

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEARNING IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS CHARACTER

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Abstract

This study examines the implementation of Islamic Religious Education learning in developing students' religious character at SD Negeri 35 Kota Bengkulu. The research employed a qualitative descriptive approach to explore classroom practices, teacher roles, and supporting conditions influencing character development. Data were collected through classroom observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis involving teachers, students, and the school principal. The findings indicate that Islamic Religious Education learning is implemented through structured instructional processes, varied teaching methods, contextual learning materials, and consistent classroom management. Teachers' exemplary behavior and interactive learning strategies play a significant role in reinforcing religious values. Supportive school culture and parental collaboration strengthen students' religious character, while challenges such as limited instructional time, student diversity, and external influences require adaptive strategies. The study underscores the importance of coherent implementation and professional commitment in optimizing Islamic Religious Education at the elementary school level.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education; Religious Character; Classroom Learning; Elementary School; Character Education

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a central role in shaping not only students' cognitive abilities but also their moral and spiritual dimensions. In the context of Indonesian national education, character formation is positioned as a fundamental objective alongside academic achievement. Schools are

expected to foster values that guide students' attitudes, behaviors, and decision-making processes (Muzaini & Salamah, 2023). Religious character, as part of character education, contributes significantly to the development of ethical awareness and self-discipline. These values are particularly important at the elementary level, where

foundational habits and moral orientations begin to form. Educational institutions therefore carry a strategic responsibility in nurturing students' religious character through structured learning processes (Purnomo, 2021).

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) holds a distinctive position within the Indonesian education system. As a compulsory subject, IRE is designed to transmit Islamic teachings while cultivating faith, piety, and moral conduct. The learning objectives of IRE extend beyond knowledge acquisition to include internalization of values and daily practice. Effective IRE learning encourages students to align their behavior with religious principles. Classroom instruction, school culture, and teacher modeling collectively influence this process. The quality of implementation determines whether religious values remain conceptual or become lived experiences (Nasucha, 2024).

The concept of religious character encompasses attitudes, behaviors, and habits that reflect religious teachings in everyday life. These characteristics include honesty, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, and commitment to worship. Religious character development requires consistent reinforcement through both formal instruction and informal interaction. Learning experiences that integrate values with real-life contexts tend to have stronger impacts on students' character formation.

Elementary students are particularly receptive to habituation and example-based learning. For this reason, educational strategies at this level must be carefully designed to support value internalization (Aufa, Muna, Rozikin, Aryanto, & Kusmawati, 2023).

Elementary education serves as a critical stage for character development due to students' psychological and moral growth. At this stage, students begin to understand moral norms and imitate behaviors observed in their environment. Teachers function as key figures whose actions significantly influence students' attitudes. Learning processes that emphasize meaningful engagement support the development of positive character traits. Islamic Religious Education at the elementary level must therefore address students' developmental characteristics. Approaches that combine cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects are essential in achieving this goal (Purwanti, Putra, & Sunantri, 2024).

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education learning involves various interconnected components. Curriculum design, teaching methods, learning materials, and assessment practices collectively shape learning outcomes. Teachers' pedagogical competence affects how religious values are conveyed and contextualized. Learning strategies that emphasize interaction, reflection, and practice enhance students'

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understanding of religious teachings. School policies and routines also support the consistency of value reinforcement. Implementation quality determines the extent to which learning objectives are achieved (Mubin & Furqon, 2023).

Teacher roles are particularly crucial in the implementation of Islamic Religious Education. Teachers are not only transmitters of knowledge but also moral exemplars for students. Professional competence enables teachers to select appropriate methods and learning activities. Personal integrity and religious commitment strengthen teachers' influence on students' character formation. Daily interactions between teachers and students provide opportunities for value modeling. Consistent teacher behavior reinforces the messages delivered through formal instruction (Kartika, Kuswandi, Herawati, & Ropitasari, 2023).

