

The Role of Teachers in Transforming Islamic Religious Education Values to Enhance Students' Moral Development at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the role of teachers in transforming the values of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) to enhance students' moral development. The research focuses on: (1) the moral condition of students, (2) the educational values transmitted by teachers, and (3) teacher strategies in shaping students' morality. This research employs a qualitative approach, utilizing observation, interviews, and documentation at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang. The findings show that students exhibit varying but generally positive levels of moral development. Teachers act as educators and role models, transmitting values of faith, honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and social care through value-based learning, exemplary behavior, and the habituation of noble character. These findings affirm that the transformation of values by teachers significantly contributes to students' character building and fosters a religious school culture. This study offers practical contributions to strengthening teachers' roles in moral education at the junior high school level. Data collection techniques were employed through direct observation of learning activities at SMP Islam Al-Madinah, Jombang.

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INTRODUCTION

SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang is situated in the Jombang district, near the Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in Tambakberas, Jombang. Although it is located near the boarding school, it is not under its management-this proximity is merely geographical. SMP Islam Al-Madinah is an Islamic school that emphasizes both religious and general education. It can be seen from the learning system that allows students to use gadgets, while maintaining an Islamic atmosphere, such as the habit of performing Duha prayer before class, greeting the teacher at the start of lessons, reciting tawassul and prayers together, shaking hands with teachers, and lining up neatly before going home.

Based on the researcher's observations, SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang has a vision of "Creating Students with Noble Character, Excellence, Skills, and Global Insight," with the following missions:

1. Conduct education and teaching, prioritizing religious and moral values.
2. Provide student-centered education that fosters students' potential to achieve accomplishments.
3. Foster student independence through habituation, entrepreneurship, and structured self-development.

4. Utilize practical learning approaches and leverage technology to optimize learning.
5. Foster harmonious cooperation among school members and relevant institutions.

The school's goals are to:

1. Produce graduates with an Islamic character aligned with *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* in the Nahdlatul Ulama tradition.
2. Produce high-achieving graduates in both academic and non-academic fields based on their talents.
3. Develop students with life skills.
4. Accelerate education and learning using technology.

To achieve these goals, SMP Islam Al-Madinah integrates Islamic values with general curriculum subjects, creating a conducive and meaningful learning atmosphere. It uses the 2013 National Curriculum (K-13) for Grades 8 and 9, and the Merdeka Curriculum for Grade 7. The religious curriculum is also integrated with the boarding school's teachings, particularly in strengthening students' understanding of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah*. As explained by the school principal:

"At SMP Islam Al-Madinah, we integrate Islamic values into every subject, so that students not only understand general knowledge but also have a strong grasp of religion." (W1/KS/SMPI/2025)."

In line with the statement of the school principal at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, the curriculum department also emphasizes the importance of flagship programs that combine character education with religious and general knowledge:

"Character education is applied in every subject, especially in Islamic Religious Education. We aim to shape students who are not only academically capable but also morally upright, with humility and discipline." (W2/WK/SMPI/25).

Theoretically, Islamic Religious Education (IRE) has a special role in shaping student behavior. In this context, teachers serve not only as instructors but also as guides, role models, and motivators in the process of transforming Islamic educational values. Paulo Freire, in his book *"Pedagogy of the Oppressed"*, highlights that education is a tool for social transformation (Freire, 1997). Although Freire focused on general education, these principles are often applied in Islamic education, where teachers serve as agents of change, helping students develop into fair and moral individuals. According to John Dewey (1916), education should be pragmatic and experience-based (learning by doing). He emphasized that the best learning occurs when students are directly involved in stimulating activities and problem-solving, rather than passively receiving information. Dewey outlines three roles for educators: (1) Teacher and Instructor, (2) Motivator and Inspirer, and (3) Agent of Social Change (Dewey, 2019).

As educators, inspirers, and change agents, teachers are not confined to classroom teaching but are expected to create positive change in the school, the students' families, and society at large. At SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, this role is manifested through: 1) Providing Role Models in Social Life: Teachers serve as real-life examples by demonstrating fairness, honesty, compassion, and involvement in community service. 2) Encouraging Students to Contribute to Society: Teachers educate students to be concerned about social issues such as cleanliness, solidarity, and mutual cooperation. 3) Using Education for Social Change: Teachers integrate lessons with current social issues, such as environmental care, respect for diversity, and interfaith harmony.

Epistemologically, Islamic Religious Education is grounded in Islamic teachings and culture, with the Qur'an and Sunnah as the primary sources. The Qur'an, as an epistemic foundation, suggests that Islamic educational values are not just accepted based on faith but can also be rationally understood and historically validated. Therefore, Islamic educational values should not be treated solely as spiritual rituals, but as a spirit of transformation, expressed through faith and piety, respect for human potential, freedom and autonomy, and social responsibility (Sarjono, 2005).

Moral development refers to a person's ability to distinguish right from wrong. It encompasses awareness of doing good, forming good habits, and cultivating a love for what is right.

Moral education, as part of school value education, helps students recognize, appreciate, and live out moral values both individually and within society.

Moral development also involves students' construction of social norms and laws. According to Piaget, moral development is a constructivist process in which interactions between actions and thoughts build moral concepts (Piaget, J., & Vygotsky, 1978).

At SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, teachers play a crucial role in enhancing moral development by integrating Islamic values into all aspects of learning and school life, such as 1) Faith (Aqidah): Students learn to build their relationship with Allah (*habluminallah*) as a strong moral foundation. 2) Noble Character (Akhlaq): Teachers instill character through example, direct teaching, and routine practices. 3) Islamic Law (Sharia): Students practice Islamic living through daily rituals and fiqh learning. 4) Tolerance and Harmony: The school emphasizes respect for diversity and harmonious living in a multicultural society.

