# The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Nurturing Religious Character of Third-Grade Students at SDN 2 Donotirto, Kretek, Bantul

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## Abstract

*Character education is seen as important and one of the starting points for building a national civilization. Character education has actually been around since the existence of education because, in general, education basically aims to develop good character. The number of bad characters appearing on the surface is a national concern. The method in this research is qualitative with a descriptive approach. The results of this research show that the role of a PAI teacher includes several roles. A PAI teacher, like other teachers, has a very important role, such as teacher, guide, role model, coach, advisor, counselor, and facilitator, which is in line with the current curriculum and carries out evaluations. The role of PAI teachers in developing the religious character of class III students at SDN 2 Donotirto is carried out using several methods, namely the exemplary method, advice, habituation, reward and punishment, and the story method. In this exemplary method, all madrasah members are involved in providing good role models and can be good examples for students in terms of speaking, worship, dressing, time discipline, and even respecting other people. The advice method is carried out by all teachers at school, whether it is typing lessons, flag ceremonies, or before the Dhuha and Asmaul Husna prayers.*

***Keywords**: teacher, religious character, student.*

## Introduction

Character education is seen as a fundamental cornerstone in the construction of a civilized society. It has been an intrinsic part of education since its inception, as the primary objective of any educational endeavor is to foster virtuous character. Character development is essential from a young age as it lays the foundation for a strong nation. This aligns with the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), who stated:

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لأُتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الأَخْلَاقِ

*innamā buʻiṣtu liutammima makārim al-akhlāqi (HR. Ahmad).*

*Which means I was indeed sent to perfect the good character. (HR. Ahmad).*

This indicates that, since ancient times, education has been recognized as crucial in shaping a person's character and morals.

According to Socrates and the Prophet Muhammad SAW, as stated in Abudin Nata's book *Akhlak Tasawuf*, education is not merely focused on intellectual intelligence but also on the development of good character and morals. Therefore, character education plays a central role in molding individuals into intellectually intelligent persons. In line with this, character education also aims to ensure that individuals possess good morals and ethics in their daily lives.

The abundance of negative characters appearing on the surface has become a national concern (Aulia, 2016). Based on data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI), there are many cases of student fights, such as brawls, underage drinking, theft, harassment, or bullying. In 2014, there were 67 cases where children became criminals. In 2015, this number increased to 79 cases where children were perpetrators of violence. In addition, there were 530 children as perpetrators of violence, while 477 children became victims in 2016.

These phenomena indicate that the character and morals of the Indonesian nation have undergone decadence and damage. The decline of children's character in school environments, including aspects such as respect for others, responsibility, and honesty, has become a serious issue that demands attention from various parties. Thus, anticipatory measures must be taken immediately to anticipate the negative impacts (Sunnah et al., 2020). One of the factors contributing to this problem is the advancement of technology and the influence of social media (Hasna et al., 2021).

Excessive use of technology and social media can negatively impact students' character development, including their religious character. Some of these negative impacts include:

1) Fostering intolerance towards differences: Advances in technology and social media can expose children to narrow-minded opinions and perspectives, making them less tolerant of religious and cultural differences.
2) Decreasing respect for parents and teachers: Dependence on technology can lead children to undervalue time spent with parents and teachers. They may focus more on gadgets than paying attention to verbal communication and direct social interaction. Children may even follow pointless trends that degrade others.
3) Causing bullying and violence: The use of social media can also increase the risk of cyberbullying and violence, which can damage students' character (S et al., 2018). Additionally, a lack of adequate religious education can lead to a lack of understanding and practice of religious values among students. Therefore, serious efforts must be made to address this issue.

The research conducted by Fitriana revealed that to minimize juvenile delinquency, religious character education can be implemented in students through learning activities, the development of school culture, coaching, habituation, and the presence of reward and sanction systems. According to Joko Wibowo's research findings, juvenile delinquency in society has a negative impact on students. Therefore, students must be instilled with manners or morals, along with knowledge and nurturing of good character values in accordance with Islamic teachings (Hasanah et al., 2019). Consequently, it is very important to strengthen the religious character of students.

