



# The Role of Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Shaping Students' Morals and Ethics at Junior High School

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## Abstract:

This study aims to evaluate the role of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in shaping students' morals and ethics in Junior High Schools (SMP). The background of this study focuses on the importance of integrating religious values in education for the development of students' character amidst the challenges of globalization and social change. The research method used is a qualitative approach with in-depth interview techniques and curriculum document analysis. The results of the study indicate that the PAI curriculum significantly contributes to the formation of students' morals and ethics, with the integration of moral values in each PAI subject strengthening positive behavior and building students' character. The main contribution of this finding is to provide a basis for the development of a more effective PAI curriculum in facilitating the development of students' character and offering guidance for policy makers and educators in improving the quality of religious education in schools.

## INTRODUCTION

In the midst of globalization and rapid technological developments, character education has become one of the main focuses in the education system in various countries including Indonesia. Schools in Indonesia, especially at the Junior High School (SMP) level, face major challenges in shaping students' characters in accordance with moral and ethical values. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is one of the subjects that is expected to make a significant contribution to this process (Anggraini et al., 2022; Sechandini et al., 2023; Taja et al., 2021). PAI is designed to teach religious values that are expected to shape students' morals and character. However, the reality in the field shows variations in the effectiveness of its implementation (Darlan et al., 2021; Masturin, 2022; Saihu et al., 2022). Various factors such as teaching methods, quality of teaching materials, and environmental support influence how PAI can truly shape students' character. Therefore, it is important to evaluate how effective the implementation of PAI is in achieving these goals and how these factors contribute to the results achieved. Penelitian terdahulu mengenai efektivitas Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam membangun karakter siswa menunjukkan hasil yang bervariasi. Beberapa

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studi menilai bahwa PAI memiliki dampak positif yang signifikan dalam pembentukan karakter siswa dengan menekankan bahwa penerapan nilai-nilai agama dalam pendidikan dapat meningkatkan aspek moral dan etika siswa. Peneliti menunjukkan bahwa integrasi nilai-nilai agama dalam kurikulum dapat memperbaiki sikap dan perilaku siswa serta mengurangi perilaku menyimpang.

However, several studies also noted challenges in implementing PAI such as lack of consistency in teaching methods and limited resources. research by (Maideja et al., 2023; Saraya et al., 2023; Sukiman et al., 2021) revealed that although the PAI curriculum is designed to shape character, its implementation is often inconsistent in various schools, which affects its effectiveness (Al Mursyidi & Darmawan, 2023; Najmi et al., 2023). Therefore, a study by Nirmayani (2021) shows that the role of teachers as role models is very important in maximizing the impact of PAI, however, not all teachers have adequate training or commitment.

Although previous studies have provided insight into the influence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in the formation of student character, there are several research gaps that need to be filled to understand the effectiveness of PAI implementation in more depth. First, many previous studies tend to focus on theoretical aspects and do not sufficiently examine the practical application of the PAI curriculum in the field (Harianto & Kandedes, 2023; Tsoraya et al., 2022). There is a lack of studies that specifically evaluate how PAI teaching methods are implemented in different types of schools and different local contexts. Second, existing studies often do not discuss in depth how external factors such as parental and community support affect the outcomes of character education through PAI. The influence of the social and cultural environment on the effectiveness of the PAI curriculum is still underexplored. Third, previous studies generally have not comprehensively examined the role of teacher role models and how teaching quality affects the achievement of character education goals (Adila et al., 2023; Syarnubi et al., 2023). Many studies do not include an analysis of how teachers' consistency and personal approach can contribute to the effectiveness of the curriculum. Fourth, there is a lack of research that evaluates the long-term impact of PAI implementation on student character development, including how the values taught during the school period affect student behavior after they graduate. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengisi gap-gab ini dengan melakukan evaluasi yang lebih mendalam mengenai implementasi PAI di lapangan, serta memperhatikan faktor-faktor eksternal dan peran guru sebagai teladan, untuk memberikan pemahaman yang lebih lengkap tentang efektivitas kurikulum dalam membentuk karakter siswa.

