

## Developing Students' Spiritual Intelligence Through Religious Practices at Muhammadiyah Plus Junior High School In Salatiga

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### *Abstract*

The development of students' spiritual intelligence is an important requirement in education to face the challenges of modernity and overcome the decline in the moral character of students. In response to this, this study aims to analyze the religious habit formation program at Muhammadiyah Plus Junior High School in Salatiga and examine it from the perspective of spiritual intelligence development. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type, using interview, observation, and documentation. Data analysis in this study was conducted using the Miles Huberman and Saldana analysis model, which includes data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The research results obtained in developing spiritual intelligence are in the form of religious habituation through daily, weekly and semester habituation programs. This process is reinforced by teacher role models, school culture habits, and the involvement of all stakeholders. The impact of this program is seen in the improvement of students' religious-social attitudes, such as responsibility, independence, discipline, and social concern.

**Keywords:** Developing; Spiritual Intelligence; Religious Habits.

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### *Abstrak*

Pengembangan kecerdasan spiritual siswa merupakan kebutuhan penting dalam pendidikan untuk menghadapi tantangan modernitas dan mengatasi penurunan karakter moral peserta didik. Menanggapi hal tersebut penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis program pembiasaan keagamaan di SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga dan dikaji melalui sudut pandang pengembangan kecerdasan spiritual. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus, menggunakan wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dalam penelitian ini dilakukan

dengan menggunakan model analisis Miles Huberman dan Saldana yang meliputi pengumpulan data, kondensasi data, display data, serta penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian yang diperoleh dalam mengembangkan kecerdasan spiritual yaitu pelaksanaan bentuk pembiasaan keagamaan melalui program pembiasaan harian, mingguan dan semester. Proses ini diperkuat dengan keteladanan guru, pembiasaan budaya sekolah, serta pelibatan seluruh stakeholder. Dampak dalam program ini tampak pada peningkatan sikap religius-sosial siswa, seperti tanggung jawab, kemandirian, kedisiplinan, dan kepedulian sosial.

**Kata Kunci:** Pengembangan; Kecerdasan Spiritual; Pembiasaan Keagamaan.

### A. Introduction

In line with the principles of the Qur'an and Hadith, Islamic education can be described as a learning process that aims to shape individuals who are balanced in their spiritual, intellectual, and social dimensions (Gafur et al., 2025). However, education in schools generally emphasizes the development of intelligence in a narrow sense (intellectual intelligence) and pays less attention to the development of other potentials, such as spiritual and emotional intelligence, as part of character education or noble morals of students (Suhifatullah et al., 2021). The finding of low spiritual intelligence can be demonstrated by the weak behavior of students who lack discipline and are

unable to interpret the learning process holistically (Suhifatullah et al., 2021).

This shows the importance of developing students' spiritual intelligence in modern Islamic education. This is because, in addition to influencing students' moral behavior and character, spiritual intelligence also helps teachers overcome identity crises and other difficulties that arise in modern life (Mawaddah & Nurmawati, 2024). Spiritual intelligence is the primary foundation for human growth that stems from divine spiritual values (Muttuqin et al., 2025). This intelligence helps students develop self-awareness, creativity, and a deep understanding of their identity. Therefore, the role of Islamic education is very important in instilling spiritual intelligence so that students not only

develop academically but also have a well-rounded personality (Aldi & Khairanis, 2025).

The development of students' spiritual intelligence includes the mental capacity to understand the inner self, maintain a sense of belonging, express dependence on a higher power, seek meaning in life, and act with love and compassion (Grasmane, 2023). Spiritual intelligence in education provides direction and motivation in learning, shaping individuals who are optimistic, responsible, and hopeful students (Muttaqin et al., 2025).

In developing students' intelligence, the role of teachers is very important in order to increase their spiritual abilities (Parhati et al., 2022). The development of spiritual intelligence can be done by teaching students how to apply moral principles in real life, in addition to helping them identify them theoretically. Students can internalize these principles and apply them to interact with their social environment through educational programs that combine direct teaching of Islamic teachings, teacher role models, instilling religious values, and creating a religious learning environment with

meaningful spiritual experiences (Jumsir et al., 2025).