Islamic education values at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang significantly contribute to students' moral development. Through Islamic habits, teacher role modeling, contextual learning, and religious extracurricular activities, students develop both academic understanding and a strong Islamic character. With proper strategies, challenges can be addressed, making IRE values a proper foundation for students' moral growth.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive-narrative method. A qualitative approach is chosen because it enables the researcher to understand social phenomena through direct interaction with research subjects, providing a deeper understanding of their behaviors and experiences (Moha, 2015). Meanwhile, a descriptive approach is used to systematically, factually, and accurately describe the facts and characteristics of the object under study, as stated by Charismana, D.S., Retnawati, H., & Dhewantoro (2022).

The strategy used is narrative research, which involves compiling stories based on the life experiences of individuals or groups through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Narrative research helps reconstruct the meaning of the subjects' experiences and their relevance to the educational context (Sugiyono, 2022).

Data collection techniques were employed through direct observation of learning activities at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers, the principal, and students, as well as documentation of habitual programs and school documents that support Islamic values.

The data analysis follows the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles, M. B., & Huberman, 2020). This process is carried out interactively and continuously until the data is considered saturated. Through this approach, the study aims to comprehensively and contextually illustrate the teacher's role in transforming Islamic Religious Education values in efforts to improve students' moral development (Creswell, 2010).

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

A. Moral Condition of Students at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang

The moral development of students at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang evolves dynamically within an environment that prioritizes Islamic values. The school applies Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development to cultivate moral awareness, rather than merely compliance with rules. Teachers serve as moral guides (*murobbi*) rather than just academic instructors, using dialogical and educational approaches. Despite the diverse backgrounds of the students, some of whom may have limited religious exposure, the school fosters character through activities such as congregational prayers, Qur'an reading classes (BTQ), and the Ramadan Boarding Program. A "Character Visit Book" serves as an evaluation instrument for student character and actively involves parents.

1. Students Performing Congregational Prayers

The school environment plays a crucial role in shaping students' moral development. At SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, the overall atmosphere is carefully designed to cultivate character and morals in line with Islamic teachings. One strategy involves utilizing the school's physical space as a medium for moral education. Every corner of the school is decorated with Qur'anic verses, hadiths, and motivational posters that emphasize noble values such as honesty, responsibility, politeness, and discipline. These visual decorations not only beautify the school but also function as constant reminders of these values in students' daily lives (Syafira, V., & Saepudin, 2022).

Every corner of the school is adorned with sacred Qur'anic verses, the Prophet's hadiths, and Islamic motivational posters that deliver moral messages, such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and the importance of worship, especially prayer. These visual decorations not only enhance the school environment's beauty but also serve as reminders of noble values, consistently appearing in students' daily routines. Messages like:

"Prayer is the pillar of religion, or Establish prayer before you are prayed upon."

Become powerful symbols embedded in the students' consciousness. According to Lickona's "Moral Atmosphere" theory (1992), successful character building is not only dependent on curriculum content but also on the moral climate created in schools. Thus, students are expected to internalize these values (Thomas Lickona, 1991) more easily.

Furthermore, from Bandura's (1977) perspective, who developed Social Learning Theory, human behavior is primarily influenced by imitation or modeling (Bandura, 1977). When students are accustomed to an environment filled with moral messages, they are likely to imitate and adjust their behavior according to the values conveyed through these symbols. A poster stating "Honesty is Great" or a Qur'anic quote such as:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُتَّقِينَ

"Indeed, Allah loves those who fear Him". (QS. At-Taubah: 4) (Dadin Ardiansah, Ali Chafizh, 2018).

Serves as a psychological stimulus that reinforces good behavior without requiring verbal instruction from the teacher.

Field observations indicate that the presence of these symbols fosters an aesthetic and spiritual experience that continually shapes students' personalities. When a student walks through the school hallway and reads a hadith or Qur'anic verse about the importance of prayer and honesty, a process of gradual yet consistent internalization of values takes place. It indicates that character education does not only occur in classrooms but also lives outside of them, through symbolic presence with emotional strength.

Moreover, this strategy aligns with Qur'anic values, as seen in:

...وَاذْكُرْ رَبَّكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ تَضَرُّعًا وَخِيفَةً

"This verse shows that internalizing values through visual reminders is also part of dhikr (remembrance of Allah) and spiritual development.

Additionally, in:

...وَالْعَصْرِ ○ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ○ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ

"By time. Indeed, humanity is in loss, except those who believe and do righteous deeds..."

(QS. Al-'Asr: 1-3). (Agama, 2019)

This verse reinforces SMP Islam Al-Madinah's approach, which emphasizes not only cognitive development but also moral and spiritual awareness comprehensively.

Not only do these visuals serve as passive media, but they also become part of non-verbal pedagogical communication. They do not govern students with direct orders, but rather form the habit of thinking, feeling, and acting in accordance with Islamic principles. In a calm, orderly, and exemplary school atmosphere, students perform congregational prayers not out of fear of punishment, but due to the growth of awareness and responsibility as Muslims.

School documentation also reveals a significant increase in student participation in congregational prayers, accompanied by improvements in discipline and increased

involvement in religious activities. It demonstrates that creating a school environment rich in values not only affects behavior but also fosters deep and sustainable spiritual awareness.

2. Students' Cooperative Attitude in the Counseling Process

Religious activities such as Duha, Dhuhr, and Asr congregational prayers have become part of the daily routine at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang. These routines are not only aimed at cultivating prayer discipline but also serve as a medium for nurturing students' spiritual character. Through these activities, the school instills values such as responsibility, obedience, and self-control—three essential elements that strongly influence students' cooperative attitudes, including during counseling sessions.

