The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in the Development of Students's Islamic Character at SD IT Al-Furqon

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Abstract: Investigates implementation of Islamic Religious Education, condition of students' Islamic character, and teachers' strategies in fostering these values at SD IT Al-Furqon. Qualitative approach was employed, with data collected through interviews, observations, also document analysis. Participants included PAI teachers as key informants, supported by school principal and students. Reveal that PAI learning at SD IT Al-Furqon is conducted systematically through integration of interactive lectures, discussions, memorization, also habituation of religious values in daily school activities. Students' Islamic character is generally categorized as good, particularly in terms of discipline, politeness, and responsibility, although challenges such as behavioral inconsistency and environmental influences remain. PAI teachers play a crucial role in character development by integrating Islamic values into both instructional and non-instructional activities, including routine religious programs. Collaboration between teachers and parents strengthens students' moral development. Contributes to literature by highlighting Islamic character education strategies based on religious habituation and teacher role modeling within context of an integrated Islamic elementary school.

Keywords: PAI Learning; Student Character; Student Morality; Islamic Education Teacher; SD IT Al-Furqon

Abstrak: Mengkaji pelaksanaan pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di SD IT Al-Furqon, kondisi karakter Islami siswa, dan berbagai strategi guru dalam membentuk nilai-nilai tersebut. Pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif melalui wawancara, observasi, dan telaah dokumen. Informan penelitian terdiri atas guru PAI sebagai informan utama, kepala satuan pendidikan, serta siswa sebagai informan pendukung. Pembelajaran PAI di SD IT Al-Furqon

dilaksanakan secara sistematis dengan memadukan metode ceramah interaktif, diskusi, hafalan, serta pembiasaan nilai keagamaan dalam aktivitas sehari-hari. Karakter Islami siswa secara umum berada pada kategori baik, terutama pada aspek kedisiplinan, kesopanan, dan tanggung jawab, meskipun tantangan seperti inkonsistensi perilaku dan pengaruh lingkungan masih dijumpai. Guru PAI berperan aktif membentuk karakter berdasarkan integrasi nilai Islam pada kegiatan belajar maupun kegiatan non formal, termasuk program keagamaan rutin sekolah. Kolaborasi guru serta orang tua turut memperkuat proses pembinaan moral pelajar. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada pengungkapan strategi pembentukan karakter Islami berbasis pembiasaan religius dan keteladan guru PAI dalam konteks sekolah Islam terpadu tingkat sekolah dasar.

Kata Kunci: Pembelajaran PAI; Karakter Islami; Guru PAI; Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu.

A. Introduction

PAI serves strategic function in forming spiritual, moral, and character foundations among students starting at elementary level. In Islamic-based schools such as Al-Furqon Islamic Elementary School, PAI instruction is not merely understood as delivery of cognitive material regarding Islamic teachings, but also as process of internalizing moral values capable of influencing students' daily behavior. (Yanti and Iswantir 2024). In recent years, issue of strengthening character in elementary schools has gained prominence, particularly due to rising moral challenges faced by younger generations in digital era. Character formation must certainly be addressed from an early age. Within learning process, teachers serve as primary actors responsible for effectiveness of instructional process. (Rizqi and Budianto 2025). Educators' strategies and efforts exert significant influence, particularly regarding exemplary conduct as means of instilling Islamic values. Studies concerning PAI educators' attempts to implement instruction and its effectiveness in shaping character have become increasingly relevant.

Previous research confirms that teachers employ various strategies such as habituation, reward provision, punishment, modeling, moral guidance, and storytelling

to foster responsibility and honesty among students. Studies also underscore importance of collaboration between educators and students' families at home for character development. (Sa'diah et al. 2023). Other research indicates that PAI teachers have successfully shaped character through creative teaching methods, consistent application of values, school culture, and structured institutional support. (Rahmad, Abas, and Iqbal 2023). Most existing research still focuses on general strategic aspects and lacks in-depth portrayal. A gap persists in its implementation, constituting a key reason for conducting more comprehensive research in schools with an Islamic educational foundation, such as SD IT Al-Furqon, which emphasizes the habitual practice of religious values.