Previously, the author has reviewed several journals on the development of spiritual intelligence as a reference in writing this journal. For example, research conducted by Agus Supriyadi, entitled "The Contribution of Islamic Spiritual Extracurricular Activities and School Environmental Support in the Formation of Students' Spiritual Intelligence." This study examines how extracurricular activities, including Islamic studies, Dhuha prayers, youth activities, and others, can enhance students' academic experiences by developing spiritual intelligence (Supriyadi et al., 2024). Another study entitled "Pengembangan Kecerdasan Spiritual dan Emosional melalui Kegiatan Keagamaan di SDIT Al-Yasmin 2 Bogor" emphasizes that religious activities such as congregational prayer, reading the Qur'an, and religious studies successfully develop spiritual and emotional intelligence by fostering self-awareness, emotion management, motivation, empathy, and harmonious relationships (Rihaadah et al., 2025).

Previous studies have not touched on religious habits. This is in line with Grasmane's (2023) view, which emphasizes that spiritual intelligence develops through inner meaning and repeated religious experiences (habits). In fact, spiritual intelligence is closely related to religious values, which can be developed through a religious culture in the school environment.

It has been emphasized that increasing students' spiritual intelligence in schools can be achieved through the formation of an organized and structured religious culture (Muhammad & Sarwan, 2024). Thus, the gap in this study lies in the absence of specific studies exploring religious habituation methods with the development of spiritual intelligence in a structured religious habituation model. The religious habits studied include various forms, including reward systems, punishment, giving advice, role modeling, and environmental conditioning (Hafidz et al., 2022).

This gap is filled by research at SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga. Based on field findings, the religious habituation program implemented daily, weekly, and semesterly at SMP

Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga shows consistency with the theory of spiritual intelligence development. These programs not only train students in religious practices, but also develop inner awareness, the search for meaning in life, a sense of dependence on Allah, as well as loving and socially caring behavior. Based on this, this study was formulated to determine how religious habituation develops the spiritual intelligence of students at Junior High School (SMP) Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga. Muhammadiyah Plus Junior High School in Salatiga was chosen because observations showed that this educational institution has habit formation programs, which lead to a series of habit formation activities carried out as weekly, monthly, and semester programs with systematic and structured program designs as school priority programs.

## **B. Methods**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study context, which aims to describe in depth the development of spiritual intelligence through the implementation of a religious habituation program at SMP

Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga. This approach was chosen because the research focused on understanding the context, process, and meaning that emerged from religious habit formation practices in the school environment, rather than on measuring cause-and-effect relationships or testing hypotheses.

The research was conducted at SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga, with the research subjects including Islamic Education teachers, homeroom teachers, and students who were directly involved in the implementation of the religious habit formation program. The subjects were determined purposively, selected based on their involvement and understanding of the program being studied. The uniqueness of the research location was also evident in the school's vision and mission, which emphasized the development of students with noble character, religious values, and Islamic personality, in line with the focus on developing spiritual intelligence.

Data analysis in this study was carried out using the Miles Huberman and Saldana analysis model, which includes data collection, data condensation, data presentation, and

drawing conclusions. (Miles, & Saldana et al., 2014). (1) The data collection stage was carried out through direct observation of the implementation of the religious habit formation program, in-depth interviews with IRE teachers and students, and the collection of relevant documentation such as activity schedules, photos, and school archives. (2) Data condensation was carried out by selecting and grouping data based on themes related to the development of students' spiritual intelligence. (3) The third stage was data display, which was carried out by presenting the condensed data in the form of a narrative description. (4) The final stage was data verification and conclusion drawing, which was the process of interpreting the meaning of the data that had been presented.

Data validity was maintained through source and method triangulation. Source triangulation was carried out by checking the data obtained during the research through various sources or informants. Furthermore, method triangulation is done by comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to obtain valid and reliable data. Through various different

perspectives or points of view, it is hoped that results can be obtained that are close to the truth (Susanto et al., 2023).