Performing congregational prayers reflects one of Islam's core principles: the importance of orderliness and commitment. As stated in QS. Al-Baqarah: 238:

حَافِظُوا عَلَى الصَّلَوَاتِ وَالصَّلَاةِ الْوُسْطَىٰ وَقُومُوا لِلَّهِ قَانِتِينَ

"Guard strictly the (five obligatory) prayers, especially the middle prayer, and stand before Allah with devotion". (QS. Al-Baqarah: 238). (Yunus, 1984)

Despite this, the implementation does not yet reflect equal participation among all students. Some still arrive late or even fail to attend consistently. This phenomenon indicates that the internalization of values through worship is not yet fully embedded. As a result, these spiritual values are not always reflected in other dimensions of students' lives, including their interactions with guidance counselors (BK teachers) during counseling sessions.

In the context of counseling, a cooperative attitude reflects how open, attentive, and responsive students are to guidance and support. According to Lickona (1992), moral character shaped through religious education should be evident in social behaviors, such as respect for authority, empathy, and willingness to collaborate in guidance processes. When religious values are not deeply rooted, students may become closed off, reluctant to receive feedback, or view counseling as merely a formality (Lickona, 1992).

In Islam, the spirit of cooperation (ta'awun) and openness is strongly emphasized. As Allah says in:

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ

"And cooperate in righteousness and piety, but do not cooperate in sin and aggression. (QS. Al-Mā'idah: 2). (Kemenag, 2019)

From a behaviorist perspective, cooperative attitudes do not emerge automatically; they are shaped through habituation and reinforcement. If students are accustomed to participating actively in meaningful school activities—including worship—they will feel appreciated and motivated to apply the same attitude in other activities, such as counseling. Positive reinforcement and a supportive environment are key factors influencing students' readiness to be open during guidance sessions. It aligns with the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW:

...إِنَّمَا الْعِلْمُ بِالتَّعَلُّمِ، وَإِنَّمَا الْجَلْمُ بِالتَّحَلُّمِ

"Knowledge is gained through learning, and forbearance is attained by practicing patience..." (HR. al-Khatib al-Baghdadi).

According to Annisa (2024), one obstacle in fostering students' cooperative attitudes is the lack of continuous communication between the school, teachers, and parents. Without consistent monitoring and support at home, the habits formed at school are not always internalized. In counseling sessions, this is reflected in students' emotional disengagement from the process, which is often due to the loss of meaning in the guidance itself.

As a concrete step, strengthening students' cooperative attitudes in counseling should be supported by an integrative approach. Religious values formed through worship activities can be internalized more deeply when linked directly to daily attitudes, such as openness to discussion, empathy toward advice, and a desire for self-improvement. BK teachers can use religious practices as reflective material in counseling sessions, helping

students understand that openness and cooperation are part of both moral and spiritual responsibility.

In short, students' cooperative attitudes in counseling are not isolated traits, but are rooted in a value system consistently cultivated in the school environment. When these values are understood as part of one's identity—not merely formal obligations—students are more likely to engage sincerely in the guidance process.

3. Disciplinary Awareness Through Behavioral Change

Students' awareness of discipline is not formed instantly; instead, it develops through a gradual and consistent behavioral transformation process. In an Islamic educational environment like SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, teachers play a strategic role as primary guides and mentors in this process. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering academic material but also serve as moral role models and behavior coaches, who drive meaningful and conscious discipline among students.

In Islam, the importance of educators is emphasized in the words of Prophet Muhammad (SAW):

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ مُعَلِّمًا

"Indeed, I was sent as a teacher. (HR. Ibnu Majah).

Each disciplinary violation, for example, skipping congregational prayers or displaying disrespectful behavior, is addressed by teachers using educational and gentle approaches. The admonishments given are not intended as punishment but as direction and guidance, aiming to help students understand and correct their actions, not out of fear of punishment, but through an appreciation of the values behind the rules. It is the foundation of disciplinary awareness: when behavioral change is driven not by coercion but by inner understanding and spiritual conscience. It is in line with the words of Allah SWT in QS. An-Nahl verse 125:

ادْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ

"Invite to the way of your Lord with wisdom and good instruction, and argue with them in a way that is best." (QS. An-Nahl: 125).

According to Fadhlurrohman (2024), Islamic Religious Education teachers in schools have the power to transform moral and religious values into concrete actions through grounded and contextual methods. Teachers not only explain rules, but also guide students in understanding the reasons and meaning behind each value. This understanding becomes the basis for sustainable behavior change, because students begin to view moral values as part of their identity—not as external burdens.

This concept also aligns with Bandura's (1971) Social Learning Theory, which posits that students learn primarily through observation and imitation of authoritative figures, such as teachers. When teachers consistently demonstrate discipline, responsibility, and integrity in their daily behavior, students are encouraged to emulate these traits. This process fosters internalization of values, where discipline becomes habitual behavior rather than a response to supervision.

The success of this behavioral transformation depends heavily on consistent and personal interaction between teachers and students. Teachers who actively mentor students facing behavioral issues demonstrate a commitment that goes beyond formal obligations. This commitment builds student trust, encouraging them to be open to guidance and transformation.

The success of instilling disciplinary awareness is determined not just by written rules, but by teachers' ability to connect religious values with students' real-life experiences. When students come to realize that discipline is not merely a school requirement, but a form of responsibility to themselves, others, and Allah, the resulting behavioral change will be more authentic and enduring.

4. Student Engagement in Religious and Social Activities

Students' active participation in religious and social activities is one of the key indicators of successful character education in Islamic schools. At SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, the school's diverse social context presents both challenges and opportunities for nurturing active student involvement. Located in the pesantren (Islamic boarding school) area of Tambakberas, which is rich in Islamic traditions, the school serves students from various regions, including Dapur Kejambon, Losari, and Megaluh—areas with distinct cultural characteristics and levels of religious observance.

