



## THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION IN DEVELOPING TEACHERS' CHARACTER: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION TEACHERS AT SMP NEGERI 2 PADANGSIDIMPUAN

### IMPLEMENTASI PENDIDIKAN ISLAM DALAM MENGEMBANGKAN KARAKTER GURU: STUDI KUALITATIF TERHADAP GURU PENDIDIKAN AGAMA ISLAM DI SMP NEGERI 2 PADANGSIDIMPUAN

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#### Abstract

This study investigates the implementation of Islamic Education in fostering the character development of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Padangsidimpuan, Indonesia. Using a qualitative field study approach, data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis involving PAI teachers as primary participants. The findings indicate that Islamic Education contributes significantly to strengthening teachers' religious discipline, moral integrity, sincerity, and professional ethics. Character development is reinforced through religious habituation, exemplary conduct, and institutional support. This study offers empirical insights into the role of Islamic Education in shaping teachers' character and contributes to the broader discourse on teacher moral development in Islamic educational contexts.

**Keywords :** Islamic Education; Teacher Character; Moral Development; Qualitative Study.

#### Abstrak

This study investigates the implementation of Islamic Education in fostering the character development of Islamic Education (PAI) teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Padangsidimpuan, Indonesia. Using a qualitative field study approach, data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis involving PAI teachers as primary participants. The findings indicate that Islamic Education contributes significantly to strengthening teachers' religious discipline, moral integrity, sincerity, and professional ethics. Character development is strengthened through religious habituation, exemplary conduct, and institutional support. This study offers empirical insights into the role of Islamic



Education in shaping teachers' character and contributes to the broader discourse on teacher moral development in Islamic educational contexts.

**Kata Kunci :** Islamic Education; Teacher Character; Moral Development; Qualitative Study.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Character education has become a central issue in contemporary educational discourse, particularly in response to moral and ethical challenges faced by schools. In Islamic educational philosophy, character (*akhlāq*) is not merely an educational outcome but the core objective of the educational process itself. Teachers are required to embody Islamic values before transmitting them to students, as moral integrity is a prerequisite for effective education.<sup>1</sup>

Islamic Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) plays a strategic role in shaping teachers' moral awareness and professional ethics. In the Indonesian context, the effectiveness of character education depends significantly on teachers' religious commitment, discipline, and ethical conduct. However, empirical studies focusing on the character development of PAI teachers remain limited, especially in public secondary schools.<sup>2</sup>

Islamic Education (Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) plays a strategic role in shaping teachers' character, especially those responsible for religious instruction. However, empirical studies focusing on the moral and character development of PAI teachers remain limited. This study addresses this gap by examining how Islamic Education is implemented in developing the character of PAI teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan.

This study aims to address this gap by examining the implementation of Islamic Education in developing the character of PAI teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan. The study is expected to contribute empirical insights into Islamic teacher education and moral development within formal educational institutions.<sup>3</sup>

Islamic Education seeks to integrate faith (*īmān*), knowledge (*‘ilm*), and moral conduct (*akhlāq*) into a unified educational framework. Classical Islamic scholars emphasize that education should nurture ethical consciousness and spiritual responsibility alongside intellectual development.<sup>4</sup>

Al-Attas conceptualizes Islamic education as a process of *ta'dīb*, which focuses on instilling proper conduct, discipline, and ethical responsibility in learners. This concept positions teachers as moral agents who must internalize Islamic values before guiding others.<sup>5</sup>

Teacher character plays a decisive role in the success of character education. Studies in moral education suggest that students learn ethical behavior not only through instruction but

<sup>1</sup> Muhaimin, *Paradigma Pendidikan Islam* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2019), 33.

<sup>2</sup> Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-Akhlāq* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2002), 10.

<sup>3</sup> Al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naquib, *The Concept of Education in Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: ISTAC, 1999), 28.

<sup>4</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2005), 57.