One effective approach is to implement character education within educational institutions.

The strengthening of religious character in schools, supported by the implementation of the 2013 curriculum, should emphasize character education to influence students into individuals with better character (Surahmi et al., 2022). Primarily at the elementary school level, as a foundation for them to advance to the next level. The 2013 curriculum has been further strengthened by implementing the Merdeka Curriculum. In the Merdeka Curriculum, students are required to have character aligned with Pancasila values, one of which is to believe in and worship One Supreme God and to have noble character. This means that students must practice the values of their religion and beliefs as a form of religiosity, believe in and appreciate the existence of God, and deepen their religious teachings, which is reflected in their daily behavior as a form of applying their understanding of religious teachings (Friantary & Martina, 2018).

Religious education, including Islamic Religious Education (PAI), is a crucial tool in addressing student character issues. Through a good quality of religious education, students can develop a sound understanding of Islamic beliefs and morals. This education equips students with the moral and ethical values taught in Islam, acting as a filter against negative influences from foreign cultures that contradict Islamic teachings (Astuti, 2022). It includes character values related to one's relationship with God, involving thoughts, words, and actions consistently guided by divine values or religious teachings. According to Suparlan, religious character is defined as an attitude and behavior that is obedient in carrying out the teachings of one's religion, tolerant of the religious practices of others, and living harmoniously with followers of other religions (Rohmat, 2019). As a result, religious character education will help children develop the ability to differentiate between positive and negative social influences.

In addition, education experts agree that to shape a child's morals and religious character, habitual activities can be implemented (Pridayanti et al., 2022). Habituation activities are very important to be given to young children. Children are naturally shaped by their environment. The environment they grow up in becomes their daily routine and influences their development. The religious practice

implemented by students involves habituating behaviors or attitudes through consistent and punctual performance of the five daily prayers. This effort strengthens students' discipline in fulfilling their religious obligations. Additionally, there are regular religious practices that are carried out every morning and on specific days (Sayska, 2017). Character education should not be limited to classroom subjects alone. Schools can also implement it through routine practices directed towards developing certain activities, transforming them into structured and systematic habits.

SDN 2 Donotirto in Bantul Regency is a great example of a school that deeply cares about its students' character. This educational institution is characterized by a noble vision of excellent morals and achievements. Although it is a public school and does not focus on the Islamic religion, the school still prioritizes the development of religious character as one of its flagship programs. This school has various programs that include the development of character education (Sunhaji, 2016). Several programs at SDN 2 Donotirto specifically highlight the importance of religious character development. These include routines such as greeting each other upon entering the classroom, reading the Al-Qur'an and *Asmaul Husna* together, performing Dhuha and Zuhr prayers in congregation, and participating in religious extracurricular activities, among other programs aligned with religious values. This approach provides long-term benefits for students, not only in facing academic challenges but also in navigating everyday life and interacting with society in the future. The emphasis on religious character development at SDN 2 Donotirto demonstrates their commitment to providing a holistic education grounded in religious values.

However, challenges also arise in teaching Islam in public schools. Islamic Religious Education teachers need to be aware that they are interacting with students from diverse backgrounds and beliefs, so the teaching approach must be adjusted to remain relevant and inclusive without compromising the identity of each of their respective religions. Another potential issue is the quality and competence of Islamic Religious Education teachers. These teachers need a deep understanding of Islamic teachings. Furthermore, they must be able to convey the material in a way that is relevant and engaging to students. Without qualified teachers,

the goal of fostering religious character may not be optimally achieved. Parental involvement also plays a crucial role in developing students' religious character. The lack of parental support or involvement in fostering religious character at school can affect the development of students' religious values outside of the school environment.

