

The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Shaping Students' Islamic-Based Character at SDN 2 Montong Beter

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ABSTRACT

Islamic-based character formation in elementary school students is a crucial aspect of education, aiming to ensure that learners not only acquire academic knowledge but also internalize moral, spiritual, and ethical values as guiding principles in daily life. Islamic Education (PAI) teachers hold a strategic role in instilling these values from an early age. This study seeks to address two main questions: (1) How do PAI teachers contribute to the formation of Islamic-based character in students? and (2) What supporting and inhibiting factors influence this process? Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, involving the school principal, PAI teachers, and students as participants. Data analysis followed the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that: (1) the role of PAI teachers in shaping Islamic character is implemented through early instillation of adab, the integration of lectures with direct practice, the habituation of prayer before and after learning, and the provision of exemplary daily behavior; (2) Supporting factors include strong principal support and effective collaboration among teachers, while inhibiting factors involve limited parental engagement and restricted instructional time for PAI. Overall, the role of PAI teachers at SDN 2 Montong Beter proves effective in fostering Islamic character, though stronger collaboration between school and family is recommended to reinforce outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia serves a dual mandate: the cultivation of intellectual capability and the formation of moral character. This is codified in the Undang-Undang Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional, which explicitly requires the integration of character education into all learning processes. Within this framework, Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) holds a strategic role, aiming not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to instill Islamic values and ethical conduct in students (Oktavia & Rahman, 2021).

In elementary school contexts—where foundational moral frameworks are established—the role of the PAI teacher becomes particularly critical. The early school years are a formative stage in

which attitudes, beliefs, and moral habits are shaped, making PAI instruction a crucial mechanism for ensuring students develop *akhlaqul karimah* (Muzianah, 2017).

PAI teachers are expected to embody the values they teach. They must serve as moral exemplars whose words, actions, and attitudes reflect Islamic principles, thereby offering students a living model of faith in practice (Chaidir, Aly, & Kurnaengsih, 2024). According to Asih and El-Yunusi (2024), when learning activities—both formal and informal—are embedded with local values consistent with Islamic teachings, they become powerful vehicles for character formation.

The urgency for reinforcing Islamic-based character education is heightened in the current era of globalization, digital transformation, and shifting socio-cultural norms. Exposure to various media and ideologies can sometimes conflict with Islamic ethics, making intentional and contextually relevant teaching strategies essential (Haryati & Makarim, 2025). In rural schools such as SDN 2 Montong Beter, PAI teachers also serve as cultural mediators, balancing modern influences with local Islamic traditions (Rambe & Hasibuan, 2024).

Previous studies have highlighted the role of PAI teachers in character development through sustained moral reinforcement. Suyudi and Wathon (2020) emphasize continuous value internalization as a key practice, while Mumtahanah and Warif (2021) stress the synergy between curricular and extracurricular activities in nurturing Islamic character. Rusandi and Rusli (2021) add that qualitative research methods such as observation and narrative analysis are especially effective in revealing the nuances of such practices.

For example, research by Chaidir, Aly, and Kurnaengsih (2024) on “The Role of Aqidah Akhlak Teachers in Shaping Akhlaqul Karimah Character at MTs Negeri 12 Indramayu” found that teachers significantly improved discipline and responsibility among students. While both their study and the present research focus on the role of Islamic teachers in character formation, their work concentrated more on personality and social competencies in a junior high school context, whereas this study emphasizes rural elementary school realities and the challenges faced in SDN 2 Montong Beter.

Similarly, Cholida (2016) examined “The Role of Aqidah Akhlak Teachers in Shaping Students’ Akhlaqul Karimah at MAN Rejotangan,” revealing the teacher’s three main roles: as a guide, motivator, and communicator. While the focus aligns with the present research in evaluating the teacher’s contribution to moral education, her work is centered on upper secondary education with a role-specific lens, while this study takes a broader, integrative view, examining both pedagogical approaches and environmental constraints in a rural elementary setting.

Another relevant study by Rambe and Hasibuan (2024) on MTs Negeri 4 Mandailing Natal identified four main teacher roles: as a model, guide, advisor, and facilitator. Their research emphasized the influence of learning environments and teaching methods on academic achievement. In contrast, the present study focuses specifically on Islamic character formation, mapping not only the roles but also the specific challenges and supports influencing this process in rural primary education.

Additionally, research by Nurasiah et al. (2021) demonstrated the importance of PAI teachers in character formation, highlighting roles such as empowerment, exemplarity, intervention, integration, and screening. While similar in thematic scope, her work emphasizes self-confidence and character in an interactive and applicative learning model, whereas the present study integrates these aspects into a rural, community-embedded context.

