

Fostering Students' Religious Character Based on the Religious Literacy Program

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Abstract: The multidimensional crises of the modern era are a severe issue in this country, particularly regarding moral and character degeneration in education. This study aims to describe the faces of excellent teachers who shape students' religious character through religious literacy programs at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara. This research uses a phenomenological qualitative approach. Qualitative research methods are used to gather information about the object's condition as a key instrument, and the research findings will emphasize meaning rather than generalization. The study's findings show that the excellent teachers who applied to SMAN 2 Tambun Utara are rated as good. This is evident in the actions of instructors who demonstrate exemplary behavior by setting good classroom examples daily. Some exceptional attitudes among SMAN 2 Tambun Utara teachers include commitment to God, noble character, justice, honesty, objectivity, and discipline. The process of developing the religious character of pupils at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara through a religious literacy program supervised by PAI teachers. This study suggests that knowledge of Islamic religious subject matter does not have to be the basis for a student's character development. Still, the most crucial element is the habituation of character in culture.

Keywords: Religious Literacy Program, Implementation, Exemplary Teacher, Religious Character

Abstrak: Krisis multidimensional yang terjadi di era modern saat ini menjadi problematika yang serius di negeri ini, khususnya degradasi moral dan karakter dalam dunia pendidikan. Tujuan penelitian ini untuk mendeskripsikan potret keteladanan guru dalam membentuk karakter religius Peserta didik berbasis program literasi keagamaan di SMAN 2 Tambun Utara. Pendekatan dalam penelitian ini yaitu pendekatan kualitatif fenomenologi. Metode penelitian kualitatif diterapkan guna mendapatkan informasi terkait dengan kondisi objek yang apa adanya sebagai instrumen kunci, dan melalui teknik pengumpulan serta kajian terhadap data tersebut, hasil penelitian akan lebih menekankan makna daripada generalisasi. Hasil dari temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan keteladanan guru yang diterapkan di SMAN 2 Tambun Utara tergolong baik. Terlibat dari aktivitas guru-guru yang menunjukkan perilaku terpuji melalui teladan yang dicontokkannya setiap hari di lingkungan Sekolah. Adapun beberapa sikap keteladanan guru yang diterapkan di SMAN 2 Tambun Utara adalah ketagwaan kepada Allah, berakhlak mulia, adil, jujur, objektif dan disiplin. Proses pembinaan karakter religius peserta didik di SMAN 2 Tambun Utara dengan program literasi keagamaan yang didampingi oleh guru PAI. Implikasi penelitian ini untuk pengembangan pendidikan Islam bahwasanya berkarakternya seorang siswa tidak harus melalui penguasaan materi-materi pelajaran agama Islam, namun paling penting adalah pembiasaan karakter secara kultural.

Kata Kunci: Program Literasi keagamaan, Implementasi, Keteladanan Guru, Karakter Religius

INTRODUCTION

The multidimensional crisis in the modern era presents a serious problem for this country, particularly regarding moral and character degradation within the education system. Of course, the problem cannot be separated from the role of teachers in educating and fostering the religious character of their students. The reason is apparent: the ideal educator figure is one of the leading solutions to this nation's moral degradation problem. The role of teachers as educators is crucial because they hold a significant responsibility in nurturing the next generation of quality citizens and preventing moral poverty.¹

Moral poverty is rampant everywhere, as evidenced by the large number of young male and female students who are trapped in promiscuity, brawls, and other immoral behaviors that starkly contrast with the cultural values of the country and Islamic culture.² This portrait of moral poverty, poverty of faith, and poverty of knowledge is a significant concern in education. Culturing these values becomes very diverse and complex due to the different interpretations of "life education" and "value education" in various societies, given that different socio-cultural traditions, educational ideologies, and religious beliefs influence them.³ Individual beliefs are also linked to religiocentrism, a combination of positive attitudes toward one's religious group and negative attitudes toward the religion of other groups. Individual beliefs are also linked to religiocentrism, a combination of positive attitudes toward one's religious group and negative attitudes toward the religion of different groups.⁴

Examining an incident in the community, particularly among individuals living in areas significantly distant from religious values, primarily focuses on fulfilling worldly desires. It is not uncommon for many social deviations, such as promiscuity among adolescents, free sex culture, gambling, and a life of hedonism, to be firmly rooted in the community environment.⁵ This incident does not follow the paradigm formulated in the law in Indonesia.

¹ Akmal Rizki Gunawan Hasibuan, "Kompetensi Pendidik Ideal Berbasis Al- Qur ' an," *Al-Quds: Jurnal Studi Al-Qur'an Dan Hadits* 6, no. 2 (2022): 573–92, <https://doi.org/10.29240/alquds.v6i2.4200>.

² Akmal Rizki Gunawan Hasibuan, *Menyinari Kehidupan Dengan Cahaya Al-Qur'an* (Jakarta: PT Gramedia, 2018).