<sup>5</sup> Lickona, Thomas, *Educating for Character* (New York: Bantam Books, 1991), 90.



also through observation of teachers' conduct. Teachers who demonstrate sincerity, honesty, and discipline significantly influence students' moral development.<sup>6</sup>

From a broader educational perspective, character education is most effective when supported by institutional culture and moral leadership. Schools that cultivate ethical values through leadership example and shared norms tend to sustain stronger moral environments.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive field study approach to explore the implementation of Islamic Education in teacher character development. Qualitative methods allow researchers to examine social and educational phenomena within their natural contexts.<sup>8</sup>

The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan. The primary participants were Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, selected purposively due to their central role in religious instruction and moral guidance. Additional contextual data were obtained from school documents and informal discussions with administrators.<sup>9</sup>

Data were collected through classroom and school-based observations, semi-structured interviews with PAI teachers, and document analysis of school regulations and religious programs. The use of multiple data sources enhanced the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.<sup>10</sup>

Data analysis followed thematic analysis procedures, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This approach enabled systematic interpretation of patterns related to teacher character development.<sup>11</sup>

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that Islamic Education functions as a foundational framework for the development of teachers' character, particularly among Islamic Education (PAI) teachers. Islamic Education is not limited to the transmission of religious knowledge but serves as a comprehensive system that integrates moral, spiritual, and professional dimensions. This aligns with the classical Islamic educational philosophy which emphasizes that education (*tarbiyah*) is a process of nurturing ethical behavior (*akhlāq*) and consciousness of God (*taqwā*) alongside intellectual growth.

The findings indicate that Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan is implemented not only through classroom instruction but also through teacher-oriented religious activities. Islamic Education is implemented through both formal and informal programs.

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<sup>6</sup> Miles, Matthew B., and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis* (London: Sage, 2014), 38.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas J. Sergiovanni, *Moral Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 56–61.

<sup>8</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2013), 208–214.

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Day, *A Passion for Teaching* (London: Routledge, 2004), 73–78.

<sup>10</sup> Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis* (London: Sage, 2014), 33–38.

<sup>11</sup> John W. Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 220–223.



These activities include congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, and reflective religious discussions among teachers.<sup>12</sup>

PAI teachers at SMP Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan internalize Islamic values through continuous religious practices, reflective teaching, and moral responsibility. This internalization process supports Al-Attas's concept of *ta'dīb*, where education instills proper conduct and ethical awareness in individuals. Teachers who undergo this process are more likely to develop integrity, sincerity, and discipline, which are essential attributes of professional educators.

One of the most significant findings of this study is the emphasis on teachers' roles as moral exemplars. Islamic educational theory places teachers at the center of moral transmission. According to Al-Ghazālī, the teacher's behavior is more influential than verbal instruction, as students learn morality through observation and imitation.

Supporting factors include school leadership support, religious school culture, and teachers' intrinsic motivation. Inhibiting factors involve workload pressure and limited structured spiritual development programs. Interview data reveal that Islamic Education significantly shapes teachers' moral discipline, sincerity, and professional responsibility. Teachers perceive teaching as a form of worship (*'ibādah*), which strengthens their ethical commitment and accountability.<sup>13</sup>

Religious habituation emerged as a key factor in character development. Regular religious practices contribute to consistency in moral behavior and self-discipline among PAI teachers, reinforcing ethical awareness in their professional roles.<sup>14</sup>

#### a. Discussion

The findings confirm that Islamic Education functions as a foundational framework for teacher character development. Through internalization of Islamic values, teachers develop integrity, discipline, and moral responsibility. This aligns with classical Islamic educational theory, which emphasizes habituation and moral practice as the basis of character formation.<sup>15</sup>

The interview data indicate that PAI teachers consciously position themselves as role models, understanding that their daily behavior directly influences students' moral development. This confirms Bandura's social learning theory, which suggests that individuals learn ethical behavior through observation of significant role models. In Islamic contexts, this role-modeling function is strengthened by religious consciousness and accountability before God. Teachers' roles as moral exemplars are central to Islamic pedagogy. Consistent with social learning theory, students and colleagues learn ethical behavior by observing teachers'

<sup>12</sup> Muhaimin, *Paradigma Pendidikan Islam* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2019), 21–25.