School environment contributes significantly to the success of religious character education. A supportive school culture encourages the practice of religious values in daily activities. Rituals such as prayer routines, greetings, and respectful communication strengthen habituation. Physical and social environments influence students' emotional and moral development. Collaboration among teachers, school leaders, and staff ensures consistency in value application. A positive environment

transforms religious learning into an integrated school experience.

Learning methods used in Islamic Religious Education affect students' engagement and comprehension. Conventional lecture-based approaches often limit students' active participation. Student-centered strategies encourage discussion, reflection, and experiential learning. Activities such as storytelling, role-playing, and group work facilitate value internalization. Practical learning experiences connect religious teachings with students' daily lives. Methodological variation supports diverse learning needs and learning styles (Cahyani, Luthfiyah, Apriliyanti, & Munawir, 2024).

Assessment in Islamic Religious Education should measure more than cognitive mastery. Evaluation of attitudes and behaviors provides insight into students' character development. Observational techniques, reflective journals, and performance-based assessments offer meaningful data. Assessment practices guide teachers in improving instructional strategies. Continuous evaluation supports the alignment between learning objectives and outcomes. Balanced assessment contributes to the effectiveness of character-oriented education.

Despite its importance, the implementation of Islamic Religious Education faces various challenges. Limited instructional time often

restricts opportunities for value reinforcement. Differences in students' backgrounds influence learning responses. Teachers may encounter difficulties integrating character education into academic targets. Institutional constraints also affect program consistency. Understanding these challenges is necessary to improve implementation practices (Puspitasari & Yusuf, 2022).

Empirical studies on Islamic Religious Education emphasize its role in character formation. Previous research highlights the influence of teaching strategies, teacher competence, and school culture. However, contextual differences among schools produce varied outcomes. Local studies provide valuable insights into specific implementation practices. Research at the elementary school level remains essential to capture early character development. Such studies contribute to the refinement of educational strategies.

SD Negeri 35 Kota Bengkulu represents a public elementary school implementing Islamic Religious Education within a diverse educational environment. The school integrates religious learning into both instructional and extracurricular activities. Observations indicate efforts to strengthen students' religious character through structured programs. Teachers play an active role in guiding students' moral and spiritual development. School routines support

the reinforcement of religious values. This context provides a relevant setting for academic investigation.

This study focuses on the implementation of Islamic Religious Education learning in developing students' religious character at SD Negeri 35 Kota Bengkulu. The research examines learning processes, teacher roles, and supporting factors within the school environment. Understanding implementation practices offers insights into effective character education strategies. The findings are expected to contribute to the improvement of Islamic Religious Education at the elementary level. Academic discussion generated by this study supports broader educational development. The research also provides practical implications for educators and policymakers.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to explore the implementation of Islamic Religious Education learning in developing students' religious character at SD Negeri 35 Kota Bengkulu. The qualitative approach was selected to obtain an in-depth understanding of learning processes, teacher roles, and school practices related to character formation. The research subjects included Islamic Religious Education teachers, students, and the school principal. Data were collected through classroom

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observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation analysis. Observations focused on instructional activities and student behavior during learning sessions. Interviews were conducted to capture participants' perspectives on the implementation and outcomes of Islamic Religious Education learning.

Data analysis was carried out through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Information obtained from observations, interviews, and documents was systematically organized and categorized based on research objectives. Triangulation of data sources and techniques was applied to enhance data validity and credibility. Patterns related to learning strategies, character development, and supporting factors were identified through continuous comparison. Interpretations were developed by linking empirical findings with relevant theoretical frameworks. The results were presented descriptively to reflect actual conditions and implementation practices in the research setting.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of Islamic Religious Education Learning in Classroom Practices

Islamic Religious Education learning at SD Negeri 35 Kota Bengkulu is implemented through systematic classroom instruction aligned with curriculum standards. Lesson

objectives emphasize balanced development of knowledge, attitudes, and religious behavior. Teachers design learning activities that integrate Islamic values into subject matter. Instruction is structured to guide students from basic understanding to practical application. Learning sessions follow a clear sequence that supports comprehension and engagement. This structure facilitates consistent delivery of religious education content (Mutakin, Nurhayati, & Rusmana, 2014).