³ Lee, J.C.-K., Yip, S.Y.-W., & Kong, R.H.-M. (Eds.). (2021). *Life and Moral Education in Greater China* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429324161>

⁴ Tery Setiawan et al., "Exploring Social Identities in Indonesia: The Role of Religious and Ethnic Identities in Evaluating Well-Being," *Changing Societies and Personalities* 8, no. 4 (2024): 920–41, <https://doi.org/10.15826/csp.2024.8.4.306>.

⁵ Muhammad Resky and Yayat Suharyat, "Peran Pendidikan Pondok Pesantren Dalam Mendidik Kader Ulama Dan Membina Akhlak Umat Islam di Perumahan Graha," Attadib:

It is explicitly formulated in Law of the Republic of Indonesia No. 20 of 2003, Chapter II, Article 3, which reads, “National education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation to educate the life of the nation, aiming to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and democratic and responsible citizens.”⁶ The law on the national education system stipulates that the purpose and function of education is to form a whole Indonesian human being, the keywords of which are faith and devotion, noble character, healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizens.⁷

If the problem of religious character in students is not addressed quickly, it will lead to negative consequences, including an increase in bullying and immoral behavior among them.⁸ Many high school students who ignore school rules, such as culture, come late because they are not taught religious values and discipline in the family environment. Due to the family environment and socialization in the community that is not supportive of students' education, some students like to skip school and go to the canteen during class hours.⁹ According to Ustadz, Uus said that the community and family environment that is not supportive is an obstacle to the development of student's character values, so many students come to school late and are late to participate in congregational prayers, dhuha and dzuhu or Friday prayers.¹⁰

Asep Dahliyana has conducted several studies in the past. The findings of this study indicate that the relationship between extracurricular activities and character education embodies the knowledge gained in the classroom, along with the attitudes and skills that must be developed for students to cultivate noble ethical values.¹¹ Isnaini Nur Azizah's research reveals a daily, weekly, and incidental approach to the religious literacy movement. Students engage in daily practices such as praying before and after studying, reading short letters, reading

Journal of Elementary Education 6, no. 2 (2022): 364–81, <https://doi.org/10.32507/attadib.v6i2.1605>.

⁶Lihat https://jdih.kemdikbud.go.id/sjdih/siperpu/dokumen/salinan/UU_tahun2003_nomor020 di akses 9 Desember 2023.

⁷ Asep Suhendar, “Implementasi Keteladanan Guru Dalam Membentuk Akhlak Siswa Di Smp Pgri 3 Bogor 1 (2021): 184–94.

⁸ Zulkarnaen, Wiyono, and Sa'adah, “Penguatan Karakter Religius Siswa Dalam Mencegah Perilaku Bullying di SMA Islam Malang.”

⁹ Interview With Mrs Kesih Sumiartih as a teacher PAI SMAN 2 Tambun Utara.

¹⁰ Interview With Ibu Dede Liya as a teacher PAI SMAN 2 Tambun Utara

¹¹ Asep Dahliyana, “Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Melalui Kegiatan Ekstrakurikuler di Sekolah,” *Jurnal Sosioreligi* 15, no. 1 (2017): 54.

corners, and performing duha and dhuhr prayers.¹² The following research study, conducted by Cucu Nurzakiya, shows that religious literacy, in addition to fostering an interest in reading, also trains students to be able to criticize sources of knowledge related to religion or the values they get in the form of texts (books), oral, visual, and digital. The following research study, conducted by Cucu Nurzakiya, shows that religious literacy, in addition to fostering an interest in reading, also trains students to be able to criticize sources of knowledge related to religion or the values they get in the form of texts (books), oral, visual, and digital.¹³

This research is novel because it integrates religious literacy programs with teacher exemplarity as the main approach to shaping students' religious character in public schools, unlike previous studies that only focus on religious literacy and lack a socio-religious approach. Unlike prior studies that often focus on one aspect, this research combines both holistically, especially in a multicultural, non-religious context. A phenomenological qualitative approach is used to explore real meanings and experiences, while the research findings emphasize the importance of daily cultural habituation over mere mastery of religious materials.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of the religious literacy program by teachers in fostering students' religious character and to find out the implications of the exemplary role of teachers and the religious literacy program on the formation of students' religious character.

LITERATUR REVIEW

Definition of Character Education

The Indonesian government's policy on strengthening character education is contained in the objectives of National Education in Indonesia as stated in the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003. In addition, policy support is included in Regulation No. 75 of the Minister of Education and Culture of 2016 concerning school committees in the preparation of learning facilities and infrastructure. Government Regulation Number 19 of 2017, which concerns teachers, and Permendikbud Number 23 of 2017, along with the National Medium-Term Development Plan, include provisions for

¹² Isnaini Nur Azizah, "Gerakan Literasi Keagamaan Sebagai Strategi Pembinaan Karakter Religius Pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar," *QUALITY JOURNAL OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH IN ISLAMIC EDUCATION* 11, no. 01 (2023): 51–66, <https://doi.org/10.21043/quality.v11i1.19916>.