Initial observations by the researcher on the religious culture at SDN 2 Donotirto, Kretek, Bantul, indicate the presence of religious policies and practices in the school. Although it is a public school without a specific focus on Islam, religious activities are actively carried out. This religious culture reflects the school's attention to religious and moral values in student education. However, observation results also show that the religious behavior of third-grade students is more dominant and evident during religious activities. Outside of religious activities, students' religious behavior tends to decrease and become more varied. As a result of these findings, the researcher is interested in conducting research focused on the formation of religious character in students. The researcher is interested in conducting research titled "The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Nurturing Religious Character of Third-Grade Students at SDN 2 Donotirto, Kretek, Bantul".

**Method**

This research employs a field research method, requiring the researcher to conduct direct fieldwork. The approach used is qualitative and descriptive in nature. This study emphasizes the identification, documentation, and understanding through the interpretation of the phenomenon under investigation (Moleong, 2000). Given that this research is based on direct observation, the approach is objective. This approach aims to describe the existing phenomenon as it truly is. This method is used by the researcher to investigate the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in shaping the religious character of students at SDN 2 Donotirto.

In selecting research subjects, the researcher employed a purposive sampling technique, specifically choosing informants who possess a deep understanding, knowledge, experience, and active role in shaping children's character. The researcher has designated the Islamic Religious Education teacher at SDN 2 Donotirto as the primary informant and main

source of information. However, during the research, the researcher also involved several other supporting informants, including the school principal, the third-grade teacher, and 26 third-grade students, consisting of 14 boys and 12 girls.

Data collection was conducted in a natural setting, using primary data sources. The data collection techniques employed included observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, as well as triangulation of techniques and sources. In this research, the researcher utilized field data analysis using Miles and Huberman's model. The Miles and Huberman model involves interactive data collection that continues until data saturation is reached.

**Result and Discussion**

1. **The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Shaping the Religious Character of Third-Grade Students**

Religious principles should be internalized as a way of life, not just as a subject of study. As a result, a person's environment plays a significant role in shaping their religious identity. A person who knows a lot about religion but does not actually practice it is like a tree that does not bear fruit. This means that they do not benefit from the wealth of knowledge they have acquired (Warsah et al., 2019).

Religious values in society can be promoted by setting a good example. Ulwan argues that a more effective way to instill religious values in a person is through exposure to exemplary behavior in society. This shows the importance of setting a good example for the formation of a religiously-valued society (Ariza et al., 2020).

Q.S. Al-Ahzab (33): 21 states that in the Prophet himself, there is a good example, so the method of exemplary education (*uswah*) in Islam has existed since the Prophet was called by Allah as a figure worthy of being imitated. This verse shows the importance of exemplary behavior as part of the educational process for instilling noble ideals. So that other humans can observe the Prophet with their senses, Allah sent him down from among them. So that people act in a way that is consistent with God's will and human nature.

The call to emulate the Prophet as a human and messenger of Allah is found in Q.S. Fushshilat (41): 6. This verse reveals two important facts about the life of the Prophet Muhammad. It can be seen in the following explanation:

a) *The Human Aspect*

As psychophysical beings, humans generally claim ownership of human characteristics. Prophets, as humans, are subject to the same physical laws as everyone else: they must eat, drink, form families, give birth, grow up, grow old, and eventually die. They have feelings like happiness and sadness, desire things, etc. However, prophets maintain a positive attitude.

b) *The Prophetic Aspect*

The Prophet achieved his status as the inspiration of Islam and his faith. An additional example is someone who is honest in all aspects of their daily life. As a result, people can emulate an idealized figure if they consider that person to be morally upright and worthy of imitation. The Prophet's companions became role models for everyone during their lifetime because they had an unshakeable belief that he would show them the way to a good life and eternal happiness.

Religious belief, worship, religious knowledge, religious experience, and the consequences of these four things are five elements that, according to Mustari (2014: 3-4), can lead to the development of religiosity in humans.