Most existing research remains focused on general strategic aspects and has not provided in-depth depiction; a gap exists in its implementation. This constitutes a key reason for conducting more profound research in schools with an Islamic educational foundation, such as Al-Furqon Islamic Elementary School, which emphasizes habituation of religious values. (Putri and Siregar 2021). PAI teachers occupy a central position as role models, expected to demonstrate exemplary attitudes and behavior. Various contemporary studies emphasize that educational exemplarity serves as a determining factor for successful character education. (Judrah and Arjum 2024). Its implementation in the field does not always proceed ideally due to various technical and non-technical constraints. (Nurhayati, Ndona, and Saragi 2025).

At SD IT Al-Furqon, habituation of Islamic values such as greetings, communal prayers, dhuha prayers, and other religious activities forms an integral part of the educational process. However, the effectiveness of these activities in shaping student character and morality requires analysis from the perspective of PAI teachers who interact directly with student behavior on a daily basis. This study seeks to explore how PAI teachers endeavor to cultivate Islamic character among students at SD IT Al-Furqon.

This study formulates main research focus, encompassing implementation of PAI instruction at SD IT Al-Furqon, daily character and morality of students, efforts of PAI

educators in shaping learners' Islamic character, and analyzing results of PAI teachers' strategies in forming students' Islamic character at SD IT Al-Furqon.

This research contributes to literature concerning character-based PAI instruction, particularly within integrated Islamic schools which possess distinct characteristics compared to public schools. Studies from the past decade indicate that integrated Islamic schools have more structured habituation systems, yet still require periodic evaluation. It is expected to enrich scholarly discourse on Islamic education.

Practically, it aims to provide input for PAI educators to enhance instructional effectiveness and character-building strategies. Research findings can serve as reference for developing school programs oriented toward moral reinforcement, especially at elementary level, which constitutes most crucial period in shaping child's personality.

Article will discuss background on importance of PAI instruction, research methods employed, findings regarding implementation of instruction and student character, discussion linking findings with theory and prior research, as well as conclusion summarizing answers to research questions. With this structure, article is expected to provide comprehensive depiction regarding role of PAI educators in forming character and morality of students at SD IT Al-Furqon.

B.   Research Methods

A descriptive qualitative approach aims to deeply understand the process of PAI instruction, the state of student character, and educators' efforts to instill moral values at SD IT Al-Furqon. This qualitative approach seeks to comprehensively explore the meaning, experiences, and perspectives of PAI teachers within the natural context of the school environment. (Sugiyono 2010).

This research was conducted at SD IT Al-Furqon during the odd semester of the 2025/2026 academic year. Research subjects included PAI educators (primary informants), the school principal, and several students (supporting informants) involved in character value habituation activities.

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews with PAI educators to obtain information regarding instructional implementation, character

reinforcement strategies, and challenges they encounter. Observations were carried out during classroom learning activities, routine religious practices such as dhuha prayers, Quran recitation (tadarus), tahfidz programs, and daily greeting habits. Documentation was also utilized to reinforce obtained data.(Sugiyono 2010).

Data analysis employed Miles and Huberman's model, encompassing data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting relevant information from interviews and observations. Data presentation was accomplished through systematic descriptive narrative depicting research findings. Conclusions were drawn based on data patterns and linked to research problem formulation. (Qomar 2022).

Research data validity applied source and method triangulation techniques by comparing information from PAI teachers with supporting informants such as homeroom teachers and school principals. Method triangulation was based on comparing data from interviews, observations, and documentation (Moleong, 2019). Obtained data could be tested for consistency across various perspectives and through multiple data collection methods.

C. Results and Discussion

1. Research Findings

Based on data collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies at SD IT Al-Furqon, research findings can be synthesized into four main pillars corresponding to the research problem formulation.

a. Integrative PAI Learning Model and Implementation

PAI learning at SD IT Al-Furqon is designed as an integrative system, referencing the concept of holistic education (Patoni 2022). Its implementation is not confined to the classroom but permeates all school activities. Based on interviews with a key informant, Mrs. Salsabila Fatya Dewi, S.Pd.I., it was revealed that *"PAI learning here is designed to engage three domains simultaneously: knowledge (cognitive), feeling (affective), and action (psychomotor)."* Specifically, the implementation pattern can be mapped as follows:

1) Varied Learning Methods in the Classroom

PAI teachers combine interactive lecture methods with student-centered approaches. Observations in a fifth-grade class showed the use of quiz-based educational games for Islamic history material, which successfully increased student enthusiasm and memory retention. Case discussion methods, such as discussing attitudes towards resolving peer conflicts based on stories of the Prophet, encouraged students to analyze and internalize values. Direct practice, like demonstrations and simulations of ablution (wudu) and prayer (shalat), serves as the primary method for teaching fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence). Mrs. Salsabila added, "*We support this practical approach with independent worship practice checklists monitored by parents, ensuring continuity between school and home.*"

2) Integration of the Hidden Curriculum

Value learning does not only occur during formal PAI class hours. Observations over one week showed that Islamic values are integrated into all subjects and activities. For example, during a Mathematics lesson on division, the teacher incorporates the value of fairness. In a Natural Sciences lesson about the creation of the universe, the teacher reinforces values of gratitude (syukur) and contemplation (tafakur). This integration creates a learning environment consistent in its values.

3) Utilization of Contextual Media and Learning Resources

Teachers creatively use the school environment as a learning resource. The school's lush garden serves as an example for discussions about preserving God's creation (al-Muhafazah 'ala al-Bi'ah). The use of animated videos of Prophet's stories and digital tahfidz applications is also implemented to suit the learning styles of Generation Z. "*We strive to make religious teachings feel not outdated, but relevant to their world*," stated Mr. Asep Ahmad, S.Pd.I., another PAI teacher.

b. **Panorama of Students' Islamic Character: Achievements and Challenges**

Islamic character of students at SD IT Al-Furqon generally shows positive development. Data from observations, interviews with homeroom teachers, and simple student questionnaires depict the following conditions:

1) Strengthening Behavioral Indicators

   Three main indicators stand out. First, Ritual and Social Discipline, evident from students' adherence to the schedule for congregational Dhuha prayers and orderly queuing when using school facilities. Second, Politeness in Language and Behavior, where the culture of greetings, smiles, and courteous address (3S) has become an automatic habit. Third, Academic and Social Responsibility, reflected in diligence in completing assignments, timeliness in submitting projects, and student initiative in cleaning the classroom without being told. Interviews with several fourth and fifth-grade students revealed that they feel "*more at peace*" and "*know how to behave*" because of the rules and habituation at school.

2) Evidence of Behavioral Change in the Home Environment

   Collaboration with parents via WhatsApp groups provided additional data. Approximately 85% of responding parents reported observing positive changes in their children, such as increased awareness of obligatory prayers, reduced use of harsh language, and emerging initiative to help with housework. One parent recounted, "*My child now often reminds his younger sibling to pray before eating, something he didn't do before.*"

3) Challenges and Areas for Improvement

   Although generally positive, the research identified several challenges. First, behavioral inconsistency in a small number of students, particularly those who appear very well-behaved at school but, according to parent reports, still need frequent reminders at home. Second, the strong influence of the digital environment and social circles outside school. Mr. Asep acknowledged, "*Our biggest challenge actually comes after students return home. Content on social media and online games can*

sometimes undermine the values we have instilled." Third, varying abilities in internalizing values among students, where some students remain at the level of mere obedience to rules and have not fully reached the level of value understanding, based on Piaget's theory of moral development.

c. Strategies and Efforts of PAI Teachers in Character Strengthening

PAI teachers at SD IT Al-Furqon function as *murabbi* (educators) who transcend the role of mere instructors. Their efforts are multi-layered and interconnected.

1) Exemplary Conduct as a Core Strategy

All teacher informants emphasized that exemplary conduct is the most effective method. They consciously present themselves as role models. Mr. Asep stated, "*We cannot ask students to be disciplined if we ourselves arrive late. Character is caught, not taught.*" Observations substantiate this claim. Teacher behaviors such as always greeting first, expressing gratitude, keeping promises, and displaying a cheerful demeanor are gradually emulated by students. This modeling is a manifestation of Bandura's social-cognitive theory of observational learning, where students, especially at the elementary level, learn by imitating figures they consider significant and authoritative (Ardiansyah and Putra 2024).

2) Personal and Affective Mentoring Approach

PAI teachers do not apply a one-size-fits-all approach. They understand the individual character of each student. For shy students, the approach involves giving praise in front of the class. For less disciplined students, individual counseling with the technique of nasihat bil-hikmah (advice with wisdom) is more commonly applied. Mrs. Salsabila shared, "*There was a student who often failed to complete memorization tasks. After speaking with him, it turned out he felt overwhelmed. I modified his memorization target to be smaller but consistent, and involved his*

parents to guide him in an enjoyable way. Alhamdulillah, he is now the best memorizer in the class."