¹³ Cucu Nurzakiyah, "Literasi Agama Sebagai Alternatif Pendidikan Moral," *JPA* 19, no. 2 (2018): 1–29.

strengthening character education for school-age children at all levels of education.¹⁴

*In all its discussions, the term “religious character” combines two terms: “character” and “religion.” Combining the two will result in a character education paradigm. Arabic often refers to the word education as Tarbiyah and Ta’lim, with various derivations. The Qur’an uses Rabb as the masdar of Tarbiyah and Allamah as the masdar of Ta’lim.*¹⁵ Experts usually use the phrase tarbiyah to mean education. Ahmad Fuad Ahwani, Ali Kholil Abu Ainain, Muhammad Athiyah Al-Abrasyi, Muhammad Munir Mursyi, and others interpreted education with at-tarbiyah. The word tarbiyah comes from the etymology of ‘change, yarub,’ which means ‘grow and develop. Character education can also be referred to as a deliberate effort to help a person understand, pay attention to, and practice good ethical values.¹⁶

Ahmad Musthofa explains that “character” originates from the Greek word “to mark.” The term focuses on behavior or action. The character has two meanings. First, it shows a person behaving.¹⁷ If it is cruel and dishonest, it means a form of bad behavior, but if it is helpful and honest, it means a form of good behavior. Second, ‘personality’ closely correlates with character.¹⁸ If a person’s behavior aligns with moral values, we can refer to them as a person of character.¹⁹ Character is a person’s disposition, character, morals, or personality formed from the internalization of various virtues believed in and used as a basis for how to view, think, act, and behave. Three key terms emerge when discussing the scope of religious character: morals, ethics, and manners. The term “Adab” originates from Arabic and translates to “manners” or “social

¹⁴ Peraturan Pemerintah, “Peraturan Pemerintah (PP) Nomor 19 Tahun 2017 Tentang Perubahan Atas Peraturan Pemerintah Nomor 74 Tahun 2008 Tentang Guru” (Jakarta Pusat, 2017), <https://peraturan.bpk.go.id/Details/51474/pp-no-19-tahun-2017>.

¹⁵ Yayat Suharyat, Abdul Ghofur, and Amiruddin Abdullah, “Pendidikan Rabbani Dalam Al-Qur’an,” *Al-Liqo: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (2022): 101–13, <https://doi.org/10.46963/alliqo.v7i2.589>.

¹⁶ El-Thoyyib Zain Abidin, *Al-Minhajiyah Al-Islamiyah Wal ‘Ulum Al-Sulukiyah W’ Al-Tarbiyah*, Virginia Usa: *Al-Ma’had Al-‘Alam Li Fikri Al-Islam*, 1992.

¹⁷ Rifqi Muntaqo et al., “Nilai-Nilai Karakter Religius Dalam Surat Yusuf Ayat 23-24 (Perspektif Tafsir Al Misbah),” *Belajea: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (2022): 121–134, <https://doi.org/10.29240/belajea.v7i2.4457>.

¹⁸ Ali Mustofa, “Pendidikan Tasawuf Solusi Pembentukan Kecerdasan Spiritual Dan Karakter,” *Novatif: Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan, Agama Dan Kebudayaan* 4, no. 1 (2018): 111–39, <https://doi.org/10.55148>.

¹⁹ Lihat selengkapnya di Muhammad Resky & Yayat Suharyat, “Relevansi Pemikiran Pendidikan Akhlak KH. Hasyim Asy’ari Dalam Pendidikan Islam,” in *Shibghoh: Prosiding Ilmu Kependidikan UNIDA Gontor* (UNIDA GONTOR, 2023).

order.” In a broader sense, adab is a kind and polite behavior performed by a person in daily life.²⁰

Characters in the Great Indonesian Dictionary refer to the psychological traits inherent in a person that distinguish them from others.²¹ According to Wahyudin, character is a comprehensive natural disposition that has been mastered in a stable manner, which describes that an individual has a psychic behavior system that makes them typical in the way they think and behave.²²

Definition of Teacher

*Three main foundations serve as role models for educators: QS Al-Isra [17]: 24. Second, the words of Allah SWT in the Qur'an, specifically QS Al-Baqarah [2]: 30, serve as a foundation. Third, referring to the hadith of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him), he said, "My Lord educated me, so He gave me the best education."*²³ The teacher indicated that in Islamic education, educators should constantly strive to position themselves as successor to the prophets. The Qur'an and Hadith describe the figure of educators, referring to three main concepts: tarbiyyah, ta'dib, and ta'lim. Etymologically, the term teacher in Islamic education is often called murabbiy, mu'allim, or muaddib. Teachers are usually also referred to by the title al-Ustadz or al-Syekh. According to linguists, murabbiy comes from rabba, yurabbi, which means guiding, caring for, nurturing, and educating.

As Murabbiy teaches the people, three main principles are needed, which are put forward by al-Bana so that the messages conveyed seep into students' souls. The three principles are al-Iman al-'amiq (steady faith), al-Takwin al-daqiq (careful coaching), and al-'Amal al-Mutawashil (consistent effort).²⁴ The word mu'allim is a form of isim fai'il from 'allama yu'allimu, which is usually translated as “teaching” or “teaching,” as found in the word of Allah. The term muaddib originates from the root word addaba, yuaddibu, commonly understood as “educating.”