1) Religious belief is the adherence to divine doctrines, such as the idea that God, angels, the afterlife, heaven, hell, destiny, and other such concepts exist. There can be no religion without faith. This abstract faith needs concrete religious behavior, namely worship, to be supported.
2) Worship is a multifaceted means by which God is praised. Faith can stay alive through worship, which creates a barrier between the worshiper and the evil spirits within. Appreciation for virtuous behavior and a desire to serve God are products of the experience of worship.
3) Religious knowledge is fluency in the doctrines and practices of one or more religions. Knowledge of Islamic practices such as prayer, fasting, zakat, etc. The history of the prophet, his family, and the values he upheld can all be part of someone's religious education.
4) Religious experience refers to the emotions felt by religious people, such as tranquility,

peace, happiness, gratitude, obedience, fear, regret, repentance, and so on. Sometimes, a person's personality is greatly influenced by their religious experiences.

5) Actualization of one's religious teachings through one's thoughts, words, and deeds. Therefore, this is the sum of various factors. However, knowledge of religion does not always translate into religious practice.

Sukanto argues that the process of humanization according to religion is essentially the internalization of faith, values, knowledge, and skills in order to recognize and actualize these values in good deeds (C.-Y., 2013). This internalization process can only occur if there is an interaction between human consciousness and the will of God, which is brought into social communication. To internalize means to "make internal," "to incorporate," "to make one's own," or to "make a full member." It is only natural that religious values should be manifested in the attitudes, actions, behaviors, and speech of a religious person in everyday life. Those who claim to be devout Christians or Muslims should emulate their behavior according to God's commandments.

Efforts to promote religious values are carried out in various forms, including religious education in the classroom, religious institutions, and the community. Therefore, it is important to encourage respect for religious values in the context of family and society (Whitlatch & Orsulic-Jeras, 2018). It is widely acknowledged that one's family serves as one's first and primary educational environment where one can learn to think and act morally (Gültekin & Budak, 2022). Children's personalities and character are shaped in part by their experiences in school, where they learn and interact with adults and peers. Similarly, societal living conditions, both in organized and informal social interactions, play a role (Khalid et al., 2020).

To be successful, character education must cultivate the following seven traits or Seven E's (Empowered, Effective, Engaged, Embedded, Extended into the community, Epistemological, Evaluative).

a. Empowered: Empowering oneself is a means of instilling character education.
b. Effective: To be successful and beneficial, the process must be carried out effectively.
c. Engaged: Engaging people and drawing attention to important issues.
d. Embedded: Integrating all principles into all actions.
e. Extended into the community: Instilling values is something that must have community support.
f. Epistemological: The ethical meanings and methods used to instill appropriate applications in children must be consistent.
g. Evaluative: Evaluating a person's behavior in light of one's understanding and realization of values.

Cultivating a religious attitude requires not only teaching and practice but also habituation and exemplary behavior. To constantly remind society of the importance of religious values in their lives, campaigns emphasizing the importance of behaving and acting in accordance with these values must be able to compete with other advertisements and campaigns. Therefore, the government must promote religious values through religious-oriented programs, strict law enforcement to ensure a peaceful society, and religious education everywhere. Moreover, religious education includes the entire community, not just families and schools.

Furthermore, the role of a Islamic Religious Education teacher is just as important as other teachers, such as being a teacher, guide, trainer, advisor, counselor, and facilitator in line with the current curriculum and conducting evaluations.

### a. Teacher as an Educator

Islamic Religious Education teachers are expected to have the duty of teaching. They can utilize their role as educators to cultivate religious character in children.

The role of an Islamic Religious Education teacher as an educator in the development of religious character is very important in helping students understand, absorb, and internalize the values, ethics, and principles of Islam. Here are some ways in which they can play their role as educators in developing religious character:

1) Teaching Religious Lessons: Islamic Religious Education teachers instruct students about the fundamental teachings of Islam, including beliefs, rituals, moral principles, and ethical values.
2) Teaching Ethics and Morals: These teachers impart knowledge of ethics and morals as

reflected in Islamic teachings. They help students identify and understand moral principles such as honesty, compassion, patience, and empathy.

3) Teaching Tolerance: Islamic Religious Education teachers instill values of tolerance and appreciation for differences in religion, culture, and viewpoints within and outside the Islamic community.