Teachers apply varied instructional methods to enhance learning effectiveness. Discussion-based activities encourage students to articulate religious concepts and values. Storytelling is used to illustrate moral lessons drawn from Islamic teachings. Question-and-answer sessions support students' critical thinking and reflection. These methods promote interaction rather than passive reception of information. Method diversity maintains students' attention and motivation during lessons.

Learning content in Islamic Religious Education is contextualized to students' daily experiences. Teachers relate religious concepts to situations familiar to elementary students. Examples from school and home environments help students understand abstract values. Contextualization strengthens the relevance of religious teachings. Students are encouraged to reflect on

how lessons apply to their behavior. This approach supports meaningful learning rather than rote memorization (Esmael & Nafiah, 2018).

Instructional materials are selected to support students' understanding of religious concepts. Textbooks serve as primary references for structured content delivery. Teachers supplement textbooks with examples and simple visual aids. Learning materials are adapted to students' cognitive development levels. The use of supportive media enhances clarity of instruction. Appropriate materials contribute to effective knowledge transmission.

Classroom interaction is a central element of Islamic Religious Education learning. Teachers encourage students to participate actively during lessons. Students are given opportunities to ask questions and share opinions. Interaction fosters a positive learning atmosphere based on mutual respect. Teachers guide discussions to maintain focus on learning objectives. Active participation supports deeper engagement with religious values (Indriani & Suryani, 2023).

Classroom management reflects the principles taught in Islamic Religious Education. Teachers establish rules that promote discipline and respectful behavior. Learning activities are conducted in an orderly environment. Teachers model ethical behavior during instruction. Students observe and

imitate appropriate conduct. Classroom management practices reinforce the moral messages conveyed through lessons.

Teachers' instructional behavior plays an important role in character-oriented learning. Teachers demonstrate consistency between words and actions. Professional attitudes strengthen students' trust and respect. Teachers' interactions reflect patience and fairness. Such behavior reinforces religious values through example. Instruction becomes a form of lived teaching rather than abstract explanation.

Assessment practices in classroom-based Islamic Religious Education emphasize comprehensive evaluation. Teachers assess students' understanding through written and oral activities. Observation of attitudes and participation complements cognitive assessment. Teachers monitor students' consistency in applying religious values. Assessment outcomes guide instructional improvement. Evaluation supports continuous development of learning effectiveness (Kurniawan, Ysh, & Artharina, 2021).

Learning activities often include reflective components to strengthen understanding. Students are encouraged to think about the meaning of religious practices. Reflection helps students connect lessons with personal experiences. Teachers guide reflection through structured questions. This

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process deepens students' awareness of religious values. Reflection supports internalization of learning outcomes.

Time allocation for Islamic Religious Education is managed to optimize learning. Teachers prioritize essential concepts within limited instructional time. Lesson pacing is adjusted to students' learning abilities. Effective time management ensures coverage of learning objectives. Teachers balance explanation, interaction, and practice. Efficient use of time enhances learning quality.

Integration of religious values occurs across different learning stages. Values are introduced during lesson openings to set learning orientation. Core activities emphasize understanding and application of concepts. Lesson closures reinforce key values discussed. Integration ensures coherence throughout instruction. Students receive consistent value messages during learning (Azizah, Jariah, & Aprilianto, 2023).

Overall classroom practices demonstrate intentional efforts to implement Islamic Religious Education effectively. Instruction focuses on aligning objectives, methods, and assessment. Teachers maintain consistency in delivering religious content. Classroom learning supports both knowledge and character development. Implementation reflects awareness of students' developmental needs. These practices contribute to

meaningful Islamic Religious Education learning experiences.

Supporting Factors and Challenges in Developing Students' Religious Character

Teacher competence is a primary supporting factor in developing students' religious character. Teachers possess adequate understanding of Islamic teachings and learning objectives. Pedagogical skills enable teachers to present religious values in an age-appropriate manner. Consistent instructional behavior strengthens students' acceptance of moral messages. Teachers' commitment supports continuous character reinforcement. Professional attitudes contribute to the effectiveness of religious education practices .

