

## Strengthening Religious Character Values in Students in State MTs 1 Pesawaran

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in strengthening the religious character values of students at MTs Negeri 1 Pesawaran through various strategies implemented in a planned manner. The study used a qualitative method with a case study approach through observation, interviews, and documentation of five key informants. The results showed that PAI teachers and guidance and counseling teachers implemented a number of strategies such as Al-Qur'an literacy before learning, a tahfiz program, the habit of congregational prayer, the implementation of 3S (smile, greet, greet), the culture of shaking hands, and monitoring student behavior. These strategies proved effective in shaping students' religious character, discipline, and responsibility. However, several obstacles were found, such as the school's location close to a busy center, low parental involvement, and negative peer influence. Overall, the role of teachers is very significant in creating a madrasah environment that is conducive to the formation of students' religious character.

**Keywords:**  
 Religious Character;  
 Islamic Religious Education;  
 Madrasah Tsanawiyah.

### Abstract

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam memperkuat nilai-nilai karakter religius peserta didik di MTs Negeri 1 Pesawaran melalui berbagai strategi yang diterapkan secara terencana. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi terhadap lima informan kunci. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru PAI dan guru bimbingan dan konseling menerapkan sejumlah strategi seperti literasi Al-Qur'an sebelum pembelajaran, program tahfiz, pembiasaan salat berjamaah, penerapan 3S (senyum, salam, sapa), budaya bersalaman, dan pemantauan perilaku siswa. Strategi-strategi tersebut terbukti efektif dalam membentuk karakter religius, kedisiplinan, dan tanggung jawab peserta didik. Namun, ditemukan beberapa kendala seperti lokasi sekolah yang dekat dengan pusat keramaian, rendahnya keterlibatan orang tua, dan pengaruh negatif dari teman sebaya. Secara keseluruhan, peran

**Keywords:**  
 Karakter Religius;  
 Pendidikan Agama Islam;  
 Madrasah Tsanawiyah.



## 1. Introduction

Strengthening mark character religious in participants educate become need urgent need to pay attention For overcome decline quality marked characters with a number of indicator like decrease interest worship , less believe self , discipline , respect towards teachers and parents , as well as concern social (Wati & Arif, 2017; Sada, 2025) . Further challenges include juvenile delinquency, drug abuse (Nurhadiyanto, 2024) , and promiscuity (Sovianti et al., 2024) . Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) reported by Kompas.com and Metrotvnews.com recorded that from 2023-2024 there were 4,412 child protection cases and 1,102 of them occurred within the scope of educational units. Other more serious cases also occurred such as the murder case committed by two children with a background in Islamic Junior High School Education against the initials D in Pesawaran Regency. This shows how important it is to strengthen religious character values in students, especially in Islamic educational institutions that have a significant role in forming students who are faithful and pious.

Madrasahs, as Islamic educational institutions, are primarily tasked with instilling religious values in students. This effort, of course, extends beyond formal learning and needs to be strengthened through various non-formal approaches. A study by Sri Atin (2022) confirmed that teacher exemplary behavior, the practice of worship, and religious culture significantly influence the strengthening of religious character (Redhizma et al., 2023) . Furthermore, practices such as greetings and prayers before and after lessons, congregational prayer, almsgiving, Quranic literacy, and the Dhuha prayer have been shown to be effective in improving student discipline and spirituality (Badry & Rahman, 2021) .

This research was conducted at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Pesawaran, one of the leading schools in Pesawaran Regency. Researchers found several cases related to character that occurred at the madrasa. Such as student indiscipline, low sense of responsibility and honesty, low student interest in worship, lack of courtesy towards teachers, lack of social awareness and *bullying* . Nevertheless, the madrasa has made efforts to address these cases by strengthening religious character values through practices such as regular congregational Dhuha prayers every Friday, regular tahfiz programs every Saturday, guidance on the dangers of narcotics and promiscuity, and anti-*bullying guidance* . In addition, the madrasa is also open to parents about student development. However, these various activities are often considered mere formalities by some students and parents so that the impact of these activities is not optimal.