²⁰ Nadri Taja et al., “Character Education in the Pandemic Era: A Religious Ethical Learning Model through Islamic Education,” *International Journal of Learning, Teaching and Educational Research* 20, no. 11 (2021): 132–53, <https://doi.org/10.26803/ijlter.20.11.8>

²¹ Indrawan, *Kamus Lengkap Bahasa Indonesia* (Jombang: Lintas Media, n.d.).

²² Wahyuddin, *Pendidikan Karakter Dalam Perspektif Islam* (Alauddin University Press: Samata, 2020). Hlm. 28-19.

²³ Mar'i bin Yūsuf Al-Karmī Al-Maqdisī, *Al-Fawa'id Al-Mawḍu'ah Fi Al-Aḥadīth Al-Mawḍu'ah* (Muḥammad Bin Luṭfi Al-Ṣabbāgh, Ed.) (Beirut: Dār Al-Warrāq., 1998). Hlm 91-92.

²⁴ Hasan al-Bana dalam Badr Abdurrazaq al-Mash, *Hisbah Hasan al-Banna: Kajian Argumentatif- Historis*, terj. Abu Zaid, (Solo: Era Intermedia, 2006), hlm. 80.

Muhaimin states that these three terms have distinct meanings but share some similarities in specific contexts.²⁵ Their significance is certainly adjusted to the context of the sentence (*syiaqul kalam*). According to Quraish Shihab in Syukraini Ahmad, *Shiaq* is classified based on its function, which is divided into two parts: *Syiaq Lughawi* and *Syiaq Ghoiru Lughawi*.²⁶ Meanwhile, Sri Minarti believes that in Islamic education, educators are characterized by their characteristics. He revealed that there are fundamental qualities that educators must possess; these qualities need to be possessed by educators, especially in the formation of children's personalities. According to him, these qualities include 1) sincerity, 2) fear, 3) science, 4) being forgiving, and 5) feeling responsibility.²⁷

In line with the author's findings in the Qur'an related to the characteristics of educators mentioned, an Islamic Religious Education teacher can be called *Wa'idh* (counselor) or *Nashiun Amin* (trustworthy advisor). See QS. al-A'raf: 68), *Mudzakkir* (warner). See QS. Adz-Dzariat: 55 and QS. al-A'la: 9), *Al-Muballigh* (messenger). See QS. Al-Maidah: 67, *Al-Hadi* (guidance giver). See QS. ar-Ra'du: 7), *Ad-Da'I* (preacher). See QS. Al-Ahzab: 46, *Al-Rashid* (guidance giver). See QS. Hud: 87).

Definition of Religious Literacy

According to Diane L. Moore, religious literacy is the ability to know and discover the intersection between religion and other lives, such as political, social, and cultural life, from many points of view. Diane L. Moore defines religious literacy as the ability to see and analyze the intersection between religion and social, political, and cultural life from various points of view. A religiously literate person will have a basic understanding of the history, central texts, beliefs, and practices of religious traditions born in a particular social, historical, and cultural context. Kenneth Primrose, chair of spiritual, moral, and philosophical studies at Robert Gordon's College in Scotland, emphasized the importance of increasing religious literacy so people learn to live together.²⁸

According to Prothero, as quoted by Maimunatul Habibah, religious literacy is the ability to understand daily life based on religious traditions, which

²⁵ Muhaimin, et. al, *Pemikiran Pendidikan Islam: Kajian Filosofis Dan Kerangka Dasar Oprasionalisasinya* (Bandung: Trigenda Karya, 1993), h. 127.

²⁶ Lihat Syukraini Ahmad, "Urgensi Syiaq Dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an," *Jurnal Ilmiah Syiar* 17, no. 1 (2017): 119–28, <https://doi.org/10.29300/syr.v17i1.911>.

²⁷ Sri Minarti, *Ilmu Pendidikan Islam (Fakta Teoritis Filosofis Dan Aplikatif Normatif)* (Jakarta: Amzah, 2018). H. 107.

²⁸ Diane L. Moore, *Overcoming Religious Illiteracy: A Cultural Studies Approach to the Study of Religion in Secondary Education* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230607002>. Hlm: 21-30.

include symbols, speech, character, doctrine, practice, and narrative.²⁹ Religious literacy must include mastery of basic information and knowledge and applying that knowledge to gain understanding and find meaning in one's life.