**C. Results and Discussion**

**1. Results**

**Table 1. Religious Habits at SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga**

No	Activity	Time	Specific Behavior
1.	Morning Activity	7.00-8.00 a.m	Includes marching drills followed by group prayer and guidance on memorizing and reciting the Qur'an.
2.	Dhuha Prayer	8.00-8.45 a.m	The habit of praying in congregation is practiced, both sunnah and fardhu prayers. This practice fosters students' awareness of ḥabl min Allāh worship and religious responsibility.
3.	The routine of praying noon and afternoon prayers in congregation		
4.	5 S	Every day	Be smile, greet, say hello, be polite, courteous
4.	Sapa Seger (Sabtu Pagi Semangat Gembira)	4.00-5.00 a.m	The activity began with reading the Qur'an together, followed by online material on strengthening morals.
5.	Girl's Activities	Friday	Girl's Activities Friday This activity is a special study for girls, covering a variety of topics,

			ranging from fiqh ibadah (Islamic jurisprudence on worship), akhlak (morals), and contemporary issues.
6.	Weekly Donation Friday	Friday	The school works hard to foster empathy and social skills among its students.
7.	Quranic Camp	Once every three months	This activity is designed to foster students' love for the Qur'an and strengthen their habits of reading, memorizing, and understanding its meanings.
8.	Daarut Taqwa Camp	Level 7 semester program	This activity was carried out in the form of a religious camp that combined elements of spirituality, discipline, and togetherness

The religious habituation program implemented at SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga shows the institution's seriousness in developing students' spiritual intelligence. Each program is designed according to the curriculum SOP guidelines to realize character building and moral values that form the basis of spiritual intelligence, with measurable achievement indicators. In addition, the program is implemented in

an integrated manner and becomes a joint synergy carried out by all stakeholders.

This religious habit formation is carried out based on the vision and mission of SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga, namely “Excelling in the fields of Imtaq and Science and Technology to create a generation with character, achievement, Qur'anic charity, and environmental and global awareness.”

The mission is as follows:

- a. Fostering the religious spirit of students by instilling Islamic values in their daily lives
- b. Improving the competence and commitment of all educators in order to boost students' knowledge, insight, intelligence, and academic and non-academic achievements
- c. Exploring students' potential through structured and optimal intracurricular, extracurricular, and cocurricular activities
- d. Becoming a model school that implements and applies character education values
- e. Fostering a spirit of nationalism and love for the homeland

- f. Creating a school culture that is environmentally conscious and child-friendly
- g. Creating a school with a global outlook and international standards

### **Impact on Student Character**

The implementation of religious habits has a significant positive impact on the development of spiritual intelligence and character building in students. According to Mr. Azzam, a IRE teacher at SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga, *"the values that seem to grow from religious habits are responsibility, independence, and exemplary behavior. This is also reinforced by feedback from parents, who say that their children have also developed a sense of responsibility. For example, Sapa Seger is considered very positive by parents because it encourages children to wake up early, so that after performing the Subuh prayer, activities can begin immediately."* This shows that the habit-forming program at SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga is carried out through the contribution of teachers, homeroom teachers, educators, and parents in assisting student activities. This involvement contributes

to the formation of religious attitudes that support the development of students' spiritual intelligence.

## 2. Discussion

### **Developing Students' Spiritual Intelligence through Religious Habits**

Based on the results of research on religious habits at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School, religious habits can be divided into three programs, namely daily, weekly, and semester programs.

#### **Daily Program**

Daily religious practices are a form of school program implementation that is carried out consistently in students' daily activities at school. Daily religious practices include morning activities and the routine of praying Dhuha and Zuhur in congregation.

Morning activities include lining up, followed by group prayer and guidance on memorizing and reciting the Quran. Every day at 6:30 a.m., teachers welcome students at the gate with smiles and friendly greetings. This practice shapes students' characters and creates a positive atmosphere from the start of the day, as well as strengthening the emotional bond between teachers and

students. However, this habit needs to be linked to a deeper understanding of religious values so that it does not merely become a social routine (habit) without the internalization of concrete religious meaning (Lathifah & Rusli, 2019).