<sup>13</sup> Amin Abdullah, "Islamic Education and Moral Development," *Journal of Islamic Studies* 25, no. 1 (2020): 62–68.

<sup>14</sup> J. Mark Halstead, "Islamic Values: A Distinctive Framework for Moral Education?" *Journal of Moral Education* 36, no. 3 (2007): 285–289.

<sup>15</sup> Al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 2005), 52–55.



conduct. In Islamic contexts, this role-modeling function is reinforced by spiritual accountability before God.<sup>16</sup>

Institutional culture and leadership support play a crucial role in sustaining teacher character development. Moral leadership and supportive policies create an environment that encourages ethical consistency and professional integrity.<sup>17</sup>

Islamic Education also strengthens professional ethics by framing teaching as a moral and spiritual responsibility. This ethical orientation enhances teachers' sincerity, commitment, and resilience amid professional challenges.<sup>18</sup>

### **b. Implications and Challenges**

Despite positive outcomes, the study identifies challenges such as workload pressure and limited formal programs dedicated to teachers' spiritual development. This finding echoes previous studies suggesting that teacher burnout and administrative demands can undermine moral consistency.

To ensure sustainability, Islamic Education must be supported by continuous professional and spiritual development programs. Integrating reflective practice, mentoring, and peer support can strengthen teachers' moral resilience and prevent ethical decline.

Despite positive outcomes, challenges such as workload pressure and limited formal spiritual development programs were identified. These challenges may weaken moral consistency if not addressed through systematic institutional support.<sup>19</sup>

Therefore, Islamic Education policy and practice should emphasize continuous moral and spiritual development for teachers. Integrating character education into teacher professional development programs can enhance sustainability and long-term impact.<sup>20</sup>

The study also highlights the importance of institutional culture and leadership support in sustaining teacher character development. Schools that promote religious values through policies, leadership example, and collective practices create an environment conducive to moral growth. This finding aligns with Sergiovanni's view that moral leadership is essential for nurturing ethical school communities.

In Islamic educational institutions, leadership that prioritizes spiritual development reinforces teachers' commitment to moral excellence. The findings suggest that character education cannot rely solely on individual motivation but must be institutionalized through supportive systems and shared values.

The findings of this study have significant implications for Islamic education policy and practice. First, character development programs should be explicitly designed for teachers, not only students. Second, Islamic Education curricula should integrate moral reflection and

<sup>16</sup> Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1977), 22–28.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas J. Sergiovanni, *Moral Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1992), 56–61.

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Campbell, "Ethical Knowledge in Teaching," *Teaching and Teacher Education* 19, no. 1 (2003): 18–22.

<sup>19</sup> H.A.R. Tilaar, *Pendidikan, Kebudayaan, dan Masyarakat Madani* (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2012), 101–105.

<sup>20</sup> UNESCO, *Education for Sustainable Development* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 2017), 41–44.



spiritual development for educators. Third, school leadership should actively model Islamic ethical values to reinforce institutional culture. These implications support broader educational reforms emphasizing character education as a systemic and holistic process.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the implementation of Islamic Education at SMP Negeri 2 Padangsidempuan significantly contributes to the character development of PAI teachers. Strengthening structured spiritual and moral development programs for teachers is recommended to sustain these positive outcomes. In summary, this extended discussion confirms that Islamic Education plays a vital and multidimensional role in shaping the character of PAI teachers. Through internalization of Islamic values, religious habituation, exemplary conduct, and institutional support, teachers develop moral integrity and professional ethics. This study contributes to the growing body of empirical research emphasizing that teacher character is the cornerstone of effective character education in schools.

In summary, this extended discussion confirms that Islamic Education plays a vital and multidimensional role in shaping the character of PAI teachers. Through internalization of Islamic values, religious habituation, exemplary conduct, and institutional support, teachers develop moral integrity and professional ethics. This study contributes to the growing body of empirical research emphasizing that teacher character is the cornerstone of effective character education in schools.

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