Teachers' personal example significantly influences students' religious character development. Students observe teachers' daily behavior during classroom interactions. Consistency between instruction and conduct reinforces credibility. Teachers' discipline and respectful communication serve as practical models. Exemplary behavior encourages students to emulate positive attitudes. Modeling functions as an implicit yet powerful educational strategy.

School culture supports the implementation of religious character education. Daily routines reinforce religious practices within the school environment. Shared norms promote

respectful interactions among school members. School leadership provides direction for character-based programs. Collaboration among teachers ensures consistency in value application. A supportive culture strengthens students' moral development (Fahmi & Susanto, 2018).

The physical and social school environment also contributes to character formation. Clean and orderly classrooms support disciplined behavior. Visual reminders of religious values enhance awareness. Positive peer relationships encourage mutual respect. Social interaction reinforces shared moral standards. Environmental support complements instructional efforts.

Parental involvement serves as an additional supporting factor in character development. Communication between teachers and parents ensures value consistency. Parents reinforce religious practices at home. Shared responsibility strengthens students' behavioral stability. Parental attitudes influence students' moral orientation. Cooperation between school and family enhances educational outcomes (Anggraenie, Hanafiah, & Niâ, 2022).

Learning resources facilitate the development of students' religious character. Adequate teaching materials support value-oriented instruction. Resources provide structure for consistent learning delivery. Teachers use available materials to reinforce

moral messages. Appropriate resources enhance lesson clarity. Learning materials support both understanding and practice (Artika, Sukardi, & Idawati, 2021).

Despite supportive factors, several challenges affect character development efforts. Limited instructional time restricts opportunities for reinforcement. Teachers must balance academic content and character education. Time constraints reduce reflective activities. Effective prioritization becomes necessary. Instructional limitations influence learning depth.

Student diversity presents challenges in character education implementation. Differences in family background affect students' religious understanding. Varied levels of prior knowledge influence learning responses. Teachers adapt strategies to accommodate diversity. Individual differences require differentiated approaches. Diversity increases instructional complexity (Khairani & Rosyidi, 2022).

Students' exposure to external influences challenges religious character development. Media consumption affects students' attitudes and behavior. Inconsistent values outside school impact internalization. Teachers address conflicting messages during instruction. Guidance supports critical awareness. External factors require adaptive educational strategies.

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Teacher workload influences the consistency of character education. Administrative responsibilities limit instructional preparation time. Multiple teaching demands affect focus. Teachers manage competing professional obligations (Diana & Sugiharto, 2024). Workload challenges instructional sustainability. Institutional support becomes essential.

Assessment of religious character presents methodological challenges. Behavioral outcomes are difficult to measure objectively. Teachers rely on observation and qualitative judgment. Assessment consistency requires clear indicators. Subjectivity affects evaluation accuracy. Balanced assessment approaches are necessary (Astriana & Hayati, 2023).

Overall, supporting factors and challenges interact dynamically in developing students' religious character. Effective implementation depends on teacher competence and school culture. External influences require adaptive strategies. Continuous collaboration supports consistency. Awareness of challenges informs improvement efforts. These conditions shape the effectiveness of religious character education.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of Islamic Religious Education at SD Negeri 35 Kota Bengkulu demonstrates a structured effort to develop students'

religious character through classroom-based learning practices. Instructional processes integrate cognitive understanding with the cultivation of religious attitudes and behaviors. Teachers play a central role by applying varied methods, modeling positive conduct, and reinforcing values consistently. Supportive school culture and collaboration with parents strengthen the internalization of religious values. Despite challenges such as limited instructional time, student diversity, and external influences, character-oriented learning remains effective when supported by professional commitment and adaptive strategies. These findings highlight the importance of coherent instructional design and contextual support in enhancing the role of Islamic Religious Education in elementary schools.

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