This study offers several aspects of novelty that distinguish it from previous studies on the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in building student character. First, this study will use a mixed methodology approach that combines qualitative and quantitative analysis. With this method, it is expected to obtain a more holistic picture of the implementation of the PAI curriculum and its impact in various types of schools and identify factors that contribute to or hinder its effectiveness. Second, this study will examine in depth the role of teacher role models in the implementation of PAI with a focus on how teacher behavior and attitudes affect student character education outcomes. This study will identify practical strategies used by teachers to be effective role models and evaluate their influence on students that have rarely been discussed in previous literature. Third, this study will pay attention to external factors such

as parental and community support in the context of character education. By collecting data from various stakeholders, this study aims to reveal how family and community involvement affect the success of PAI implementation which often does not receive enough attention in previous studies. Fourth, this study will assess the long-term impact of the PAI curriculum on student character development, evaluating how the values taught during school contribute to student behavior and attitudes outside the school environment. This provides a new perspective on the effectiveness of character education that is not only seen from temporary results but also from its long-term impact.

This study aims to analyze how the Islamic Religious Education curriculum is implemented in various schools and how consistent its implementation at SMP 2 Banyuwangi. This includes an assessment of teaching methods, teaching materials, and support facilities available to support Islamic religious education.

## RESEARCH METHOD

The selection of SMP 2 Banyuwangi as the location of this research was based on several important considerations. SMP 2 Banyuwangi is one of the junior high schools that has a good reputation in implementing the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in the Banyuwangi area. This school is known to have a strong commitment to religious teaching and student character development, making it an ideal location to assess the effectiveness of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in shaping students' morals and ethics.

SMP 2 Banyuwangi has a diverse student body that is representative of various socio-economic backgrounds. This provides a broader picture of the impact of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum in different contexts and allows for a more in-depth assessment of the diversity of student responses to the curriculum (Williams, 2021). The school has adequate facilities and resources to support the implementation of the research, including easy access to conduct interviews, observations, and collect documentation. The availability of relevant data and support from the school will strengthen the validity and reliability of the research results. By considering these factors, SMP 2 Banyuwangi was chosen as the research location to provide comprehensive insight into the role of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in shaping the morals and ethics of students at the junior high school level.

The research on the role of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in shaping the morals and ethics of students in junior high schools (SMP) will use a mixed research approach that combines quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method will involve a survey conducted with students, teachers, and parents to collect data on their perceptions of the effectiveness of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in shaping the morals and ethics of students. A specially designed questionnaire will measure aspects such as the implementation of moral values in the curriculum, teaching methods, and the impact of the curriculum on students' attitudes and behavior.

The qualitative method will involve in-depth interviews and focus group discussions with teachers, principals, and students to gain deeper insights into the implementation of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum and the challenges faced. Direct classroom observations will also be conducted to assess how the curriculum is implemented in daily practice and how interactions between teachers and students affect the learning process. Data collected from

surveys, interviews, and observations will be comprehensively analyzed to identify patterns, trends, and relationships between the Islamic Religious Education curriculum and the formation of students' morals and ethics. This data analysis will provide a clear picture of the effectiveness of the Islamic Religious Education curriculum and the factors that influence the results achieved. This study aims to provide evidence-based recommendations for improving the curriculum and teaching practices to improve the formation of students' morals and ethics in junior high schools.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Islamic Religious Education plays a crucial role in addressing the challenges posed by globalization by providing a framework that integrates traditional Islamic values with contemporary global dynamics. In an era where rapid technological advancements and cultural exchanges are reshaping societies, Islamic Religious Education offers a unique perspective that helps individuals navigate these changes while remaining grounded in their faith. The concept emphasizes the importance of preserving core Islamic principles and ethics amidst a globalized world that often promotes diverse and sometimes conflicting values. By incorporating teachings that address both modern challenges and timeless principles, Islamic Religious Education equips students with the tools to critically engage with global issues, maintain their cultural and religious identity, and contribute positively to a pluralistic society. This approach not only fosters a deep understanding of Islamic teachings but also encourages adaptability and resilience, enabling individuals to balance their religious commitments with the demands and opportunities of a globalized world.