Apart from that, the role of teachers is also important and is the main key in strengthening religious character values in students, both in the learning process in class and outside the classroom because teachers must be good role models or role models for their students (Fadkhulil Imad Haikal Huda, 2022) . Bahri et al., (2024) in their study stated that teachers are not only limited to conveying knowledge, but teachers are also crucial *Mu'adib* (value instillers) in madrasas. This factor emphasizes that strengthening religious character values does not only depend on an Islamic school environment, but also the major role of teachers as role models and conveyors of values (Galuh et al., 2021; Arif Saputra et al., 2025) .

Several previous studies have shown that strengthening religious character values in madrasas is effective in forming students who are faithful, moral, and pious. Among them, research conducted at the Farhan Syarif Hidayah Private Islamic Senior High School, Sunggal District, found that the habit of performing Zuhur and Asr prayers at school plays a role in the formation of attitudes of discipline, honesty, social concern and is able to form students who are faithful, moral, and pious to Allah SWT (Pratiwi & Agustia, 2025). Study by Moh. Hamim Marzuki, (2023) with the title "strategies for forming religious character in students through religious activities" also stated that teacher role models, the habit of greeting, saluting, shaking hands with teachers, Dhuha and Zuhur prayers in congregation, Al-Quran recitation and Tahlil as well as a conducive atmosphere inside and outside the classroom are able to form students who are pious, polite, honest, disciplined, respect time, sincere, humble and helpful.

Based on several data, overall, strengthening religious character values in madrasas has been proven effective in shaping students with faith, morals, and piety through the practice of worship and role models. However, most research focuses on student habituation activities, while the role of teachers as instillers of religious values has received less in-depth study. This suggests the need for further contextual research to understand teachers' contribution to strengthening religious character values in madrasas.

Therefore, researchers are interested in further studying the strengthening of religious character values in madrasas with a focus on the role of teachers in strengthening religious character values as reviewed from the strategies of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers. This study aims to analyze the role of PAI teachers in strengthening religious character values in madrasas through various strategies implemented. The focus of this research was chosen as an effort to provide solutions and a deep understanding of the role of teachers in strengthening religious character values in madrasas. Thus, strengthening religious character values in madrasas through accurate, planned and consistent strategies is a solution so that students not only achieve academically but also have a moral and spiritual foundation as a provision for living in society.

## **2. Methods**

This research employed a qualitative method with a case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the topic (Hidayah & Wahyudi, 2025) . Purposive sampling was used to select the research subjects. This research was

conducted at MTs Negeri 1 Pesawaran, one of the leading schools in Pesawaran Regency. This research focused on madrasahs because these educational institutions have their own unique characteristics and play a crucial role in strengthening religious character values (Turner, 2020) .

Purposive sampling technique was also used to select informants based on their active involvement (Turner, 2020) . This study involved 5 informants to obtain accurate and comprehensive information with characteristics as shown in Table 1. The table explains the characteristics of the informants, namely the aqidah akhlak teacher, the guidance counseling teacher, and the vice principal of student affairs.

Table 1. Characteristics Informant

Work informant	Amount informant	Average age (years)	Gender		Experience work (year)
			Man	Woman	
Grade VII teacher	1	35-40	1	-	5
Grade VIII teacher	1	25-30	1	-	4
Grade IX teacher	1	30-40	1	-	7
Guidance counseling teacher	1	40-50	1	-	8
Deputy Head of Student Affairs	1	45-50	1	-	8
Total	5		5		

Data were collected through direct observation at the research location, semi-structured interviews with informants lasting 30-45 minutes, and documentation. The data collection process involved four main stages: data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and data verification (A. Michael Huberman, 1994).

Data analysis used content analysis techniques (Safitri et al., 2022) to examine supporting documents such as madrasa profiles, vision and mission statements, teacher learning tools, media cases, and observation notes to support interview data. Data transformation included selecting important information, such as inhibiting factors. Data were presented in descriptive narrative form so that research findings could be clearly understood (Atin & Maemonah, 2022) . Conclusions were drawn and verified by comparing research findings with relevant theories to ensure data validity and legitimacy (Baharudin et al., 2022) .

