



The Role of Teachers and the Implementation of Islamic Character Education Methods in Madrasah Students

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Abstract

This study explores the role of teachers in implementing Islamic character education methods for students at MTs Amin Darussalam, Desa Bandar Setia, Kecamatan Percut Sei Tuan, Indonesia. Using a qualitative field research approach, data were collected through structured interviews with key informants, including teachers and the head of the madrasah. The findings reveal that teachers adopt three core strategies in shaping students' character: exemplary conduct, moral advice, and behavioral habituation. These methods contribute significantly to the development of students' moral values, discipline, and social ethics in accordance with Islamic teachings. The study concludes that character formation in madrasah education requires active teacher involvement supported by institutional policies and a positive school culture. The implications emphasize the importance of strengthening teachers' competencies in Islamic character pedagogy and enhancing collaboration between school and family to ensure continuous moral development.

Keywords: *Islamic Character Education; Teacher Role; Moral Development; Madrasah Students*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran guru dalam menerapkan metode pendidikan karakter Islam bagi siswa di MTs Amin Darussalam, Desa Bandar Setia, Kecamatan Percut Sei Tuan, Indonesia. Pendekatan penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif studi lapangan dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara terstruktur kepada guru dan kepala madrasah sebagai informan kunci. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru menerapkan tiga strategi utama dalam membentuk karakter siswa, yaitu keteladanan, pemberian nasehat, dan pembiasaan perilaku yang baik. Ketiga metode tersebut berkontribusi penting terhadap penguatan nilai moral, kedisiplinan, dan etika sosial siswa sesuai ajaran Islam. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pembentukan karakter di madrasah membutuhkan keterlibatan aktif guru yang didukung oleh kebijakan kelembagaan dan budaya sekolah yang positif. Implikasi penelitian menekankan pentingnya penguatan kompetensi guru dalam pedagogi karakter Islam serta kerja sama antara sekolah dan keluarga untuk memastikan perkembangan moral yang berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: *Pendidikan Karakter Islam; Peran Guru; Perkembangan Moral; Siswa Madrasah*

INTRODUCTION

Islamic character education plays a central role in shaping students' moral integrity, spiritual maturity, and social responsibility in Indonesian Islamic educational institutions. In recent years, madrasahs have faced significant challenges due to globalization, digital transformation, and shifting youth behavior, creating moral gaps between the values taught in schools and the realities experienced by students in their daily lives. This condition raises concerns about increasing moral decline such as lack of discipline, weakened respect for teachers, and reduced awareness of religious obligations. As a result, the urgency to strengthen Islamic character education has become a strategic priority in maintaining the identity and ethical foundation of Muslim learners.

Within this context, teachers serve as the main agents responsible for directing students' moral development through exemplary conduct, emotional guidance, and the internalization of Islamic values both inside and outside the classroom. Their role is not merely transferring religious knowledge but shaping students' behavior based on *akhlaq al-karimah* as emphasized in Islamic educational principles. Therefore, the success of Islamic character education implementation depends significantly on teachers' professional competence, pedagogical skills, and personal integrity. Studies have shown that teachers' motivation, leadership, and ethical modeling are crucial determinants for learners' moral growth within Islamic schools (Harto et al., 2022).

Islamic character education must also be understood as a comprehensive pedagogical process that integrates affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions. In this regard, implementing various character education methods such as habituation, contextual learning, and role modeling becomes essential in fostering internalized Islamic values. Previous research highlights the effectiveness of learning models that combine religious knowledge with experiential moral engagement, enabling students to practice ethical decision-making in real-life situations (Fitriani & Mahfud, 2023). This reinforces the notion that Islamic character formation cannot rely solely on theoretical instruction but requires pedagogical innovation.