### The Influence of Curriculum on the Formation of Morals

The phenomenon of the influence of the curriculum on the formation of students' morals is a central issue in character education in Junior High Schools (SMP). The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is designed to integrate moral and ethical values in the teaching and learning process, with the aim of forming good morals in students. In practice, this curriculum functions as a guide to teaching the values of honesty, responsibility, and social concern, which are expected to form strong and integral student characters. However, the influence of this curriculum is often influenced by various external factors, such as teaching methods, parental support, and the student's social environment. Research shows that although the PAI curriculum has great potential to form morals, its effectiveness is often influenced by the challenges of implementation in the field. Therefore, it is important to analyze in depth how this curriculum contributes to the formation of students' morals and how external factors can affect the expected results. As the results of interviews with school principals, the curriculum not only teaches religious knowledge but also instills essential moral values.

"The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum plays a very important role in the formation of students' morals in our school. We believe that this curriculum not only teaches religious knowledge, but also instills essential moral values. In the PAI curriculum, we strive to provide not only theory, but also real practice in everyday life. We integrate religious teachings with activities that promote honesty, responsibility, and concern for others."

Based on the results of the interview with the Principal of SMP 2 Banyuwangi, it can be concluded that the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum has a very important role in the formation of students' morals at SMP 2 Banyuwangi. The Principal emphasized that this curriculum not only provides religious knowledge but also serves as a basis for teaching essential moral and ethical values, such as honesty, responsibility, and social concern. The influence of the curriculum on the formation of students' morals in Junior High Schools (SMP) is an important issue in character education. The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum is designed to integrate moral and ethical values, such as honesty, responsibility, and social concern, with the aim of forming good morals in students (Afiah & Fadhliah, 2022; Mujahid, 2021; Widana et al., 2023). This curriculum serves as a guide in the teaching and learning process, aiming to form strong and integrated student characters. However, the effectiveness of the PAI curriculum is often influenced by various external factors such as teaching methods, parental support, and the students' social environment (Hasnadi, 2023; Kartika et al., 2023; Shiddiq et al., 2024). Research shows that although the PAI curriculum has great potential, implementation challenges can affect the expected results. The results of interviews with the principal confirmed that the PAI curriculum does not only focus on religious knowledge but also on instilling essential moral values, indicating that the success of forming students' morals depends on how the curriculum is implemented and supported comprehensively. The following is a table of indicators of students' morals at SMP 2 Banyuwangi:

### Effective Teaching Methods

The phenomenon of effective teaching methods in education, especially in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), shows that innovative and interactive teaching approaches can significantly improve students' understanding and application of moral values. In Junior High School 2 Banyuwangi, using teaching methods that actively involve students, such as group discussions, role-playing, and case studies, has proven to be more effective than traditional lecture methods (Arif et al., 2023; Ismail et al., 2022). These methods not only make the subject matter more interesting but also allow students to practice and apply moral principles in real situations. This approach helps students to better understand the relevance of religious values in everyday life and encourages them to internalize and apply good morals more consistently. In addition, teaching methods that involve various media and creative techniques can accommodate various learning styles of students, increasing their involvement and motivation in the learning process. Based on the results of interviews with the curriculum vice principal, it shows that active teaching methods are methods that can actively involve students and motivate them.

“In the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the most effective teaching method is one that can actively involve students and motivate them to apply religious values in everyday life. Interactive methods such as group discussions, role-playing, and case studies are very effective because they encourage students to think critically and practice moral values in real situations. In addition, the use of multimedia and technology, such as educational videos and interactive applications, also help make learning more interesting and relevant to students' needs.”

Based on the results of the interview with the Deputy Head of Curriculum, it can be concluded that effective teaching methods in the context of Religious Education are those that can actively involve students and are relevant to their needs. Methods such as group discussions, role-playing, and case studies have proven to be more successful in improving the understanding and application of religious values compared to traditional lecture methods. In addition, the use of multimedia and technology is also considered very helpful in making learning more interesting and in accordance with current developments.