This diversity in background greatly influences students' understanding, appreciation, and engagement in religious activities such as congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, and celebrations of Islamic holidays, as well as in social initiatives like community service, social work, and acts of solidarity. Students from santri (Islamic boarding school) environments are usually more accustomed to religious discipline, while others need time to adapt to the school's Islamic culture.

In this context, the school serves not only as a learning institution but also as a space for social and spiritual transformation, where students are encouraged to participate actively in religious and social activities as part of developing a contextual Islamic identity. It is in line with Allah's words in QS. Al-Hujurat ayat 13:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا

"O mankind! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female and made you into nations and tribes so that you may know one another"... (QS. Al-Hujurat: 13).

This verse affirms the importance of building healthy and productive integration amid diversity—something the school promotes through inclusive and educational group activities.

According to Amaliyah Rosyidah (2025), it is essential to apply inclusive and universally valued approaches—such as honesty, cooperation, and responsibility—to encourage student participation regardless of their backgrounds. This strategy creates an environment that allows all students to feel a sense of belonging and engage positively in school life (Rosyidah, 2025).

From a sociological perspective, Émile Durkheim (1956) posited that morality and social engagement do not arise naturally, but are formed through socialization processes within institutions such as schools (Durkheim, 1912). In a heterogeneous student environment, Islamic and social value-based group activities become practical tools for fostering a sense of togetherness, social responsibility, and solidarity. Therefore, religious and social activities in schools must be inclusive, dialogical, and capable of facilitating integration among students. It is reflected in the Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) hadith:

الْمُؤْمِنُ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ كَالْبَيْتَانِ، يَشُدُّ بَعْضُهُ بَعْضًا

"The believer to another believer is like a building whose parts support each other"... (HR. Bukhari dan Muslim).

With this spirit, school programs such as congregational prayers, mutual assistance, and social service must be designed to be inclusive, dialogical, and promote interaction among students from various backgrounds. Participation gaps should not be seen merely as disciplinary issues, but as a reflection of the need for more personalized and culturally sensitive approaches.

The process of building student engagement cannot be rushed. It requires patience, continuous intervention, and collaboration among teachers, students, and parents. Activities such as moral counseling, peer discussion forums, and parental involvement in character evaluation can serve as supporting strategies to increase student participation while bridging social differences.

5. Moral Discipline Through Stimulus and Response to Consequences

The formation of students' moral discipline is not solely dependent on verbal instruction, but is greatly influenced by stimulus-response mechanisms practiced on a daily

basis. At SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, one of the innovative strategies used to foster morally disciplined behavior is the implementation of the “Character Visit Book” (*Buku Kunjungan Budi Pekerti*). It functions as a control system that not only records student behavior but also provides positive reinforcement (stimuli) and corrective consequences (responses) for behaviors at school and at home.

This recordkeeping is done collaboratively by teachers and parents. When students demonstrate commendable behavior—such as honesty, prayer discipline, and responsibility—positive notes are given as reinforcing stimuli that encourage the repetition of such behavior. Conversely, misbehavior is documented with corrective notes that may lead to coaching, individual counseling, or other educational interventions. In this way, students learn that every action has real consequences.

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فَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْرًا يَرَهُ (٧) وَمَنْ يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ شَرًّا يَرَهُ

So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it.” (QS. Az-Zalzalah: 7–8).

It affirms that every action, no matter how small, is accounted for—an idea that mirrors the principles in the Character Visit Book, which evaluates each student's actions thoroughly and fairly.

This system also represents a holistic and participatory approach to character evaluation. According to Tina Sugiharti (2023), parental involvement in monitoring student behavior expands supervision beyond the school, extending it to the home (Sugiharti, 2023). Thus, stimulus and response to student behavior occur in both primary environments: school and home. The effectiveness of this system is reinforced by consistency across these domains. Prophet Muhammad SAW emphasized the importance of continuous character education.

مَا نَحَلَ وَالِدٌ وَلَدَهُ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ أَدَبٍ حَسَنٍ

No parent has ever given a better gift to their child than good manners.” (HR. Tirmidzi).

Practically, the book includes checklists of daily behaviors such as honesty, responsibility, social care, and prayer discipline. These are not merely marked as “good” or “needs improvement,” but are accompanied by narrative notes that provide context to the observation.

This system also reflects a formative assessment philosophy, where evaluation is an ongoing process aimed at improvement, not punishment. According to Lickona (1992), effective moral education must involve continuous assessment of cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects. In this context, stimulus and punishment are not merely control tools, but integral to an intentional moral education strategy. As a result, this approach increases students' awareness of behavioral responsibility and social morality. They become more reflective, recognizing that their actions have consequences and are motivated to behave ethically, not merely out of obligation, but from inner moral awareness. In other words, moral discipline grows not from supervision alone, but from the awareness nurtured through consistent and fair stimulus-response processes.

B. Educational Values Transformed by Teachers at Al-Madinah Islamic Junior High School in Jombang

Teachers at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang not only teach academic subjects but also serve as agents of moral and spiritual transformation. Through programmes such as the Character Education Visit Book, BTQ, Ramadan Camp, and the Maghrib Study Movement, teachers instil values of honesty, responsibility, and independence in a sustained manner. The

nurturing process is conducted using a humanistic and dialogic approach, tailored to the students' moral development stages, as outlined in Lawrence Kohlberg's theory. As a result, approximately 80% of students demonstrate positive behavioural changes, such as increased discipline and social awareness. This success is achieved through collaboration among teachers, students, and parents, creating a holistic and meaningful learning environment.