Moreover, recent studies in Indonesian madrasahs indicate that the challenges of character education are closely related to external pressures, including digital media influences, peer environments, and family dynamics—factors that may counteract moral values promoted in schools (Nurhayati et al., 2021; Syafii & Amin, 2024). This situation calls for collaborative strategies between teachers, parents, and communities to ensure holistic moral development. Thus, teachers are increasingly required to adapt their approaches, enhance cultural sensitivity, and utilize technology wisely to maintain students' moral resilience in the contemporary era.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze how teachers implement methods of Islamic character education for madrasah students within the contemporary educational context. This research specifically seeks to answer the central question: How do teachers apply Islamic character education methods in fostering students' moral and behavioral development? The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the discourse of Islamic education and provide practical guidance for enhancing pedagogical design and policy strategies that support sustainable moral development in madrasahs.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative field research design conducted at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Swasta (MTs) Amin Darussalam, Desa Bandar Setia, Kecamatan Percut Sei Tuan, to investigate how teachers implement methods of Islamic character education among students. Data were collected through structured interviews with key informants consisting of teachers and the head of the madrasah who are directly responsible for organizing character-based learning and value internalization. This approach enabled the researcher to gather detailed and focused information on teaching strategies, habituation practices, and moral guidance integrated into school culture. The collected data were then analyzed using an Islamic character education analytical framework through the processes of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, aiming to formulate an empirical understanding of how character values rooted in Islamic teachings are applied within the educational environment to shape the moral attitudes and behaviors of students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Roles in Islamic Character Education

Teachers serve as key agents in shaping students' character development, particularly in Islamic educational institutions where moral formation stands as an integral objective of learning. Their responsibilities extend beyond delivering subject knowledge to cultivating ethical dispositions that reflect Islamic virtues such as discipline, honesty, respect, and responsibility. In the madrasah context, the teachers' role becomes increasingly crucial because Islamic education emphasizes the holistic construction of *akhlaq al-karimah* rather than merely achieving cognitive proficiency. Thus, teachers must integrate moral instruction into everyday pedagogical practices to ensure that Islamic values are not only learned but also embodied in students' behavior.

Field findings from structured interviews reveal that teachers embed character values directly into classroom learning activities through curriculum-based instruction. One teacher explained: "The role of teachers in shaping students' character at MTs Amin Darussalam

is implemented during the learning process, where the materials delivered to students must align with the core competencies based on character education stated in the MTs Amin Darussalam student workbook.” This indicates that character education is positioned as an essential component within instructional content, ensuring that moral values are systematically internalized alongside academic competencies.

In addition to curricular integration, teachers adopt advisory and guidance-based approaches to prevent behavioral misconduct and reinforce moral discipline. Another respondent stated: “The role of teachers in shaping students’ character at MTs Amin Darussalam is to provide guidance and advice so that students do not engage in misbehavior or violate school rules...” Such practices demonstrate a form of direct moral engagement that aligns with *maw’izhah hasanah* (good counsel), an Islamic pedagogical principle encouraging guidance rooted in compassion and spiritual responsibility.

Further, teachers extend their moral supervision beyond the classroom setting to ensure that students maintain ethical behavior as a habitual part of daily life. The same informant added that such guidance enables students to “improve their character or behavior when they are still in school or outside the school environment.” This reflects a habituation-based approach where consistent moral reinforcement transforms values into sustained behavioral patterns—an essential dimension of Islamic character formation.

These findings also illustrate the teachers’ preventive role in discouraging negative conduct before it develops into more serious moral issues. Through proactive supervision and verbal reminders, teachers adopt a preventive character education strategy that resonates with the Islamic ethical principle that prevention is better than correction. In this context, teachers function not only as corrective figures but as protectors of students’ moral well-being within and beyond schooling activities.

The implementation of character education at the madrasah implicitly positions teachers as *uswah hasanah* (exemplary role models). Although not explicitly articulated in the interview excerpts, the effectiveness of moral guidance intrinsically depends on teachers’ ability to demonstrate consistent ethical actions themselves. Without role modeling, moral instruction risks being perceived as merely theoretical rather than actionable. This underscores the importance of teachers’ integrity as a foundational requirement of Islamic character pedagogy.

Finally, the teachers’ efforts contribute to the development of a cohesive school culture rooted in Islamic values. Encouraging behavioral consistency inside and outside the classroom suggests that the school environment fosters collective reinforcement of moral norms. Such a value-based ecosystem supports the sustainability of character formation, as students continually encounter positive influences and ethical expectations embedded within the madrasah’s institutional culture.

