage marked by identity exploration and increasing critical awareness, the strategies implemented by teachers are directed toward fostering self-control, moral responsibility, and ethical awareness. This is consistent with Santrock's (2016) view that adolescents are more responsive to dialogic engagement and authentic role modelling than to purely normative or instructive approaches.

One of the most prominent strategies identified in this study is teacher role modelling, which functions as a direct mechanism for value transmission. Teachers' consistent demonstration of positive behaviours—such as punctuality, respectful communication, and professional responsibility—serves as a concrete reference for students in shaping their own attitudes and actions. These findings indicate that exemplary behaviour is not solely a personal attribute of the teacher, but a deliberate pedagogical strategy with a significant impact on students' moral development (Hasan, 2019). In parallel, habituation strategies embedded within the school culture play a crucial role in reinforcing moral values. Through continuous and structured practice, positive behaviours become internalised as habits, contributing to the development of students' self-discipline and behavioural stability. This supports Lickona's (2013) assertion that character formation is a gradual process that requires sustained reinforcement.

Furthermore, the integration of moral values into PAI teaching materials has proven effective when contextualised within students' everyday experiences. By linking religious content to real-life issues—such as peer relationships, academic integrity, and ethical use of social media—teachers make moral values more meaningful and applicable. This approach

strengthens the relevance of PAI as a form of values education that addresses contemporary social challenges faced by adolescents. In line with Muhaimin (2017), contextual learning enables the bridging of normative Islamic teachings with students' lived realities. Additionally, reflective and dialogic learning strategies encourage students to engage in self-assessment and critical thinking regarding their own behaviour. Through reflection and discussion, students internalise values more deeply, leading to more sustainable behavioural change. This aligns with Sanjaya's (2017) view that reflective learning fosters personal responsibility in moral decision-making.

When compared with previous studies, these findings are consistent with research highlighting the importance of teacher consistency, role modelling, and supportive school culture in the success of character education (Zubaedi, 2015; Mulyasa, 2018). However, this study contributes a more specific contextual insight by illustrating how these strategies are adapted to the unique developmental needs of senior high school students. Unlike younger learners, adolescents require approaches that are participatory, reflective, and grounded in real-life contexts.

Pedagogically, this study implies that PAI instruction at the secondary level must be designed strategically, with teachers acting not only as knowledge transmitters but also as facilitators of moral awareness and character development. Without such contextual and developmentally appropriate strategies, PAI risks becoming overly normative and less impactful on students' actual behaviour. Therefore, the success of moral value internalisation depends on the synergy between teacher competence, school culture, and broader environmental support, ensuring that character education is sustained and meaningful in addressing the moral challenges of contemporary adolescence.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in instilling moral values at SMAN 5 Pariaman are systematically planned, contextual, and oriented toward students' character development. IRE learning functions not only as a medium for delivering religious knowledge but also as a process of moral formation that balances cognitive, affective, and behavioural aspects. The primary strategies applied include teacher role modelling, habituation of positive behaviour, integration of moral values into instructional content, and reflective-dialogic learning. These approaches effectively foster students' self-discipline, responsibility, and ethical awareness, which are essential during adolescence. Teachers' exemplary conduct plays a central role as a behavioural reference, while continuous habituation and reflection strengthen the internalisation of values in students' daily lives. The moral values emphasised in IRE learning include honesty, responsibility, discipline, tolerance, courtesy, and religiosity. These values are not merely taught theoretically but are actualised through consistent practice within the school environment. Supporting factors for successful character education include teacher competence, a positive school culture, and institutional policies aligned with moral development goals. However, challenges arise from

diverse student backgrounds, peer influence, and exposure to social media that may contradict educational values. In conclusion, the effectiveness of moral value internalisation is highly dependent on teachers' ability to implement adaptive, contextual, and student-centred strategies. Therefore, IRE learning must continue to evolve as a reflective and participatory form of character education to address contemporary moral challenges among adolescents.

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