### 3. Results and Discussion

The findings in this study illustrate the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in strengthening religious character values in students at MTs Negeri 1

Pesawaran, as viewed from the perspective of teacher strategies. Through interviews with several informants, several strategies used by teachers and several obstacles in strengthening religious character values in students were identified. The strategies implemented were tailored to the grade level and student characteristics. Further details can be seen in the table below.

Table 2. Findings in the Research

Dimensions	Indicator
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Al-Quran literacy before starting learning</li> <li>• Al-Quran tahfiz program every Saturday</li> <li>• Getting used to praying in congregation at school (zuhur prayer and dhuha sunnah prayer)</li> <li>• 3 S habits ( smile , greet , say hello )</li> <li>• The culture of shaking hands before entering the school environment in the morning</li> <li>• Participant monitoring educate</li> <li>• Integrity in learning</li> <li>• The location of the madrasa is close to the center of the crowd</li> </ul>
Obstacle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of parental involvement</li> <li>• Invitation Friend peers</li> </ul>

### 3.1. Strategies used by teachers

Based on results interviews and observations , researchers find several strategies that teachers use in effort strengthening mark character religious in participants educate . among them covering culture literacy of the Qur'an before start activity learning , which is guided by the participants educate in a way alternate through hardener This strategy is also supported by the Quran memorization program which is carried out routinely every day Saturday and followed by all participant educate through culture Al- Quran literacy is carried out in a way consistent as well as supported with by the tahfiz program , participants educate experience improvement understanding about teachings Islam , especially in matter Reciting Al- Qur'an with good and right (KP Sari & Mahariah, 2023) . In addition , Quranic literacy is also able to help participant educate in increase discipline , sensitivity social and identity strong religious (Ismaraidha et al., 2024) .

Furthermore, other strategies implemented by teachers include the habit of congregational prayer at school. Congregational prayer activities carried out at MTs Negeri 1 Pesawaran include the midday prayer and the dhuha prayer. The midday prayer is carried out when the midday prayer time arrives at 11:50 WIB, while the dhuha prayer in congregation is carried out every Friday starting at 07:00 WIB to 07:30 WIB, attended by all students and teachers (interview with the akidah akhlak teacher and the guidance and counseling teacher, 2025). The activities aim to improve the spiritual relationship of students, as well as increase discipline and strengthen social relationships between students and with teachers (Kamila et al., 2025) . The results of the study showed that the habit of

congregational prayer has a positive impact on the spiritual and psychological well-being of students, because it is able to increase discipline, a sense of sincerity, responsibility, togetherness and self-control (Lubis et al., 2024) .

The next strategy implemented by teachers is to make it a habit to smile, greet, and say hello. The results of an interview with the vice principal of student affairs stated that, "we emphasize to all teachers, both Islamic Religious Education teachers and other subjects, to teach, direct, guide, and make it a habit to students both in and outside the classroom." Based on the results of the interview, it can be concluded that teachers have a big role in making the 3S habit (Konadi, 2022) . The implementation of this 3S habit is carried out both inside and outside of learning. In learning, this strategy is included in the teacher's learning plan, saying hello when entering the class and saying hello when wanting to ask questions. Then, when outside the classroom, this strategy is carried out by knocking on the door and saying hello before entering the room, greeting students gently and friendly, and smiling when greeted by students. This activity aims to create a safe and comfortable school environment (Inayah & Wiyani, 2022) and create students who have good manners (Winanda et al., 2024) .

In addition to the habit of shaking hands, researchers discovered another strategy: the habit of shaking hands. This strategy is implemented when new students enter the school environment. Several teachers line up near the school entrance, intending to greet students with smiles and shake hands. This strategy aims to get students into the habit of shaking hands when meeting teachers and parents. Several studies have shown that through the habit taught by teachers, the culture of shaking hands can increase students' respect (Biantoro et al., 2023) , increase feelings of affection (Munadi, 2021) , and improve student discipline, because this culture makes students reluctant to arrive late (Wardi et al., 2023) .