4) Organizing Religious Activities: They guide students in performing acts of worship like prayer, fasting, and Quran recitation. They ensure that students understand the procedures and significance of these practices.

5) Using Religious Stories: Islamic Religious Education teachers employ stories and narratives from Islamic history to illustrate moral and ethical values in a way that is easier for students to comprehend.

6) Setting an Example: These teachers serve as role models by living according to Islamic values in their daily lives. Their conduct inspires students.

7) Teaching about the Afterlife: Islamic Religious Education teachers explain the concept of the afterlife and the consequences of moral and ethical actions. This helps students understand the concepts of reward and punishment in Islam.

8) Using Interactive Teaching Methods: Islamic Religious Education teachers use active and interactive teaching methods, such as discussions, role-plays, presentations, and projects, to facilitate comprehensive learning.

The role of Islamic Education teachers in character development is to provide a solid understanding of Islamic values and help students apply these values in their daily lives. Through effective teaching methods, these teachers can help students cultivate strong and responsible religious character.

### b. *The Teacher as a Mentor*

The role of an Islamic Religious Education teacher as a mentor in the development of religious character is crucial in helping students develop a deep understanding of Islamic values, ethics, and principles and applying them in their daily lives. Here are some ways in which Islamic Religious Education teachers play a role as mentors in developing religious character:

1) Providing Spiritual Support: Islamic Religious Education teachers provide spiritual support to students, helping them deal with spiritual or inner problems. Teachers can position themselves as a source of support when students need it.

2) Conducting Religious Counseling Sessions: Islamic Religious Education teachers hold religious counseling sessions where students can discuss questions or religious conflicts they face. This helps students to understand and appreciate their religious values.

3) Mentoring in Worship: Islamic Religious Education teachers guide students in performing acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, and reciting the Qur'an correctly. They ensure that students understand the procedures and meanings of each act of worship.

4) Teaching Ethics and Morals: Islamic Religious Education teachers guide students on ethics and morals in the context of Islam. They help students understand moral principles such as honesty, compassion, and patience.

5) Giving Religious Advice: Islamic Religious Education teachers give advice on how to apply religious teachings in everyday life. They help students identify actions that are in accordance with religious values.

6) Providing Support in Personal Matters: Islamic Religious Education teachers are people to whom students can talk about personal problems or conflicts in their lives. They provide emotional support and advice in dealing with personal problems.

7) Organizing Religious Activities: Islamic Religious Education teachers guide students in organizing religious activities such as study circles, fundraising for charity, or visiting places of worship. This gives students the opportunity to practice religious values in concrete actions.

8) Teaching Tolerance: Islamic Religious Education teachers guide students on tolerance and respect for religious and cultural differences. They encourage students to live in harmony with individuals from various religious backgrounds.

The role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as mentors in developing religious character is to help students internalize Islamic values and apply them in their daily actions. With a caring approach, Islamic Religious

Education teachers can play a very important role in shaping students' religious character and helping them become responsible and ethical individuals.

### c. *The Teacher as a Role Model*

The role of an Islamic Religious Education teacher as a role model in developing religious character is very important in helping students understand, accept, and internalize the values, ethics, and principles of Islam. Here are some ways in which Islamic Education teachers can serve as role models in developing religious character:

1) Providing Practical Examples: Islamic Religious Education teachers become examples in living the values of Islam in everyday life. They must practice these values in their actions and behavior so that students can see how religious values are applied in real life.
2) Consistency in Worship: Islamic Religious Education teachers are consistent in carrying out acts of worship such as prayer, fasting, and reading the Quran. They show students that worship is an important part of daily life.
3) Attitude Towards Others: Islamic Religious Education teachers show compassion, empathy, and respect for others. They must provide examples of positive attitudes in interacting with others, especially in handling conflicts or differences of opinion.
4) Attitude of Tolerance: Islamic Religious Education teachers demonstrate tolerance towards differences and appreciation for various religious, cultural, and ideological backgrounds. This reflects the values of Islam, which emphasize tolerance.
5) Positive Communication: Islamic Religious Education teachers communicate in positive language and avoid harsh or demeaning speech. Even when dealing with problematic students, Islamic Education teachers show how to speak respectfully and politely to the child and in a soft voice.
6) Resolving Conflicts Peacefully: Islamic Religious Education teachers demonstrate how to resolve conflicts peacefully and talk to find a good solution. They can teach students about the importance of fair and peaceful conflict resolution.
7) Teaching Compassion: Islamic Religious Education teachers show affection and care for their students. They can teach that compassion is an important value in Islam.