Tahfizh and tahsin mentoring, students are organized together with the homeroom teachers and assistant teachers. Students are taught to be patient and sincere in completing the targets at each level. The ethics of reading and reciting memorization are carried out according to practice and repeated continuously so that students can consistently improve the quality and quantity of their memorization according to existing standards. This is in line with the theory of spiritual intelligence, which highlights the importance of self-control as a sign of spiritual development. Students are trained to be patient when facing difficulties in memorization, to repeat readings in a disciplined manner, and to accept corrections from teachers and peers. According to Zohar and Marshall, who emphasize the importance of integrating spirituality into daily life, this method has been proven successful

in developing students' spiritual intelligence (Zohar & Marshall, 2007).



**Figure 1.1** Getting Used to Praying Together



**Figure 1.2** Memorization and Recitation of the Qur'an

Based on observations, religious habits at SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga, Students began to perform their religious duties in an orderly manner with their own awareness. This finding is in line with (Muttaqin et al., 2025) view that spiritual intelligence in education serves to provide direction and motivation in life, so that students are able to undergo the learning process with meaningful goals. This value is in line with Islamic education in developing spiritual intelligence, where students are accustomed to internalizing the values of faith and piety through consistent activities, there by forming spiritual awareness that is reflected in their attitudes, behavior, and outlook on life (Grasmane, 2023).

This statement aligns with that of Thomas Lickona, as cited by Muslich Masnur in his presentation: character is, in fact, a person's natural disposition in responding to situations in a moral manner, manifested in concrete actions through good behavior, honesty, responsibility, respect for others, and other noble character traits (Muslich, 2022). Habits formed through consistent practice can serve as an initial stimulus that subsequently develops into internal awareness.

Nevertheless, in the context of Islamic schools, students' religious practices may still be influenced by external factors such as institutional rules and norms, rather than solely by internal motivation. According to research by Dwiyani et al., ineffective internal motivation can hinder the effectiveness of religious character development, even if the program has been implemented as planned (Dwiyani et al., 2023). However, this process is reinforced by the involvement of all stakeholders within the school community in fostering a religious culture. This is in line with the view of Supadi et al., who assert that teachers

serve as agents of character development through values-based teaching, while a curriculum integrated with religious practices promotes a deep internalization of values (Supadi & Fauzi, 2024).

### Weekly Program

Weekly religious practices are carried out on a scheduled basis throughout the week. Activities include infaq practices, girl's activities, and Sapa Seger (*Sabtu Pagi Semangat Gembira*). Infaq is carried out voluntarily every week on Fridays. By setting aside some of their belongings or money, this practice allows children to become accustomed to giving and helping others in need, while teaching them how to strengthen their faith (Sultanik et al., 2022). Students with high spiritual intelligence are more capable of empathizing with others, which is reflected in their attitudes of mutual assistance, mutual respect, and compassionate behavior. This contributes to the formation of more harmonious social relationships, both in the school environment and in the community (Jumsir et al., 2025).

The girls' activities are held every Friday, attended by all female students in grades 7, 8, and 9.

One of student said that, *“Usually, activities for grades 7 and 8 are held in the lower hall, while grade 9 is held upstairs. The material usually covers topics related to girls, such as puberty or strengthening manners and morals.”*

Next is the Sapa Seger activity, which is held every Saturday after subuh prayers. The activity is conducted online with reinforcement of worship material and moral values. Based on interviews with IRE teachers, this activity has a positive impact on students because it fosters a spirit of discipline and responsibility. However, to maximize this impact, a more integrated approach between learning at school and education at home is needed. Given the crucial timing of the program, parents need to be actively involved in the process of shaping their children's character to create an environment conducive to their spiritual growth (Aldi & Khairanis, 2024). From the teachers' perspective, the implementation of this program also requires more systematic support, such as the provision of standardized learning

modules. Although the material taught covers aspects of faith, worship, and morals, there is still a need for more structured curriculum development efforts to ensure continuity of learning (Sultanik et al., 2022).