Agus Iswanto said that religious literacy is an activity that helps people understand various religious teachings in different cultural contexts and what a person does daily related to religion.³⁰ Farid Ahmadi also explained another opinion: Islamic religious literacy is everything related to reading and writing activities, as well as all efforts to gain knowledge about religious sciences from print, visual, digital, and auditory media.³¹

RESEARCH METHOD

This research applies a qualitative approach with a phenomenological qualitative approach. This research explores the planning and implementation of religious literacy activities and teacher exemplarity as the primary foundation in fostering character, then describes it through words or sentences. Qualitative research requires data analysis. According to Yayat Suharyat, data analysis of research data is a process carried out by researchers after obtaining comprehensive data from all data sources so that the data becomes meaningful, can be interpreted, and can provide information.³² Some of the methods and techniques in analyzing and collecting data applied in this study are:

1. Observation Method: Observation is collecting data by providing accurate supervision by researchers, then recording the events that occur and considering the relationship of various aspects to the incident.³³
2. Documentation Method: Documentation is a method of collecting data used in research in the form of images, writings, or works.³⁴ Data collection generates crucial records relevant to the study under investigation, ensuring comprehensive data acquisition—Religious Literacy Booth. The data

²⁹ Maimunatun Habibah and Siti Wahyuni, "Literasi Agama Islam Sebagai Strategi Pembinaan Karakter Religius Siswa Ra Km Al Hikmah Kediri," *JCE (Journal of Childhood Education)* 4, no. 1 (2020): 46–61, <https://doi.org/10.30736/jce.v3i2.114>.

³⁰ Iswanto Agus et al., *Tingkat Literasi Al-Quran Siswa SMP Di Jawa Timur Dan D.I Yogyakarta* (Semarang: Semarang: Balai Litbang Agama Semarang, 2017), https://books.google.co.id/books?id=tc4LEAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=id&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false.

³¹ Farid Ahmadi and Hamidulloh Ibda, *Media Literasi Sekolah: Teori Dan Praktik* (Semarang: CV. Pilar Nusantara, 2018), www.pilarnusa.net. Hlm. 89.

³² Yayat Suharyat, *Metode Penelitian Pendidikan* (Banyumas: Wawasan Ilmu, 2022). Hlm. 102.

³³ Imam Gunawan, *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif Teori Dan Praktik* (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2017). Hlm. 143.

³⁴ Gunawan. Hlm. 176.

collection process yields significant information about the research, ensuring complete data acquisition—Religious Literacy Booth.

3. An interview is a dialogue process between two parties with different functions aimed at solving a problem, where the activity includes oral and direct questions and answers. The first party functions as a questioner, and the second is a resource person.³⁵

Data analysis in this study is the stage of systematically searching, compiling, and reviewing information obtained through interviews so that it can be easily understood and communicated to others. The following data analysis techniques refer to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, among others:

1. Data reduction: reducing data means summarizing or selecting the main things looking for themes and patterns. At this stage, the data reduction carried out by researchers is to summarize all the data obtained in the field and focus more on important things to look for themes and patterns through sharpening and data classification activities.
2. Presentation of data: After the data has been reduced, the next step is data presentation. Data is presented in the form of a brief description by researchers by compiling data systematically and is continued with writing data obtained in the field in narrative form.
3. Conclusion and Verification: After reducing and presenting the data, the next step is to draw temporary findings based on the information obtained in the field. According to Miles, Huberman, and Saldana in Sugiyono, concluding is integral to the entire configuration process. He explained that the meanings that emerge from the data must be tested for their truthfulness, solidity, and compatibility, which is their validity.
4. Data Validity Checking. Various kinds of information that have been collected can be declared as valid data if they have gone through the checking process by applying data validity checking techniques. In this study, researchers used several methods.
 - a. Persistent Observation: The researcher conducted a direct review at the research location to obtain more in-depth information at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara.
 - b. Triangulation of sources and methods is a research activity that compares information from various sources with information from various other data collection techniques.

³⁵ Yayat Suharyat, *Model Pengembangan Karya Ilmiah Bidang Pendidikan Islam* (Klaten: Lakeisha, 2022).

- c. Peer Discussions: Researchers held discussions with parties who knew the research direction to strengthen the research results so that the data obtained could be tested.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Portrait of Teachers' Examples in the Formation of Students' Religious Character Based on Religious Literacy Programs

Teachers carry out exemplary teaching by giving helpful advice and good examples through habituation in the religious literacy program.³⁶ This program fosters positive habits that play a significant role in internalizing Islamic religious values, particularly in shaping students' behavior. Students can implement religious literacy programs in school activities to get used to participating in congregational prayer activities, reading the Qur'an, offering Infaq condolences to school residents affected by disasters, Friday prayers, and commemorating other religious holidays.

Teacher Exemplary Through Responsibility

Imam Al-Ghazali's paradigm suggests that human personality can fundamentally embrace all efforts aimed at development through habituation. Habituation is directed at empowering certain activities so that they become systemized activities.³⁷ The habituation in the religious literacy program at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara is achieved by intensifying religious activities. Activities include congregational prayers, reciting the Qur'an, adhering to proper prayer and ablution procedures, reading prayers and short verses before the lesson begins, and engaging in istighasah. The example of teachers in the world of education is the best method of shaping students' character because all their behaviors, actions, manners, ways of dressing, discipline, and speech will always be noticed by students. Allah SWT, in educating humans, uses examples as the best model so that they are easily absorbed and applied by humans.³⁸ The example of the teacher is implemented by the prophets and messengers, as the word of Allah in QS. Al Ahzab [33]: 21

³⁶ Baharuddin et al., "The Tasawwuf As the Character Education Solution in Indonesia," *Tsaqafah* 20, no. 1 (2024): 99–126, <https://doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v20i1.10120>.