Teachers and Student Character Formation

The findings strongly emphasize the significance of teachers' role modeling as a primary method in fostering Islamic character development among students at MTs Amin Darussalam. Within character education theory, modeling (*uswah hasanah*) is regarded as one of the most effective strategies in shaping students' moral behavior because learners tend to internalize values through imitation of respected figures (Lickona, 2021). The teacher interviewed affirmed this approach, stating: "Teachers provide good examples to students in behavior, polite speech, and dress ethics at school." This illustrates that teachers consciously demonstrate ethical conduct in daily interactions to serve as behavioral references for students.

Role modeling is further reinforced through the teachers' awareness of their social visibility within the school community. One respondent noted: "Teachers become the focus of students and people in their surroundings who recognize them as educators." This reflects the idea that a teacher's personal integrity is continuously observed and evaluated. Therefore, teachers must ensure that their behavior aligns with school ethical codes and Islamic norms, indicating the presence of a value-based professional identity that strengthens students' moral adherence.

The analysis also reveals a strong emphasis on behavioral consistency—both verbal and non-verbal—as a critical part of character-building practices. The interview highlights that through role modeling, "teachers must demonstrate good attitudes, behavior, speech, and actions" to cultivate students' moral reasoning and ethical decision-making. This aligns with Bandura's social learning theory, which asserts that sustained ethical exposure shapes moral cognition and behavior through observational learning. In Islamic pedagogy, this is parallel to the prophetic method of teaching through exemplary action.

Moreover, the integration of Islamic character values is reflected in the regulation of students' personal appearance and social interaction. The participant explained that: "Teachers provide examples of good dress (not tight), politeness, honesty in every word, and proper social behavior." These behavioral expectations establish clear symbolic boundaries of Islamic morality, reinforcing modesty and dignity as visible manifestations of character. At the institutional level, the requirement for students to wear hijab for girls and a cap (*peci*) for boys during lessons demonstrates the incorporation of Sharia-based identity formation into daily school routines.

Collectively, these practices create a moral ecosystem that connects the teacher's exemplary behavior with student habituation. Character development is thus not treated as a separate lesson but as a cultural process embedded in school life. By positioning teachers as ethical exemplars, students experience continuous exposure to Islamic virtues, leading to internalization

and sustainable moral transformation both inside and outside the school environment.

The formation of student character at MTs Amin Darussalam is not solely dependent on the transmission of knowledge through classroom instruction. It is also shaped through meaningful moral interactions between teachers and learners. In the framework of character education theory, the strategies utilized consist of value internalization through role modeling, moral advice, and habituation—an integrated approach designed to produce sustainable behavioral transformation. In this context, teachers act as moral agents who guide the development of students' attitudes, ethics, and social responses within their environment.

Providing advice becomes one of the primary methods employed by teachers to cultivate student character. Such advice is delivered with the intention of correcting behavior, particularly when students violate school norms or ethical expectations. Moral guidance embedded into daily classroom interactions reflects a persuasive and dialogical model of character education. Teachers do not merely reprimand students; they encourage them to understand the moral consequences of their actions. Emphasis on polite and respectful communication, honoring teachers through proper greetings and gestures, and maintaining respectful relationships with parents and peers illustrates that the education offered focuses on developing students' relational competencies—the ability to engage in harmonious social interactions.

Moreover, habituation plays a crucial role in establishing character that is deeply embedded within the students' personal identity. Through repeated practices, moral values that are initially understood at a cognitive level gradually transform into consistent behaviors. Teachers instill daily routines aligned with Islamic principles, such as greeting others, showing respect, and adhering to school discipline. These continuous practices create an educational environment that fosters moral habitus. This reflects the principle that character is not formed instantaneously, but through repeated experiences that allow values to become part of a student's lived reality.