1. The Values of Honesty and Responsibility

The values of honesty and responsibility are two main pillars in Islamic character education that must be instilled continuously. At Al-Madinah Islamic Junior High School in Jombang, these two values are deliberately promoted through a spirit of systematic internalisation, such as utilising the physical environment of the school as a means of moral education. The school walls are adorned with quotations from the Quran, the Prophet's hadith, and moral posters that specifically emphasise the importance of being honest, keeping promises, and taking responsibility in every aspect of daily life.

The visualisation of these moral messages is not only aesthetic, but also serves as part of the hidden curriculum that shapes students' moral awareness without verbal coercion. For example, quotes such as:

"Honesty is the path to heaven" or "Every trust will be held accountable".

These become symbolic stimuli that are present in students' daily lives, building an understanding that honesty and responsibility are not just teachings, but real-life habits.

Honesty is highly revered in Islam. In QS. At-Taubah verse 119, Allah SWT says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

O you who believe! Fear Allah and be with those who are truthful. (QS. At-Taubah: 119).

This verse reveals that honesty is the defining characteristic of believers, and it should be an inherent part of their lives. Similarly, Islam emphasizes the importance of trustworthiness in every role in life. The Prophet Muhammad SAW said:

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ

"Each of you is a leader, and every leader will be held accountable for those under their leadership." (HR. Bukhari dan Muslim).

According to the theory of environmental morality proposed by Lickona (1992), strong moral values are often formed not only through direct teaching but also through students' interactions with an environment that consistently conveys moral messages. In this context, the religious and symbolic atmosphere at Al-Madinah Islamic Junior High School in Jombang provides an effective environment that reinforces honesty and responsibility through repeated and reflective experiences.

Support for this approach also comes from Rahmatilla (2025), who states that religious symbols in the school environment can strengthen social characteristics such as caring and responsibility. When students see, read, and live in an environment that emphasises the importance of honesty in both their academic and social behaviour every day, they are encouraged to apply it consciously. These symbols serve as a reminder that responsibility is not only towards teachers or parents, but also towards Allah (Rahmatilla, T., Nuraeni, F., Mahpudin, F., Aziz, A. A., & Nasrulloh, 2025).

It is also emphasized by Fikriyah (2025), who states that strengthening religious character traits, such as honesty and responsibility, is not sufficient if it relies solely on the content of the Islamic Education curriculum. What is more influential is a learning environment built with symbols, values, and an atmosphere consistent with Islamic teachings. When students feel surrounded by messages that teach integrity and commitment to duty, the internalisation of these two core values will grow naturally and sustainably.

2. Social Empathy and Generosity

Religious activities at school serve not only as spiritual guidance but also play a crucial role in instilling the values of social empathy and generosity. At SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, the regular and scheduled performance of congregational prayers such as Dhuha,

Zuhur, and Asar not only teaches discipline but also fosters a sense of social responsibility among students. Prayer rooms serve as a meeting point between religious rituals and social solidarity, where students learn to share space, time, and attention.

Although student participation in these activities is not yet entirely equitable, the sense of togetherness created through collective worship becomes an affective experience that strengthens social sensitivity. When students see their peers arriving late or absent, there is an urge to remind one another—this is empathy that grows from within, not because of rules, but because of genuine concern.

According to Bandura (1997), in observational learning, the formation of social behaviours such as empathy and generosity occurs through the process of observation and habit formation. When students witness their peers and teachers sharing roles, such as tidying up prayer mats together, inviting friends to pray, or even simply taking the time to pray for others, the values of caring and social kindness are naturally instilled in their daily actions.

In the context of Islam, the values of empathy and generosity are integral to the core teachings of ethics, as commanded in the Qur'an and hadith. Allah SWT states in QS. Al-Ma'un verses 1-3:

أَرَأَيْتَ الَّذِي يُكَذِّبُ بِالدِّينِ (١) فَذَلِكَ الَّذِي يَدْعُ الْيَتِيمَ (٢) وَلَا يُخْصُ عَلَى طَعَامِ الْمُسْكِينِ (٣)

Do you know those who deny religion? They are the ones who rebuke orphans and do not encourage feeding the poor. (QS. Al-Ma'un: 1–3).

This verse emphasises that neglecting social empathy and generosity is a form of betrayal of religion itself. Therefore, the habit of worship rooted in compassion is a form of integration between spirituality and sociality.

Regularly practised communal religious activities also create a close-knit spiritual community, where the presence of each individual is an important part of the overall social harmony. In this space, students not only learn about the rules of prayer, but also about the meaning of togetherness, waiting for one another, giving each other opportunities, and most importantly, adapting to others—the basic principles of empathy and generosity.

In line with this, Nafilah & Gofur (2025) state that student involvement in religious activities can strengthen the social dimension of worship, thereby encouraging students to be more concerned about their environment. It not only reduces the curve of student disciplinary violations but also successfully increases the spirit of collaboration and concern among peers (Mu'tafiyah Bika Nafilah, Abdul Ghofur, 2025).

Additionally, Hadi (2024) notes that collective religious activities have a dual effect: not only do they foster spiritual discipline, but they also cultivate social responsibility and a spirit of sharing. For example, congregational prayers accompanied by Friday charity, fundraising for disaster victims, or sharing iftar during Ramadan, serve as tangible platforms in shaping students' empathetic and generous character (Hadi, 2024). The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said:

لَا يُؤْمِنُ أَحَدُكُمْ حَتَّى يُحِبَّ لِأَخِيهِ مَا يُحِبُّ لِنَفْسِهِ

"None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself." (HR. Bukhari dan Muslim).

Religious activities at school, such as congregational prayers, not only create spiritual order but also build an empathetic and generous social character. This inclusive and participatory religious culture enables students not only to be close to God but also to care about and actively engage in the social good around them.