³⁷ Zainun Wafiqatun Niam, "Membina Karakter Anak Melalui Program Full Day School Berbasis Nilai-Nilai Kepesantrenan (Studi Kasus Di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Nurul Ummah Kotagede Yogyakarta)," *BELAJEA: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 1 (2019): 19–34, <https://doi.org/10.29240/belajea.v4i1.696>.

³⁸ Yayat Suharyat et al., "Implementation of Islamic Educational Values In The Book of Tarikh Khulafa'," *Paradigma* 20, no. 2 (2023): 205–12, <https://doi.org/10.33558/paradigma.v20i2.6988>.

The importance of role modeling is such that Allah SWT. He uses an approach to educating his people through methods that should and deserve to be emulated. Exemplary is a compelling educational approach. Exemplary is not just giving uswah in doing something but also involves various things that can be emulated, including good habits such as the 7 S culture (smile, greeting, politeness, patience, gratitude). The example given by the teacher to the students who are accommodated with the religious literacy program at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara provides a direct example for us. The role model encompasses religion teachers and all other subject teachers.

The uniqueness of this public school lies in its religious literacy program, which allows teachers of different religions to live side by side with their students based on very high values of tolerance. When celebrating Islamic holidays, the school invites non-Muslim students and teachers to participate in activities or services in their place of worship. They coexist without blaming each other for their differences. When one of the school community is afflicted with a disaster such as death or others, all students and teachers are compelled together to visit their residence without looking at ethnicity, race, or religion.

Example of reward and supervision

The world of education is not only about teachers who get rewards and supervision. We can provide rewards and supervision within the classroom and beyond its confines. Even supervision can also be done outside the school, but its benefits cannot be maximized. Supervision must always be carried out so that students do not forget the importance of akhlakul karimah. SMAN 2 Tambun Utara implements rewards and supervision through religious literacy programs as a preventive measure against unwanted behavior. Given that humans are imperfect, it is possible to make mistakes and deviations, so it is better always to make corrections and make supervision efforts before mistakes go further.

Exemplary through Tsawab (Punishment)

Students who violate both classroom and non-classroom rules face punishment. The exemplary teacher in punishing students who violate is expected to make students regret and realize the actions that have been done so that they will not repeat them in the future. The emphasis is on morals so that students always do well and avoid evil actions in their daily lives. The exemplary act applied at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara is a reprimand and an action related to moral development.

The punishment is not physical; instead, it aims to educate the spirit. This aligns with the theory that punishment does not need to be physical;

instead, it can involve actions, words, and circumstances that discourage certain behaviors and instill genuine regret for those actions.³⁹

The right away can help the student understand his mistakes, learn from them, and become more responsible. This finding aligns with Hamka's theory that a teacher must care about his students; as a form of concern, a teacher gives a warning in the form of punishment.⁴⁰ In line with the theory put forward by Ash'ari, a teacher's example in shaping students' character must include warnings to avoid sinful acts and hostility.⁴¹

Implementation of the Religious Literacy Program in the Formation of Students' Religious Character

Educational institutions implement religious literacy programs through various activities that align with their objectives. SMAN 2 Tambun Utara, the formation of students' religious character by organizing religious literacy programs that must be followed by all students and PAI teachers as activity supervisors. The form of implementation of organized religious literacy activities varies.

Religious literacy activities at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara, as a form of implementation of students' religious character education, include morning dhikr activities, memorization of murojaah, reading prayers before and after activities, BTQ, reading daily prayers, and lazizMu. All such religious literacy activities are aimed at the goal of forming religious characters in students. The program manifests the Ministry of Education and Culture's hope that a culture of religious literacy in the basic education process can foster students' character to become lifelong learners and realize the school environment as a comfortable place to process knowledge well.⁴²

Also, the religious literacy activities run by SMAN 2 Tambun Utara are a way to teach religious values that follow basic literacy principles by using regular practice, respecting what students already know, and applying this knowledge in everyday life. This religious literacy program uses the Tamaqua method, which is

³⁹ Miftahul Amin and Muxammil, "Keteladanan Guru Dalam Menanamkan Nilai-Nilai Keagamaan Sebagai Upaya Pembinaan Akhlakul Karimah Siswa," *Edukais: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 4, no. 1 (2020): 44–51.

⁴⁰ Hamka, *Lembaga Hidup* (Jakarta: Republika Penerbit, 2015).

⁴¹ Asy'ari Hasyim, *Adabul Alim Wal Muta'allim* (Jombang: Pustaka Tebuireng, 2016).