3) Design and Implementation of Religious Habit Formation Programs

The school has a structured regimen of habituation programs, with PAI teachers serving as the driving force. These programs are designed to be tiered according to grade level. Beyond Dhuha prayers and tahfidz, there are rotating kultum (seven-minute sermons) programs that train courage and communication skills. Special keputrian (girls' activities) for female students discuss personal hygiene and the ethics of a Muslim woman. This habituation creates routines that form a "*moral muscle memory*," where good behavior becomes automatic and part of one's identity (Judrah and Arjum 2024).

4) Building Strategic Partnerships with Parents (School-Family Partnership)

Teachers' efforts do not stop at the school gate. Communication with parents is conducted proactively and in a structured manner, not merely when problems arise. WhatsApp groups are used to share updates on learning progress, parenting tips, and value reinforcement. Regular meetings between homeroom teachers and parents serve as a forum for vision consolidation. "*We believe strong character is formed when there is alignment between the messages at school and at home. This synergy is key,*" stressed Mrs. Salsabila. This finding reinforces previous research (Sa'diah et al. 2023) on the importance of collaboration in character education.

d. Impact and Effectiveness of PAI Teachers' Efforts

Evaluation of the aforementioned efforts indicates significant impact, though refinement remains necessary.

1) Effectiveness of the Holistic and Integrative PAI Learning Model

The primary success indicator is not merely behavioral change, but a shift in motivation. Interviews with students reveal that most have begun to understand the "*why*" behind good behavior, not just the "*what*." For

instance, when asked why one must be honest, a student responded, "*Because Allah is All-Seeing, and honesty brings peace of mind.*" This indicates a shift from external regulation toward introjected or internalized regulation within Self-Determination Theory.

2) Creation of a Conducive School Climate (Positive School Climate)

Social interactions within the school reflect the values being taught. An atmosphere of mutual respect, cooperation, and healthy competition is palpable. Observations in the cafeteria show students queuing orderly and reminding each other to pray. The school's physical environment, adorned with calligraphy, posters of wise sayings, and maintained cleanliness, further reinforces the value messages. This climate, termed byCahyanto et al., (2024) as an ecosystem of values, functions as a highly effective hidden curriculum..

3) Recognition from Stakeholders

The school principal stated that the character programs driven by PAI teachers have become the school's brand image and a primary consideration for parents enrolling their children. Student achievements in religious competitions at the sub-district level also serve as external proof of instructional success. Consequently, the school not only produces academically proficient students but also individuals of noble character.

2. **Discussion**

The research findings from SD IT Al-Furqon offer an in-depth discussion on several key aspects of contemporary Islamic character education.

a. Recontextualizing the Role of the PAI Teacher: From Instructor to Murabbi and Model

Finding that exemplary conduct is the dominant factor reinforces the central position of the PAI teacher not merely as a knowledge transmitter, but as a moral model and *murabbi* (holistic educator). In the context of modern society where traditional authority figures are often questioned, the

presence of authentic, consistent, and compassionate teachers becomes crucial. The consistency between a teacher's words and actions (walk the talk) builds the credibility essential for students' acceptance of values. This aligns with the Islamic concept of *uswah hasanah* (excellent model) and the theory of transformational leadership in education, where leaders (teachers) inspire change through their character (Elbertson, Jennings, and Brackett 2025). Future challenge lies in maintaining the quality of this exemplarity amid increasing professional pressures and the complex workload of teachers.

b. Habituation vs. Coercion: Finding Balance in Character Education

Intensive religious habituation programs at SD IT Al-Furqon successfully create positive routines. However, this invites a philosophical question: where is the line between healthy habit formation and indoctrination? This discussion is important to address potential critiques. Key to success at SD IT Al-Furqon, based on the findings, lies in two aspects. First, habituation is accompanied by gradual, age-appropriate explanations of the meaning (ta'wil al-'amal) behind the actions. Second, implementation atmosphere is designed to be enjoyable and non-coercive, for instance through varied methods and praise. Habituation does not become blind imposition but a stepping stone toward authentic internalization of values, as affirmed in Kohlberg's theory of moral development where the conventional stage (following rules) is a crucial step before reaching the autonomous stage.