3. The Value of Discipline and Motivation to Learn

Discipline and enthusiasm for learning are the primary foundations for developing a strong academic character. At Al-Madinah Islamic Junior High School in Jombang, the role of teachers is not limited to delivering lesson material, but also as key actors in fostering motivation and shaping students' disciplinary attitudes. Through exemplary actions, words,

and daily interactions, teachers become a source of inspiration that encourages students to behave in an orderly manner and remain enthusiastic about learning.

According to Bandura (1997), in his Social Learning Theory, students tend to imitate the behaviour of figures they perceive as authoritative and emotionally close. In an educational context, teachers occupy this position. When teachers demonstrate punctuality, responsibility in teaching, and enthusiasm in guiding students, they indirectly instill these values into the students' consciousness. Students will be more easily inspired to study diligently and behave in a disciplined manner if they see consistent real-life examples every day.

Teachers' exemplary behaviour, for example, arriving on time, preparing materials well, treating students with respect, and providing constructive feedback, is part of the character education process that touches on students' affective aspects. Teachers not only demonstrate moral values but also motivate students to strive towards their learning goals by showing that academic success is the result of discipline and hard work. This principle is emphasised in the Qur'an:

وَقُلْ اَعْمَلُوا فَسَيَرَى اللَّهُ عَمَلَكُمْ وَرَسُولُهُ وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَسَتُرَدُّونَ إِلَىٰ عِلْمِ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ فَيُنَبِّئُكُم بِمَا كُنتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ

"And say: Work, and Allah and His Messenger and the believers will see your work"... (QS. At-Taubah: 105).

This verse teaches the importance of hard work and responsibility, two values that form the foundation of enthusiasm for learning and discipline. When teachers show sincerity in their work, students learn that effort is part of worship and will be rewarded by Allah. In line with this, the Prophet Muhammad SAW also said:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ إِذَا عَمِلَ أَحَدُكُمْ عَمَلًا أَنْ يُتْقِنَهُ

"Indeed, Allah loves when someone among you does a job, he does it with itqan (excellence/perfection)". (HR. Al-Baihaqi).

Besides that, teachers' attitudes in dealing with students' mistakes also play a significant role in fostering learning enthusiasm. When students feel that their teachers are patient, not quick to judge, and able to appreciate every small step of progress, they become more courageous to try new things, learn from mistakes, and improve themselves. This pattern fosters a supportive and motivating learning environment, which is crucial for enhancing student engagement in the educational process.

A similar point was also made by Ulifah Hilmiyati (2024), who noted that a strong culture of exemplary behavior among teachers significantly contributes to the formation of students' stable and religious character. Exemplary behavior not only strengthens moral values, such as honesty and politeness, but also cultivates academic values, including learning enthusiasm, perseverance, and time management (Hilmiyati, 2024).

Clearly, strengthening students' disciplinary values and learning enthusiasm cannot be achieved solely through formal instructions or written regulations. However, it must be demonstrated through teachers' real exemplary behavior in carrying out their professional roles. A school environment formed from teachers' disciplinary actions and enthusiasm will create a dynamic learning culture, where students are motivated to achieve because they are inspired by the figures they see every day.

4. Values of Perseverance and Patience in Student Development

Perseverance and patience are two central values in the character development process of students, which is a long-term and challenging endeavor. At SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, student character formation is not only the school's responsibility, but is carried out through strategic partnerships between teachers and parents. One concrete manifestation of this collaboration is the Character Visit Book program, an innovation that emphasizes the importance of monitoring students' character simultaneously, continuously, and comprehensively.

This program not only functions as a behavior recording tool but also serves as a means of reflection and dialogue among teachers, students, and parents. Teachers diligently take time to visit students' homes, discuss with parents, and understand the background of children's behavior in the family context. This process requires a great deal of patience, because changes in students' attitudes and character cannot happen instantly. Teachers must understand that each child develops at a different pace and in a unique way, and guidance must be tailored to these individual needs.

Through this interaction, students are invited to engage in reflective dialogue about their attitudes, behavior, and habits, with patient guidance from two moral authorities: teachers and parents. It is a form of guidance that is not punitive in nature, but prioritizes understanding, empathy, and emotional involvement. This value of patience is emphasized in the Qur'an:

وَأَصْبِرْ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُضِيعُ أَجْرَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

"And be patient, indeed Allah does not waste the reward of those who do good deeds." (QS. Hud: 115).

This verse teaches that patience in performing good deeds, including educating children, will be rewarded by Allah. The character development process is part of 'ihsan' in education - striving for the best with a sincere heart. In line with this, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

مَا أُعْطِيَ أَحَدٌ عَطَاءً خَيْرًا وَأَوْسَعَ مِنَ الصَّبْرِ

"There is no gift better and more extensive given to someone than patience." (HR. Bukhari dan Muslim).

In this context, perseverance is not only a value instilled in students, but also becomes the main character of the mentors themselves.'

This model aligns with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems theory, which emphasizes the importance of collaboration between microsystems, such as family and school, in shaping children's character formation. When these two systems work together consistently, the moral messages instilled become stronger, and guidance can be carried out with continuous patience. Students also find it easier to understand and accept values because they feel cared for in two important environments in their lives.

According to Elyana (2025), parental involvement in the character development process can significantly improve children's discipline, provided it is conducted with open communication and complete patience. It is reinforced by Solihin et. al (2021) that practical guidance must be supported by strong emotional relationships - something that can only grow if teachers and parents are equally persistent and do not easily give up in facing the dynamics of students' behavioral development (M. F. Sholihin, Saputri Tini Hakim, M., & Zaenul Fitri, 2021).