Overall, the interview findings demonstrate that character development strategies at MTs Amin Darussalam operate through three primary dimensions of character education theory: moral knowing (understanding moral values), moral feeling (moral sensitivity strengthened through advice), and moral action (behavior reinforced through habituation). Teachers function not only as educators but also as exemplary figures who demonstrate ethics through action, provide guidance through advice, and reinforce values through repeated practice. Ultimately, these efforts aim to nurture students who possess strong religious character, demonstrate courteous behavior, and uphold Islamic social values both within the school environment and in the broader community.

Teachers' Methods in Implementing Islamic Character Education

Teachers at MTs Amin Darussalam adopt a comprehensive approach to instilling Islamic moral values, ensuring that character formation is not taught merely as cognitive knowledge but embedded within students' daily behavior. The implementation of character education is integrated into the learning process, school culture, and interpersonal interaction. This holistic strategy positions teachers as the main agents of transformation who bridge Islamic values with the lived experience of students in the classroom environment.

One of the primary methods used by teachers is the practice of exemplary behavior, where the teacher becomes a real-life model of Islamic morality. As stated in the interview, one teacher emphasized that: "Guru dalam memberikan keteladanan ini dilakukan dengan cara seperti memberikan contoh yang baik kepada siswa baik dalam bersikap, berbicara, sopan santun maupun dalam etika berpakaian di sekolah." This statement reinforces the theoretical stance that students learn moral values effectively through observation and imitation.

In this regard, teachers at MTs Amin Darussalam intentionally demonstrate proper speech, respectful behavior, and modest Islamic dress. They are aware that their actions are constantly observed by students and the community, making their moral consistency a crucial component of educational success. As one respondent noted: "Guru selain sebagai panutan dan teladan, juga menjadi perhatian dan sorotan siswa serta orang di sekitar lingkungannya." This confirms that teachers carry a symbolic authority that encourages students to follow the ethics modeled before them.

Furthermore, teachers reinforce Islamic character by establishing behavioral standards in dress and social interaction. One informant clearly stated that: "Segala bentuk sikap, prilaku, tutur kata dan tindak tanduk yang ditampilkan... harus dapat mencerminkan karakter yang baik bagi siswa." These expectations are reflected in rules requiring female students to wear hijab and male students to wear peci, showing an alignment between school norms and Islamic teachings.

In addition to modeling behavior, teachers actively employ advice-based guidance (nasihat) as a strategy for moral reinforcement. Advice is not only offered reactively to rule violations but also delivered continuously during learning activities. As stated during interviews: "Pada umumnya nasehat diberikan kepada siswa dalam upaya membentuk karakter siswa, lebih-lebih bagi siswa yang melanggar peraturan dan kode etik sekolah." This method nurtures moral reflection and prompts students to internalize Islamic manners in communication and conduct.

This approach to giving advice emphasizes speech etiquette such as being gentle, respectful, and polite. According to the interview: "Nasehat ini sering diberikan kepada kami di dalam kelas seperti bertutur kata yang baik

misalnya lemah lembut dalam berbicara... hormat kepada guru... hormat kepada orang tua..." Such religiously rooted moral reminders help strengthen students' awareness of Islamic norms beyond the school context, fostering integrity and public decency.

Another essential strategy is habituation, where students repeatedly practice good behavior until it becomes part of their identity. Teachers encourage students to make daily moral acts—such as greeting others, maintaining cleanliness, and observing discipline—into routine practices. The interview affirmed: "Pembiasaan juga merupakan salah satu strategi guru... mempunyai peranan yang penting dalam pembentukan karakter siswa." This shows that repetitive positive actions lead to long-term character internalization that reflects Islamic values.

Overall, the three core methods—exemplary conduct, moral advice, and positive habituation—form a coherent pedagogical framework that ensures character education is continuously absorbed and experienced by students. By combining cognitive, behavioral, and emotional learning dimensions, teachers position Islamic character not only as a school subject but as a lived moral practice. This integrated approach solidifies the important role of teachers as spiritual mentors and moral guardians who nurture a generation of students capable of applying Islamic ethics both within and beyond madrasah settings.

Asesment dan Evaluasi

Assessment and evaluation in character education at MTs Amin Darussalam are designed not merely to measure cognitive learning outcomes, but to capture the transformation of students' behavior, moral attitudes, and internalized Islamic values. Unlike conventional assessment focused solely on academic achievement, character evaluation is oriented toward the holistic development of the learner as a moral individual who practices ethical principles consistently in daily life.