The next strategy, namely student monitoring, is carried out by Islamic Religious Education teachers and guidance counselors, both inside and outside of learning. This process includes observing, analyzing, and recording all aspects related to student behavior to ensure that learning is proceeding according to plan and achieving the set goals (Daheri & Warlizasusi, 2024; Mursilawati & Afriyadi, 2025) . In the classroom, monitoring is carried out by Islamic Religious Education teachers through direct observation of student behavior, such as their level of activity during learning.

Interviews with religious and moral teachers and guidance and counseling teachers (2025) revealed that students sometimes appear gloomy and unfocused during class. Teachers immediately take action by approaching them, inquiring about their condition, and providing special attention and motivation so that students can actively participate in class. Outside of class, monitoring is carried out by guidance and counseling teachers, through observing and recording student behavior that violates rules, such as cases of bullying (Arvianola et al., 2016) . In such situations, guidance and counseling teachers immediately consult with the perpetrators by providing advice and guidance on the dangers of bullying, as well as providing mental support to victims to help them regain their

confidence and have a safe space to share their experiences (Suparto & Liara, 2021).

From monitoring this strategy, it can be concluded that this approach allows teachers to identify the level of problems and determine appropriate steps for students. Providing motivation and mental support is very important, because a good mental condition makes it easier for students to understand the learning material being taught (Fitriyah et al., 2024). This is especially crucial for students who are victims of bullying, considering that victims of bullying can experience depression or severe stress (A. Sari & Muslihah, 2020).

Another strategy implemented by teachers is integrating religious values into students' classrooms. Islamic religious education teachers, particularly the Islamic faith and morals teachers who served as key informants in this process, explained that they not only convey learning materials but also teach and instill religious values (Nurchamidah & Hamsah, 2022), such as discipline, honesty, a love of knowledge, creativity, courtesy, and tolerance (Hidayat, 2021). This strategy has a significant positive impact on students (Astuti et al., 2024), as classroom learning activities serve as the primary platform for instilling and cultivating these religious values.

### 3.2. *Inhibiting factors*

Based on results interviews and observations in a way direct at the location research, found that, there is a number of factors that become inhibitor in the process of running various existing strategies. Several inhibiting factors in this process include the school's location close to a busy center (traditional market). Based on its coordinates, MTs Negeri 1 Pesawaran is close to a busy center, which indirectly serves as a place for cultural exchange, customs, and habits. Thus, teachers have difficulty understanding students' behavior and character.

Other inhibiting factors were also identified, such as a lack of parental involvement. This lack of parental involvement is a major complaint among teachers. Teachers reported that many parents are reluctant to cooperate, leaving the responsibility entirely to the teachers at school, even though parents play a significant role in instilling religious values in students at home (Fikriyah et al., 2022). Furthermore, parents are the first educators who determine the future character of their children (Hyoscyamina, 2011).

Furthermore, inhibiting factors such as peer pressure were also identified. Interviews with several informants revealed that these inhibiting factors come from friends at home and from other schools. These pressures include invitations to skip school, brawls, and other behaviors that suggest juvenile delinquency. This is very difficult for teachers to monitor, therefore, the role of parents in monitoring students' social interactions is crucial.

Nevertheless, overall, efforts to strengthen religious character values in students at MTs Negeri 1 Pesawaran have been well-executed and consistently implemented. Teachers and the school have done their best and made this a top priority, without neglecting academic intelligence.

Through various strategies, it's possible to develop students who not only excel academically but also develop strong religious character, emotional intelligence, and skills necessary for social life.

#### 4. Conclusion

Research results at MTs Negeri 1 Pesawaran show that the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher together with the Guidance teacher Counseling (BK) has role central in strengthening mark character religious participant educate through various planned strategies, such as literacy of the Qur'an before learning, tahfiz program, habituation prayer congregation, implementation of 3S (smile, greet, say hello), culture shaking hands, and monitoring behavior students. These efforts proven capable form participant disciplined, moral education noble, and have intelligence emotional and spiritual balance. However, in its implementation, teachers face several obstacles, such as the school's proximity to a busy center, low parental involvement, and negative peer influence. Nevertheless, the dedication of teachers and the support of the school have created an educational environment conducive to strengthening religious character. Thus, strengthening religious values in madrasas not only shapes academic achievement but also fosters morality and social responsibility, which are essential for living in society.

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