Furthermore, Rahmatilla (2025) states that this collaboration-based character education has long-term effects, as students become accustomed to facing value assessments not through punishment, but through a patient and meaningful guidance process. When students commit violations, guidance is provided through in-depth discussions and consistent mentoring, allowing attitude changes to develop naturally (Rahmatilla, T., Nuraeni, F., Mahpudin, F., Aziz, A. A., & Nasrulloh, 2025).

At SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, the values of perseverance and patience are not only instilled in students as part of Islamic character. However, they are also reflected in how teachers and parents accompany them. This collaboration sets a role model for school education, one that is based on sincerity, continuity, and compassion, thereby forming a strong foundation for a generation with noble character.

C. The Role of Teachers in Enhancing Students' Moral Development at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang

The central role of teachers, especially Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, in enhancing students' moral development at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang. Teachers not only teach religious material, but also serve as moral guides through exemplary behavior, daily interactions, and contextual as well as reflective approaches. Religious activities, such as congregational prayer, BTQ, and the Maghrib Reading Movement, serve as means of internalizing values.

Teachers utilize Lawrence Kohlberg's moral development theory to encourage students from the preconventional stage toward higher levels of moral awareness. The main obstacles stem from a lack of parental involvement and the negative influences of digital media, but these are overcome through home visits and active communication. Restorative strategies and humanistic approaches remain priorities in handling students' moral violations.

1. Teachers as Value Facilitators and Moral Guides

The role of teachers as value facilitators at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang is reflected in their methods and approaches that do not merely deliver and teach subject matter, but also build an educational environment that supports students' moral development. In daily school life, teachers serve as role models, guides, and moral authorities for students.

Every interaction between teachers and students becomes a character learning opportunity. Teachers actively reprimand students who violate norms with persuasive and dialogical approaches. There is no pressure or physical punishment, but rather guidance through educational communication that fosters students' internal awareness of the importance of values such as honesty, responsibility, courtesy, and empathy (Muadzin, 2021).

This role aligns with Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which emphasizes that moral formation and behavior are shaped mainly through observation and modeling. When students witness teachers demonstrating integrity, discipline, and social concern in real actions, they are encouraged to internalize these values as part of their personality. The role of teachers in this context actualizes Allah's word:

يَرْفَعُ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجَاتٍ

Allah will raise those who believe among you and those who are given knowledge by several degrees. (QS. Al-Mujadila: 11).

According to Putri & Kurniawan (2024), teachers who can become role models and value facilitators are proven to be more effective in shaping students' character. They not only teach what is right, but demonstrate how to behave correctly in practice (Putri, W., & Arif Kurniawan, 2024). Kohlberg (1981) also states that the role of teachers in guiding students' moral development greatly depends on their courage to be present as representatives of values, not merely as communicators of information (Kohlberg, 1981).

At SMP Islam Al-Madinah, teachers are also given space to form emotional closeness with students. They not only control behavior but also nurture and guide students in the process of discovering their moral identity. Teachers' involvement in religious activities, home visits, and non-academic guidance programs is part of the strategy to create a comprehensive value education system.

It demonstrates that teachers who assume the role of value facilitators and moral guides are agents of cultural transformation in schools. They bridge Islamic values into students' life practices contextually, not being preachy, but facilitating moral growth naturally and consciously.

2. Teachers Monitor Students' Morality Through the Character Visit Book

At SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, students' moral development is not only carried out through classroom learning activities or religious activities alone, but also through a structured and continuous monitoring system. One of the primary instruments in this process is the Character Visit Book, which is designed as a tool for teachers to monitor and evaluate students' moral development comprehensively.

Teachers not only act as facilitators of religious activities, such as tahlilan, sholawatan, and congregational prayer, but also as moral companions who actively record, reflect on, and foster students' character values. Through this visit book, teachers can record various aspects of student behavior in the context of school and home life, including attitudes of responsibility, honesty, cooperation, and social concern. This approach is in line with the Qur'anic verse:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ

"Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example". (QS. Al-Ahzab: 21).

This verse shows that exemplary behavior is the most effective method in moral education. Teachers who demonstrate attitudes of integrity, discipline, and compassion become role models for the values that students emulate in their daily lives. It is also reinforced by the saying of the Prophet (peace be upon him):

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

"Indeed, I was sent for nothing other than to perfect noble character". (HR. Ahmad).

Every record entered into this book is not merely administrative in nature. However, it contains a qualitative evaluation of student behavior, based on both direct observation in activities and dialogue with parents. Teachers then integrate these findings into subsequent guidance strategies, such as counseling sessions, personal guidance, or affective approaches in the classroom.

The existence and use of the Character Visit Book is an innovation and reflection of a formative and collaborative approach in moral education. Teachers become a communication bridge between school and family, ensuring that the values instilled in religious extracurricular activities are also monitored in students' daily lives at home. It aligns with the principles of Islamic character education, which emphasizes consistency in values between school and family environments.

In the context of value-laden religious activities, such as study sessions, congregational prayers, and Islamic leadership training, teachers record not only students' physical involvement but also their affective aspects, including sincerity, attitude towards friends, and voluntary participation. It provides a comprehensive view of the moral character being developed in students, not just mere attendance.

This program also strengthens the role of teachers as moral observers and character guides, who are not only present during activities but also actively follow up on their students' progress. By utilizing data from the visit book, teachers can identify changes in attitude, detect potential deviations, and design personalized and contextual guidance approaches.

At SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, the Character Visit Book serves as a strategic tool in the character education system, enabling teachers not only to teach but also to continuously and meaningfully supervise and foster students' character development. This system emphasizes that moral education is not just about symbolic activities, but the result of a process that is monitored, reflected upon, and accompanied by authoritative figures — namely, teachers who are aware of their strategic role in shaping the character of the younger generation.