c. Confronting Value Dissonance: The School's Role Amid Global and Digital Currents

Finding regarding external environmental influences as the main challenge confirms a current reality in Indonesian society. Students live in two worlds often characterized by differing values: the structured, Islamic school environment, and the relatively free, instant-gratification-oriented digital and social world. This is where the strategies of integrating values

into all activities and collaborating with parents, as identified in this research, become highly relevant. Schools can no longer remain "*ivory towers*." PAI teachers need to be equipped with digital literacy competencies to guide students in critically navigating social media content. The partnership with parents must also be elevated from mere administrative communication to value-based parenting coaching, ensuring the home truly becomes an extension of the school.

d. Sustainability and Replication of the Model: Lessons from SD IT Al-Furqon

Character formation model at SD IT Al-Furqon demonstrates that success is not determined by a single factor, but by a systemic convergence of: (1) an Integrative Curriculum that unites knowledge and values, (2) Teachers as Exemplars who are competent both pedagogically and spiritually, (3) a pervasive and consistent School Culture, and (4) a strong School-Family Partnership. These four pillars are mutually reinforcing. This finding enriches the study of character education in integrated Islamic schools by providing an operational strategic map. For replication in other contexts, these principles can be adopted but require adaptation to local wisdom, resources, and community characteristics. Further research could test the effectiveness of each pillar separately or compare its application across different types of schools.

e. Theoretical and Practical Implications

This research reinforces theories of value-based character education and social-cognitive theory within an Indonesian Islamic context. It shows that a holistic approach combining cognition, habituation, and modeling within a supportive ecosystem constitutes an effective formula for elementary education. Practically, this research offers several recommendations:

1) For Teacher Education Institutions: There is a need to strengthen courses on character formation and teacher exemplarity within the curriculum of teacher training institutes, not just teaching methodology.

2) For School Policy: It is crucial to allocate time and resources for structured and measurable habituation programs, and to build an effective school-family communication system.

3) For PAI Teachers: Continuous self-reflection on one's own attitudes and behavior is essential, as is innovation in teaching methods to remain contextual.

Concludes that the efforts of PAI teachers at SD IT Al-Furqon have created an effective character education ecosystem. Its success lies in the synergistic integration of creative teaching methods, living exemplarity, consistent habituation programs, and a strong partnership with families. Challenges in the digital era require ongoing adaptation, but a strong foundation has been built to shape students who are not only academically intelligent but also possess strong Islamic character.

D.   Conclusion

Implementation of PAI instruction at SD IT Al-Furqon has been conducted systematically and integrates Islamic values. PAI learning emphasizes mastery of religious material, prioritizes direct practice, and cultivates habituation in students' daily lives. Interactive lectures, discussions, worship demonstrations, and hands-on practice are employed in PAI instruction and proven to help students understand and internalize Islamic values more meaningfully (Hadi et al. 2025).

Character and morality of students at SD IT Al-Furqon are generally positive. This is reflected in disciplined behavior, politeness, and student responsibility both at school and at home. However, some students require more intensive approaches to character formation, such as those who still use inappropriate language influenced by out-of-school environments, indicating a need to enhance their religious awareness. Islamic activities at SD IT Al-Furqon considered capable of influencing student behavior include Dhuha prayers, Quran recitation (tadarus), tahfidz, and girls' religious activities (keputrian). An Islamic school environment significantly impacts formation of Islamic character in learners from elementary school age (Hikmawati et al. 2022).

PAI teachers play a primary role as figures for students, demonstrating discipline, responsibility, honesty, and noble morals in daily interactions. Efforts by teachers, particularly PAI teachers, to shape students' Islamic character are achieved

through personal example, practice, and individualized approaches to each student. Furthermore, teachers collaborate with students' parents to integrate Islamic values into both intracurricular and daily religious activities. This cooperation strengthens continuity of character education between school and family.

Research affirms that PAI teachers exert strong influence on formation of students' Islamic character, as forming Islamic character proves more effective through direct practice than theory. However, optimization of habituation programs is needed so application of character values can occur more consistently, especially in facing influences from external environments. Subsequent research is recommended to examine effectiveness of PAI instruction using more varied approaches or involving different subjects and school contexts to enrich study of character-based Islamic education.

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