The role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as role models is key in helping students understand and internalize the values of Islam. By being a good example, Islamic Religious Education teachers can inspire students to follow the right path in developing their religious character.

### d. *The Teacher as a Coach*

The role of an Islamic Religious Education teacher as a coach might still be unfamiliar, but it is maximized by Islamic Education teachers at SDN 2 Donotirto, Kretek, Bantul. This is evident in their training of students in various religious skills such as prayer recitation, prayer movements, ablution, the adhan, and many more. The hope is that students will develop religious competencies and be able to practice them correctly.

The role of an Islamic Religious Education teacher as a coach in fostering religious character is to guide students in understanding, accepting, and internalizing Islamic values, ethics, and principles through an approach that involves active practice and training. Here are some ways in which Islamic Religious Education teachers can act as coaches in fostering religious character:

1) Training in Worship: Islamic Religious Education teachers train students in performing acts of worship such as congregational Zuhr prayers, congregational Dhuha prayers, fasting, and daily Quran recitation on Tuesdays. Islamic Religious Education teachers ensure that students understand the procedures and meanings of each act of worship.
2) Ethics and Moral Training: Islamic Religious Education teachers provide training in ethics and morals within the context of Islam. They help students understand moral principles such as honesty, compassion, and patience. Examples of this can be seen during flag ceremonies, before lessons begin, or even when a student misbehaves, and the Islamic Religious Education teacher immediately reminds them.
3) Charity and Good Deeds Projects: Islamic Religious Education teachers can train students to plan, implement, and evaluate charity or good deeds projects related to

Islam. This gives students practical experience in applying religious values.

The role of an Islamic Religious Education teacher as a coach in fostering religious character aims to help students gain a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings and how to apply them in daily life. Through training, practice, and practical experience, students can build a strong and responsible religious character.

### e. *The Teacher as an Advisor*

As an advisor, an Islamic Religious Education teacher plays a crucial role in providing advice, guidance, and support to students in various aspects of life-related to Islam. In practice, teachers choose appropriate times and places, such as during ceremonies, Friday health programs, or even when sitting with students outside of class hours. The roles that an Islamic Religious Education teacher plays as an advisor are as follows:

1) Religious Advisor: Islamic Religious Education teachers provide advice about Islam, helping students understand beliefs, worship practices, and Islamic values.
2) Moral Advisor: Islamic Religious Education teachers provide advice on good ethics and morals in daily life. They help students understand ethical concepts and provide guidance on how to live according to religious teachings. For example, when a student passes in front of the teacher without saying "excuse me" or bowing, the Islamic Religious Education teacher immediately reminds them gently, without getting angry.
3) Supporter in Personal Matters: Islamic Religious Education teachers can help resolve personal problems or conflicts in their students' lives. They provide emotional support and advice in dealing with personal issues.

The role of an Islamic Religious Education teacher as an advisor is very important in helping students understand and integrate Islamic values into their lives. In addition, Islamic Religious Education teachers also provide support in moral and spiritual aspects, helping students live in accordance with Islamic teachings and overcome personal problems.

### f. *The Teacher as a Counselor*

Teachers of Islamic Religious Education can also play the role of counselors or mentors to students. While counseling is generally the specific task of guidance counselors, Islamic Religious Education teachers who have a deep understanding of moral values, ethics, and spirituality can provide valuable guidance and mentorship to students in religious and moral contexts.