3. Integrated Character Formation

Character evaluation of students at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang does not stop at daily observations in the school environment, but is expanded through a collaborative supervision system involving families. One of the main instruments in this process is the Character Visit Book, which functions as a tool to measure character development holistically. This system tracks student behavior in the two primary settings of their lives: school and home.

In practice, teachers not only assess students based on classroom interactions, but also make direct visits to students' homes to dialogue with parents. Reports from parents

regarding students' honesty, responsibility, discipline, and social attitudes are included in the character portfolio. After the visit, teachers convey the results to students in moral guidance forums in a direct and persuasive manner. This process fosters students' sense of responsibility not because of fear of punishment, but because of students' internal personal moral drive, which aligns with the conventional stage in Lawrence Kohlberg's moral development theory. This pattern reflects the development of ethical awareness that emerges from within, rather than being imposed by external pressure. This practice is in line with Allah's word:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَتَمُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا

"O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from the fire of hell..." (QS. (At-Tahrim: 6).

This evaluation model also reflects an authentic evaluation approach that is not merely cognitive-based, but integrative, involving affective and conative aspects. According to Adha & Faridi (2023), family involvement in the moral evaluation process enhances the effectiveness of character education by bringing together school and home contexts within the same value framework. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has also emphasized the importance of trust and responsibility towards students:

كُلُّكُمْ رَاعٍ وَكُلُّكُمْ مَسْئُولٌ عَنْ رَعِيَّتِهِ

"Each of you is a leader, and every leader will be held accountable for those he leads". (HR. Bukhari dan Muslim).

Furthermore, Nugraha & Karlaely (2024) emphasize that the practice of collaboration between schools and parents in character education, including through character control books, not only creates collaboration in supervision but also strengthens consistent value communication (Karlaely, I., Nugraha, M. S., & Nursobah, 2024). It is also confirmed by Yusri (2023), who shows that character development through dialogical and collaborative approaches is more effective in creating long-term character transformation (Yusri et al., 2023).

Therefore, the Character Visit Book is not merely an administrative record, but a strategic instrument in the continuous character evaluation system. With this system, the school successfully adopts a holistic approach in assessing, fostering, and directing students' moral development.

4. Strengthening Values through Structured Religious Programs

Religious programs, such as the Maghrib Reading Movement and Ramadan Dormitory at SMP Islam Al-Madinah Jombang, are not merely supplements to learning activities, but are an integral part of a structured character education strategy. All of them function as means of internalizing Islamic values practically and consistently in students' daily lives.

The regular implementation of the BTQ program, three times a week, aims to strengthen reading while fostering students' connection to the primary source of moral teachings in Islam. Not only reading ability, but students are also trained to understand and practice the values contained within it. The BTQ program plays a significant role in shaping students' spiritual discipline and increasing worship awareness from an early age. It is in line with Allah's word:

اقْرَأْ بِاسْمِ رَبِّكَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ

"Read in the name of your Lord who created". (QS. Al-Alaq: 1).

This verse demonstrates that the reading process in Islam is not merely a cognitive activity, but rather the starting point of spiritual and character development, as it is directly linked to the recognition of God and divine values. The BTQ program also has an impact on forming spiritual discipline and worship awareness from an early age, because Qur'anic reading activities are carried out in a structured and consistent manner.

The Maghrib Reading Movement program, which is implemented at home and reported conventionally, becomes an effort to encourage family involvement in moral

education. This activity instills values of obedience, responsibility, and self-regulation, in accordance with the principle of home-based religious reinforcement emphasized in family-based Islamic education. The Prophet (peace be upon him) said:

خَيْرُكُمْ مَنْ تَعَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ وَعَلَّمَهُ

“The best among you are those who learn the Qur'an and teach it”. (HR. Bukhari).

This hadith provides strong evidence that reciting the Qur'an is not only an obligation but also an indicator of a Muslim's moral and spiritual excellence, both in personal and family contexts.

Pondok Ramadan is an intensive training event held during the holy month, combining the spiritual, social, and cognitive aspects of students through a series of activities. In these activities, students are encouraged to reflect on themselves and practice the values of compassion, empathy, and discipline, which are important foundations for the development of a complete Islamic character. Religious activities outside of main class hours also create an adequate contemplative space for fostering akhlak al-karimah (noble character) in students.

The implementation of these programmes also reflects an integrative and contextual approach to Islamic education. Values are not only taught verbally in the classroom but are brought to life through supervised, evaluated, and contextualised practical activities that align with students' daily lives.

Through the collaboration of teachers, families, and a continuous evaluation system, these programmes have proven to strengthen students' character in terms of religiosity, independence, and social responsibility. The school becomes a laboratory of values, where students not only learn about goodness but also practise it as part of their daily lives.

CONCLUSION

Teachers act as educators, motivators, and agents of social change, who not only convey academic material but also guide students in moral aspects through exemplary behaviour, personal approaches, and daily interactions. The transformation of Islamic educational values is carried out holistically through the integration of classroom learning and non-formal religious activities, such as tahlilan, silaturahmi, and the Maghrib Mengaji Movement, which strengthens the spiritual dimension and character of students. The moral development approach is applied by understanding the moral stages of students (pre-conventional, conventional, and post-conventional), so that moral interventions are tailored to students' psychological and spiritual needs.

The theoretical implications of this study suggest that the role of teachers in Islamic education should be understood as a continuous and contextual process of value transformation, rather than merely dogmatic teaching. Practically, these findings recommend the need for teacher training in strengthening moral values based on students' religious experiences. This research contributes to the development of a moral development model in the context of an integrative Islamic school. Future studies could investigate the impact of external factors, such as family environment or boarding school community, on the effectiveness of value transformation by teachers.

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