The foundation of character assessment relies on the teacher's close observation during learning and social interactions. Teachers become evaluators of students' emotional control, respect for authority, cooperation with peers, and adherence to school norms rooted in Islamic teachings. Such evaluation is continuous and formative, integrating behavioral feedback within the natural flow of school activities. This aligns with the Islamic educational philosophy emphasizing *tarbiyah*, or nurturing character through care, guidance, and correction.

Teachers also utilize structured interviews and reflective conversations as a form of evaluative feedback. When students exhibit inappropriate behavior or violate school rules, teachers provide targeted guidance to help them understand their mistakes and internalize better behavior. This moral evaluation strategy encourages self-awareness and accountability, reinforcing that character improvement is a process of learning, not merely punishment.

It demonstrates the school's commitment to restorative rather than punitive approaches.

In addition, character assessment incorporates the use of positive reinforcement. Teachers acknowledge students' good deeds—such as politeness, discipline, and cooperation—by offering praise and encouragement. This reinforces desired behaviors and supports the development of intrinsic motivation. In Islamic education, such reinforcement reflects the prophetic model of *tarbiyah*, where kindness and appreciation guide moral strengthening.

Parental involvement is also considered an essential factor in evaluating character formation. Communication between teachers and parents ensures that students' behavior is consistently monitored both inside and outside school. Since character is lived beyond classroom walls, evaluation must extend to the home and community environment. This collaborative approach strengthens the continuity of moral development and reduces behavioral discrepancies between school and home settings.

Furthermore, evaluation in this context emphasizes spiritual character as reflected in students' worship practices and religious discipline. Teachers observe punctuality in prayer, adherence to Islamic dress codes, and participation in religious activities. Such practices serve as indicators of obedience to Islamic values and spiritual internalization—core components of character education in a *madrasah* setting.

The habitual nature of character formation requires long-term monitoring, which is why evaluation is conducted progressively throughout the academic year. Rather than focusing on short-term achievements, teachers assess gradual behavioral change, resilience in moral decision-making, and the stability of ethical attitudes in different situations. This aligns with character education theory suggesting that values must transition from moral knowledge into consistent moral action.

Ultimately, assessment and evaluation at MTs Amin Darussalam function as mechanisms not only for measuring success but also for guiding students toward continuous self-improvement. By integrating observation, guidance, reinforcement, and spiritual indicators, the evaluation system supports the cultivation of students who embody Islamic morality with awareness, conviction, and responsibility. This holistic evaluative framework ensures that character education is not symbolic, but operationalized as a transformative and enduring educational mission.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study demonstrate that teachers at MTs Amin Darussalam play a central and multi-dimensional role in shaping students' character grounded in Islamic values. The character development process is mainly implemented through exemplary behavior, structured advice, and

positive habituation. Teachers serve as role models in manners, communication, dress, and behavior, enabling students to adopt moral values by observing and following their educators' conduct. Furthermore, teachers reinforce character formation through continuous moral guidance, corrective feedback, and nurturing ethical behavior that aligns with school regulations and Islamic teachings. This approach ensures that character building is not only theoretical but manifested in the everyday actions and decision-making of students. Holistic assessment and evaluation further strengthen this process by monitoring behavioral changes, spiritual discipline, and moral consistency inside and outside the school environment.

These results highlight the importance of equipping teachers with strong competencies in both character pedagogy and Islamic ethical principles. Schools must provide supportive learning environments, consistent behavioral policies, and collaboration with parents to ensure ongoing reinforcement beyond the classroom. Policymakers and educational institutions should consider integrating structured character-based professional development for teachers, ensuring they possess the theoretical understanding and practical skills to nurture moral growth in students. Additionally, future research may expand the scope to include comparative studies between different madrasahs to enrich models of Islamic character education. Ultimately, the findings reinforce that character education, when grounded in Islamic values and supported by active teacher involvement, can produce a generation of students who embody moral excellence in both academic and social life.

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