Figure 1.3 Sapa seger

### Semester Program

The semester-long religious habit formation program is designed as an intensive spiritual experience that deepens students' appreciation of religious values outside of their daily routines. Through the semester-long religious habit formation program, namely the Quranic camp and Daarut Taqwa Camp (DTC), students are encouraged to become familiar with the Quran by reading, memorizing, and understanding its verses. As stated by Nafis in Sholehuddin et al. (2023), intensive and repetitive practice in both programs builds students' spiritual

resilience in performing worship and facing daily challenges. This reinforces the argument that contextual and experience-based religious practices play a strategic role in developing students' spiritual intelligence.

The development of spiritual intelligence itself includes the mental capacity to understand the inner self, maintain a sense of belonging, express dependence on a higher power, seek meaning in life, and act with love and compassion (Grasmane, 2023). In addition, Nafis in Sholehuddin et al. (2023), also argues that children's Islamic spiritual intelligence will develop when a person has resilience, gratitude, interest, and excellent perception, honesty, good relationships, trust in God, sincerity, and piety. This conceptual framework is reflected in the implementation of DTC and Quranic Camp programs, which are designed as intensive religious training to strengthen the religious experiences of students.

Thus, consistent religious practices in schools serve as a medium for internalizing spiritual values. This is in line with (Grasmane, 2023), which emphasizes that spiritual intelligence

develops through inner meaning and repeated religious experiences (habituation). In addition, the development of a structured and integrated religious culture can be an effective strategy in fostering the spiritual intelligence of students at school (Muhammad & Sarwan, 2024).

Religious culture at school is an effort to embody religious values as traditions in the behavior and organizational culture followed by all members of the school (Khadavi, 2023). With habituation in educational institutions, students better understand Islamic teachings and know God, and have good character because this habituation can nurture individuals to become better people in the future (Khadavi et al., 2023).

### **Impact on Student Character**

In addition to gaining knowledge and improving students' intellectual abilities, learning or education in schools also involves the internalization of values that have the power to shape students' personalities. At all phases and stages of student growth, learning is a dynamic process, and the delivery of subject matter is only one of many actions involved (Suhifatullah et al.,

2021). This concept of education describes the integration of cognitive (knowledge), affective (attitude), and psychomotor (skills) aspects. Therefore, in educating students, it is imperative to build competencies that integrate unity of mind, attitude, and action. One of IRE teacher said,

*“The values that are seen to grow from religious habits are responsibility, independence, and exemplary behavior”*

Habit formation in religious or spiritual spirit can shape students' character. Research findings show that students at SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga develop their character through a consistent and continuous process, both in routine religious practices and learning habits in the classroom. In an educational environment, developing spiritual intelligence is an important effort to instill fundamental Islamic principles and strengthen character. In addition to gaining in-depth knowledge, this development initiative can help students strengthen their belief in their religious values.

This indicates that moral education should be provided to all school-age children to foster ethical behavior. The

Ministry of Education's Curriculum Division should involve teachers in designing a separate ethics course for students (Saeed Lodhi & Siddiqui, 2014). Therefore, spiritual intelligence is not only understood as an abstract concept, but also as an ability that needs to be developed from an early age, so that children are able to deal with moral and ethical dilemmas in their daily lives wisely (Ningrum & Hidayat, 2022).

#### D. Conclusion

Research shows that religious habits implemented at Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga Junior High School has an important role in developing students' spiritual intelligence. The religious habit program is carried out in a structured manner through daily, weekly, and semester activities. These habits are designed not only as formal activities but also as the internalization of religious values in students' lives. This is reflected through religious habits with structured programs, comprehensive strategies, an integrated curriculum, a supportive learning environment, and the active involvement of all school stakeholders.

Furthermore, the impact of

religious habits can be seen in the formation of students' character, particularly in terms of responsibility, independence, and exemplary behavior. As shown by the research results, students at SMP Muhammadiyah Plus Salatiga develop their character through a consistent and continuous process, both in classroom learning and routine religious habits at school. Thus, religious habits at this school serve as an effective strategy in developing students' spiritual intelligence and supporting the achievement of Islamic educational goals.

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