⁴² Dirjen Pendidikan Dasar Menengah, *Buku Saku Gerakan Literasi Sekolah, Menumbuhkan Budaya Literasi Sekolah* (Jakarta: Direktorat Jendral Pendidikan Dasar dan Menengah Kementrian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2016). Hlm. 2.

practiced to understand and deepen the knowledge learned.⁴³ *Tafaqquh* means understanding, which emphasizes comprehension in religious sciences. The researcher then presents an analysis table of basic literacy principles based on Imam Ghazali's theory, using examples from teachers involved in the religious literacy program to demonstrate how SMAN 2 Tambun Utara implements religious character education.

Table 1. Analysis of the Basics of Literacy with Teachers' Examples

No.	Literacy Principles	Implementation of the Religious Literacy Program at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara
1.	Implementation of exemplary as a character-building strategy	<p>The habituation strategies in the religious literacy program have been implemented by SMAN 2 Tambun Utara by organizing routine, consistent, and sustainable activities. The religious literacy activities include</p> <p>Shaking hands and saying greetings.</p> <p>Reading the Qur'an and reciting prayers before and after activities.</p> <p>Praying in the congregation for dhuhr and Friday prayers</p> <p>Supervision of the Qur'an.</p> <p>Organizing Istighasah and Seven Minute Lecture (KULTUM).</p> <p>Social Care.</p> <p>Womanhood.</p>
2.	Accommodating students' knowledge by applying mutual respect	<p>SMAN 2 Tambun Utara implements the religious literacy program's principle through social care activities. This is an infaq and sadaqah activity that the entire school community carries out. We will use the funds raised from these activities to assist people or neighborhoods in need. This event shows that the principle of mutual respect for fellow human beings has been realized and instilled</p>

⁴³ Azizan Nurzatil Ismah et al., "Metode Pengajian Tafsir Al-Quran Institusi Pondok Di Malaysia. Methods Study Of Al-Quran Interpretation Pondok Institutions In Malaysia," *Jurnal Pengajian Islam* 14 (2021): 50–58.

in students through religious literacy programs.		
3.	Practice knowledge in life.	By organizing a clean Friday activity, SMAN 2 Tambun Utara has realized the principle of implementing knowledge in daily life. This activity demonstrates the students' caring attitude towards the environment, which reflects their religious character and is evident in their good behavior influenced by the spiritual knowledge they possess.

The discussion of implementing religious literacy activities in educational institutions leads to the conclusion that literacy activities are not limited to reading and writing. Throughout its development, literacy has incorporated religious elements such as doctrine, practice, speech, character, and spiritual traditions in everyday life.

Implications of the Religious Literacy Program in the Formation of Students' Religious Character

Religious attitudes are students' responses to religious activities at school and home.⁴⁴ In this study, the authors conducted interviews and observations to see the extent of exemplary teachers' impact in forming religious characters among students based on religious literacy programs. The results of observations and interviews with several informants indicate that exemplary teachers at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara can effectively shape the spiritual characters of students through religious literacy programs. As stated by Imam Turmudi

"Yes, graduates are expected to excel in academics, faith, piety, and morals because we are a Christian public school. Please, according to their religion, become obedient Christians because no religion teaches bad things, even though later the right one is Islam. Still, we always teach tolerance to do good to anyone."⁴⁵

Based on the above statement, the religious attitudes formed will be described in two dimensions: the aspect of worship, the aspect of morals, and the aspect of social piety.

Aspects of Worship

⁴⁴ Sutarto Sutarto, "Kontribusi Keluarga Dalam Menanamkan Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam Untuk Membentuk Karakter Islami Remaja," *Belajea: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 8, no. 1 (2023): 67–86, <https://doi.org/10.29240/belajea.v8i1.6602>.

⁴⁵ Interview with WAKASEK Bidang Kurikulum.

The development of religious attitudes or behaviors carried out at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara through exemplary school culture has a positive impact on the religious attitudes of students. Among the observable effects of the worship dimension is that students habitually read the Qur'an before learning without being prompted to do it, and they immediately perform ablutions when they hear the dhuhur adhan for prayer. The vice principal conveys this to the author through an interview. The author interviewed the curriculum's vice principal about the religious literacy program's effect on students who have been interpreted.

*"The impact is there. Namely, children increasingly understand religious values and characters, cover the aurat, and pray properly."*⁴⁶

The same thing was also conveyed by one of the teachers, who interpreted:

*"The students at this school are used to praying because the teachers always accompany every worship implementation, both dhuhur prayers and Friday prayers, reading the Qur'an, and other activities. Even Hajar, responsible for spiritual activities, schedules the muezzin for dhuhur and Friday prayers."*⁴⁷

Moral Aspect

The religious literacy program and exemplary teachers developed at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara impact religious attitudes in the environment at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara and at home.

From the results of observations and interviews, several sources of informants said that the behavior or attitude of students at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara is polite in speaking, saying greetings when meeting (S5), honest, disciplined, responsible, and has a sense of shame and piety to Allah SWT. This is as stated by Uus Husnan during an interview with the author, who interpreted:

*"Students in this school have good behavior, are polite in speaking and greeting when meeting both at school and outside school, have discipline, responsibility, and honesty, have a sense of shame in doing wrong, and care for the environment, and this is due to the guidance of teachers through advice, mentoring about morals, and exemplary behavior."*⁴⁸

The data above, supported by the results of observations in the field, shows that the example and school culture at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara impact the formation of students' religious attitudes. This can be observed from the

⁴⁶Interview With Mr Imam Turmudi.