### g. *The Teacher as a Facilitator*

The role of an Islamic Religious Education teacher as a facilitator in cultivating religious character is crucial. Islamic Religious Education teachers are responsible for creating a learning environment that supports the development of students' religious character, as well as for facilitating the growth of Islamic values, ethics, and understanding.

The role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as facilitators in fostering religious character is crucial in helping students understand, accept, and internalize the values of Islam. Through teaching methods that emphasize reflection, interaction, and deep understanding, Islamic Religious Education teachers assist students in developing a strong and enduring religious character.

### h. *The Teacher as an Evaluator*

The role of an Islamic Religious Education teacher as an evaluator in the development of religious character is to measure and monitor students' progress in terms of religious values and ethics. This evaluation aims to ensure that students understand, accept, and apply religious values in their daily lives.

The role of the teacher as an evaluator in the development of religious character is important to ensure that the goals of religious character education are achieved. A good evaluation helps students to become better individuals and more aware of the religious values they hold. In addition, teachers can use the results of this evaluation to design more effective and relevant character education programs.

### 2. Methods of Religious Character Development

### a) *Through Learning Materials*

Character building, particularly the cultivation of polite behavior in third-grade students, can be implemented through Islamic Religious Education learning materials. This

aligns with Iman Wahyudi's assertion that *Akidah* and *Akhlak* subjects encompass topics related to manners, morals, and exemplary behavior. In fostering these qualities, Islamic Religious Education teachers employ various methods, including lectures, problem-based learning, and innovative approaches like crossword puzzles and matching cards. These methods aim to simplify the students' understanding of religious character.

### b) *The Exemplary Method*

The exemplary method is an influential method in instilling good manners in students. Exemplary behavior is also a hallmark of *Akidah Akhlak* learning. As Iman Wahyudi stated, there is exemplary material in *Akidah Akhlak* learning.

The exemplary behavior provided by Islamic Religious Education teachers is abundant, including speaking politely, dressing appropriately and neatly, being punctual, eating and drinking while seated, and trying not to be "*jarkoni*" (able to teach but unable to practice). Exemplary behavior is also carried out by all members of the school or madrasah. Therefore, all forms of behavior, words, and actions carried out by madrasah members must demonstrate good character or noble character.

The exemplary method falls within the stage of moral knowing or learning to know. This exemplary behavior provides an understanding of noble character that should be emulated by students. In addition, exemplary behavior is also included in the stage of moral loving or moral feeling. Exemplary stories, as well as examples from teachers and madrasah members, can foster awareness of the values of noble character.

### c) *Habitual Method*

Indirectly, the process of fostering religious character at SDN 2 Donotirto by the Islamic Religious Education teacher has been demonstrated through habitual practices. This can be seen from the activities carried out by the school. These activities include flag ceremonies, communal Ḍuḥā prayers, *Asmaul Husna*, communal ẓuhur prayers, 7S (smile, greeting, being polite, patient, and grateful), BTAQ extracurricular activities, Qur'an literacy, singing the Javanese song "*yen esuk sugeng enjing, yen awan sugeng siang, yen sore sugeng sonten, yen bengi sugeng ndalu, diparingi matur nuwun, di timbali matur dalem, yen lewat ndere*

*langkung*", the habit of eating and drinking while sitting, shaking hands upon arriving and leaving school, bowing and saying "*nderek langkung*" when passing in front of a teacher, the habit of being honest and kind, avoiding harsh or rude language, including teasing friends, and various activities during special events.

In Islamic Religious Education learning at SDN 2 Donotirto, the habits practiced include greeting before and after learning, praying at the beginning and end of learning, receiving something with the right hand, saying thank you, shaking hands or kissing the teacher's hand, asking permission when wanting to leave the classroom, respecting the opinions of friends, and so on. These habits are carried out so that students can respect and appreciate their teachers, friends, and the school community.

The habitual method is a method that makes students develop good moral habits. Therefore, this method is part of the learning to do or moral doing stage. With this habituation of good morals, it is hoped that students can practice them not only at school but also in their daily lives.