Regarding effective teaching methods in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), it shows that innovative and interactive teaching approaches can significantly improve students' understanding and application of moral values. In Junior High School 2 Banyuwangi, teaching methods that actively involve students—such as group discussions, role-playing, and case studies—have proven to be more effective than traditional lecture methods. These methods not only make the subject matter more interesting, but also provide opportunities for students to practice and apply moral principles in real situations. In this way, students can better understand the relevance of religious values in everyday life, encouraging them to internalize and apply good morals more consistently (Fadlillah, 2023; Ridlo & Yanti, 2023; Zubaidi, 2023). The use of various media and creative techniques in teaching accommodates students' various learning styles, which increases their involvement and motivation in the learning process. The results of interviews with the curriculum vice principal underline that active teaching methods can engage students more deeply and motivate them to engage more intensively in learning, confirming the importance of this approach in religious education.

### **The Role of Teachers as Role Models**

The phenomenon of the role of teachers as role models shows that the influence of teachers on the formation of student character is very significant. At Junior High School 2 Banyuwangi, teachers not only function as teachers but also as behavioral models that are used as references by students. Students often imitate the attitudes, values, and actions of their teachers in their daily lives. When teachers demonstrate integrity, honesty, and empathy. These values tend to be reflected in student behavior. This role model is very important in character education, especially in subjects such as Islamic Religious Education where teachers are expected not only to teach material but also to bring the teachings to life through real examples. The quality of the role model shown by teachers can strengthen the moral values taught in class and provide a sustainable positive impact on students' morals and ethics. With one statement that the role of teachers is not only to teach but also as a role model for students.

"As a teacher, I realize that my role is not only limited to teaching subject matter but also as a role model for students. Students often pay attention to and imitate my behavior and attitudes. Therefore, I try to show a good example in every aspect, both in how I interact with them, how I manage the class, and in terms of honesty and responsibility. I believe that by being a positive role model, I can help shape the character of students and reinforce the moral values that we teach."

Based on the results of interviews with teachers, it can be concluded that the role of teachers as role models is very important in the educational process

and character formation of students. Teachers are not only responsible for teaching subject matter, but also for being examples of good behavior in various aspects of life. Teachers who consistently demonstrate positive attitudes such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy can have a significant impact on students' attitudes and behavior (Alfathy et al., 2024; Maphie, 2023; Mubarok et al., 2023; Ondrušková & Pospíšil, 2023). Although challenges such as maintaining behavioral consistency and external influences from students can affect the effectiveness of the role of role models, a consistent and reflective approach helps strengthen the moral values taught in the classroom (Caves & Oswald-Egg, 2023; Mwandosya, 2023; Siswanto et al., 2023). Evaluation of the impact of the role of role models is carried out through observation and feedback from students, which provides an overview of how much positive influence is caused. Thus, teachers as role models play a crucial role in supporting the formation of student character and strengthening moral values in the educational process.

The role of teachers as role models in education, especially in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), is very important in shaping students' morals and ethics. Teachers are not only tasked with delivering teaching materials, but also serve as concrete examples of the moral values taught. At Junior High School 2 Banyuwangi, teachers who demonstrate good morals such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy can have a significant impact on students. When teachers apply these principles in their daily lives and interactions with students, they can help internalize these values in students. Teacher behavior that is consistent with the religious values taught creates a positive and supportive learning environment and reinforces the moral messages conveyed in the curriculum. The results of interviews with the principal and observations in the field revealed that teachers who act as role models not only motivate students but also strengthen their understanding of the importance of morals in everyday life. Thus, the role of teachers as role models is crucial in supporting the formation of student character and creating a school culture based on religious values.

## CONCLUSION

The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum plays a crucial role in shaping the morals and ethics of students at Junior High School 2 Banyuwangi. Based on the analysis and research findings, it can be concluded that the PAI curriculum has great potential to influence the development of students' character by instilling important moral and ethical values. Its effectiveness is highly dependent on several factors including the quality of curriculum implementation, teaching methods, and the role of role models shown by teachers. In addition, support from parents and the community has also proven to be important in supporting the expected character education outcomes.

Although there are various challenges faced, such as consistency in curriculum implementation and limited resources, effective strategies and strong support can increase the positive impact of the PAI curriculum. This study shows that to achieve optimal results, continuous efforts are needed to improve teaching methods, strengthen the role of teachers as role models, and involve various related parties. With a comprehensive and collaborative approach, the PAI curriculum can be more effective in shaping students' morals and ethics and supporting the formation of strong and positive characters in school environment.

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