⁴⁷Interview With Mr Uus Husnan as a teacher PAI.

⁴⁸ Wawancara kepada Mr Uus Husnan as a teacher PAI.

habit of congregational prayers, exemplary recitation of the Qur'an, 7S culture or manners, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and clean and healthy living.

Aspects of Social Righteousness

Public school religious activities are important because they encourage personal and social piety. A Muslim is required not only to be pious personally but also socially, namely, *hablum minallah dan hablum minan nas*. When religious activities are systematically practiced in schools through religious literacy programs in public schools, such as SMAN 2 Tambun Utara. Religious character values are well fostered. For example, the school must create an environment conducive to religion, namely the spiritual side, such as teachers and students standing in front of the school gate to welcome and greet students and educators who come at the time before entering the school around 6:40 to 7:00 am. Researchers interviewed one of the eleventh-grade students, who stated that:

*"Character with the method of stories and cultums and about the correct prayer procedures because the correct prayer will lead to the right attitude behavior, 'Inna solata tanha anil fahsyai will Munkar.' With this religious literacy program, many of my friends have changed their character and behavior because the procedures for praying are correct, and they know how to respect fellow religious people because the teachers exemplify them."*⁴⁹

Conducting recitation together in the field or class, making Yasin recitation in the field, Kultum and khataman al-Qur'an, and cooperation activities to clean the environment are practiced by SMAN 2 Tambun Utara. Therefore, the creation of pious individuals, both individually and socially, is not limited to Islamic educational institutions such as madrasahs or dayahs; it also applies to public schools that engage in religious activities. Religious literacy programs integrated into school programs such as JUMSESIH will affect social piety and students' awareness of environmental care.

Programs such as congregational prayer, KULTUM, and social care emphasize the ritual aspect and highlight the role of teachers as behavioral models. This research shows that religious programs at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara create space for minority groups (examples: non-Muslim teachers and students) to participate actively. The result is a fresh perspective that challenges the assumption that religiosity reinforcement is always potentially exclusive.

Cultural habituation is more effective than mastery of religious materials in shaping religious character.⁵⁰ Several previous studies have shown that

⁴⁹ Interview with Fakhri as a student class 11 IIS 3.

⁵⁰ Tsani & Sufirmansyah, "Evaluasi Pembelajaran Nilai-Nilai Keislaman Di Sekolah Dasar Plus Rahmat Kediri Perspektif Logic Model."

individuals highly value other religious values, such as empathy and altruism, over the norms of religious groups; they can still foster positive social relationships. The novelty of this study lies in its specific context, namely the implementation of a religious literacy program in a multireligious public school. This work differs from similar studies usually conducted in homogeneous environments.

The findings enrich the scholarship on character building by showing that a cultural approach can be practical. The role of non-IBI teachers in religious exemplification is a more original contribution. So far, Islamic education literature tends to position religious teachers as the leading actors in religious character-building. This research shifts the paradigm by showing that universal values such as honesty, discipline, and tolerance taught by cross-subject teachers also contribute to forming religious character. This study expands the scope of religious character by highlighting its impact on social piety, such as tolerance and environmental care. Analyzing basic literacy principles and applying Islamic education theory in school practice is also an added value that has not been widely discussed in previous literature.

The findings open the door for a more holistic approach, where the entire academic community, regardless of religious background or field of study, can be involved in character education. However, this finding still needs to be tested further by comparing schools that actively involve non-religious teachers with schools that do not to ensure its validity. This study identified the integration of religious literacy and teacher exemplarity as key success factors. Although these two concepts are not new, their combination in a structured model implemented at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara is an innovative contribution.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the role of teacher exemplars in the formation of religious character in students, based on the Religious Literacy Program at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara, it can be concluded that the exemplary role of teachers applied at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara is good. The conclusion can be seen from the activities of teachers who show commendable behavior through the example they set daily in the school environment. In addition to exemplary behavior, the teachers accompany students in every religious activity. Some exemplary attitudes of teachers applied at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara are devotion to God, noble character, fairness, honesty, objectivity, and discipline.

The process of fostering the religious character of students at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara with a religious literacy program accompanied by PAI teachers, namely: reading the Qur'an and prayers before and after activities; praying in

congregation for dhuhr and Friday prayers; supervision of the Qur'an; organizing Istighasah and Seven Minute Lectures (KULTUM); and social care. The results of the religious literacy activities at SMAN 2 Tambun Utara show that students understand Islamic teachings well, including rules, morals, the meaning of the Qur'an, and helping others. The religious literacy program in public schools develops students' character through participation in religious activities and Sunnah practices. This also has implications for the development of Islamic education: a student's character does not need to be developed solely through mastery of Islamic religious subject matter; rather, the most critical aspect is the habituation of cultural character.

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