### d) *Advice Method*

One method frequently used in character development is through giving advice or motivation. This advice is usually given directly to students in the classroom during learning or outside of class. This provision of advice or motivation is not only done by Islamic Religious Education teachers but also by classroom teachers, subject teachers, and school principals, even physical education teachers.

Advice or motivation is also often provided during certain events. Based on observations, the ceremony leader conveys advice or motivation to students during the flag ceremony. In addition, advice is also delivered at the beginning of a lesson. The content of the ceremony leader, according to the principal of SDN 2 Donotirto, conveyed advice and motivation about how to be good friends, dress well, and respect each other. Not only at that time, every Friday before reciting *Asmaul Husna*, the Islamic Religious Education teacher also gave messages of advice and motivation such as, "Do not make fun of friends, call friends by a good name, not by their parents' name."

The provision of motivation and advice to students is intended to provide understanding and touch the hearts of students. This is in

accordance with the stages of learning to know or moral knowing and the stage of moral loving or moral feeling. Therefore, this habituation method is classified into these stages.

### e) *Reward and Punishment Method*

The reward and punishment method is another frequently used approach. Here, rewards are typically verbal, such as praise and encouraging words. However, the Islamic Religious Education teacher also uses star rewards for children who successfully answer questions or are brave enough to present during the lesson, hoping other children will feel challenged to engage in positive competition. Verbal praise might be common practice not only for Islamic Religious Education teachers but also for all teachers at SDN 2 Donotirto, but there is a limit or control to this, as children might become immune to it, and verbal praise might no longer have an effect.

In contrast to rewards, the Islamic Religious Education teacher also remains firm when a child commits a misdeed, such as teasing a friend, and so on. The actions taken by the Islamic Religious Education teacher include verbal reprimands and individual consultations. When children quarrel, the Islamic Religious Education teacher does not immediately scold them in front of everyone but calls them aside to maintain their sense of shame and encourage them to forgive each other.

### f) *Storytelling Method*

The storytelling method is perhaps a quite good method and can leave a lasting impression on a child. The use of the storytelling method by Islamic Religious Education teachers in the development of religious character is practiced in the classroom, before and after lessons as a spark and motivation for children.

### Conclusion

The role of an Islamic Religious Education teacher is similar to other teachers, holding a very important position such as instructor, guide, role model, trainer, advisor, counselor, and facilitator in line with the current curriculum, as well as conducting evaluations. As an instructor, they optimally teach Islamic Religious Education subjects. As a guide, they guide students in various aspects, including behavior. As a trainer, they must also train students in activities like adhan (call to prayer) and *iqamah*. Islamic Religious Education

teachers are also expected to provide advice to all students to keep them on track and ensure that religious character building in grade 3 runs smoothly. When a student has a problem, whether with their peers or teachers, the Islamic Religious Education teacher must be able to act as a counselor to solve the problem in a good way. Lastly, they must be able to facilitate students so that religious character-building can run smoothly.

The role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in building the religious character of grade 3 students at SDN 2 Donotirto is carried out using several methods: role modeling, advice, habituation, rewards and punishments, and storytelling. In the role-modeling method, all school personnel are involved in providing a good example and can be a good role model for students regarding speech, worship, clothing, time discipline, and even how to respect others. The advice method is carried out by all teachers at the school, whether during lessons, flag ceremonies, or before Dhuha prayers and *Asmaul Husna*. The Islamic Religious Education teacher, in collaboration with all stakeholders of SDN 2 Donotirto, creates habits that support the building of students' character, especially in grade 3, such as greeting and shaking hands with teachers as a sign of respect, bowing their heads when passing in front of teachers, Dhuha prayers, *Asmaul Husna*, Qur'an literacy, eating and drinking while sitting, and many more. The reward and punishment method is used by Islamic Religious Education teachers and other teachers in a balanced and controlled manner, such as giving praise, and when a child does something inappropriate, they will be called in for questioning and advice. The use of storytelling is still limited to the classroom and is not often done.

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