Other scholars have examined institutional and leadership factors in supporting moral education. Permatasari et al. (2023) found that transformational leadership significantly boosts

teacher effectiveness in moral education, while Utari, Kurniawan, and Fathurrochman (2020) identified the importance of school–family–community collaboration. Sulistiyo (2025), however, reminds that teacher exemplarity remains the most decisive factor in character-building success.

Despite this growing body of literature, there remains a notable research gap: rural public elementary schools, such as SDN 2 Montong Beter, are underrepresented in the discourse. Most previous studies focus on urban or private Islamic school settings, which often have different resources, cultural norms, and community engagement structures (Kuswanto, forthcoming; Yunita & Mujib, 2021).

This gap warrants focused investigation into how rural PAI teachers navigate their roles within unique socio-cultural and institutional contexts. Understanding these dynamics can illuminate adaptive strategies and alternative models of Islamic character education not typically captured in mainstream research.

The novelty of this research lies in its integrated approach—examining the PAI teacher’s role not only in pedagogical terms but also in relation to environmental, institutional, and socio-cultural supports and barriers. This dual focus allows for a more holistic analysis compared to prior studies that typically emphasize either teaching methods or external constraints (Rizqiyah & Thobroni, 2023).

Therefore, this study is guided by two research questions: (1) How does the PAI teacher contribute to the formation of Islamic-based character among students at SDN 2 Montong Beter? and (2) What are the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing this process? The first objective is to identify and analyze the teaching methods, strategies, and role-modeling behaviors employed by the PAI teacher. The second is to explore environmental, institutional, and socio-cultural factors that either facilitate or hinder Islamic character formation (Firdaus et al., 2016; Cholida, n.d.; Dewanti & Akriani, 2023).

Academically, this study contributes to filling the empirical gap in rural Islamic character education research by integrating pedagogical and contextual perspectives. Practically, the findings may inform teacher training programs, policy development, and community engagement strategies aimed at strengthening Islamic-based character formation in rural schools. Ultimately, this research supports the broader national educational goal of producing students who are intellectually capable, morally grounded, and socially responsible members of Indonesian society (Putri et al., 2023; Setyasari et al., 2025).

METHOD

A. Research Type and Design

1. Research Type

This study employed a **qualitative descriptive approach**, which is a research method aimed at understanding a phenomenon from the perspective of the subjects or participants involved. The researcher focused on gathering qualitative data through interviews, observations, documentation, and document analysis to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Rusandi & Rusli, 2021).

Qualitative research generally utilized an inductive approach in data analysis, where the researcher conducted in-depth observations and analyses to identify emerging patterns or themes from the data. The descriptive qualitative method was deemed suitable because it enabled the researcher to present verbal descriptions of aspects of the social environment, including individuals, institutions, or other social contexts.

2. Research Design

The systematic research design followed the steps below:

- a) Identified the research problem and formulated clear research questions.
- b) Selected relevant participants capable of providing credible data.
- c) Collected data through interviews, observations, and documentation.
- d) Analyzed data by identifying themes, categories, and patterns.
- e) Verified data to ensure validity and credibility of findings in the field.
- f) Presented the research results in a narrative form.

B. Research Location

The study was conducted at SDN 02 Montong Beter. This site was selected due to its accessibility and the relevance of the research problem to the researcher's interest in understanding the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in shaping students' Islamic-based character. The location also offered a contextually rich environment for observing and collecting data needed for the study.

C. Research Subjects

The research subjects—also referred to as informants, resource persons, or participants—were individuals involved in a specific social situation who served as data sources (Sugiyono, 2022). In qualitative research, the selection of participants followed the serial selection of sample units principle, meaning that the number of subjects remained flexible and expanded as data collection progressed.

Participants included:

1. The Principal and PAI Teacher – Provided insights into strategies implemented for Islamic-based character building, challenges encountered, and students' comprehension of Islamic education.
2. Students – Shared their perspectives on Islamic education materials, frequency and effectiveness of teaching methods, challenges faced during learning, and external factors such as family environment and peer influence that affected their character development. Interviews were expected to reveal obstacles encountered by teachers and potential solutions for enhancing the effectiveness of Islamic education.

D. Data Collection Techniques

To obtain comprehensive and detailed data, the study used the following techniques:

1. Observation – Observed student activities during learning sessions.
2. Interviews – Conducted interviews with students, teachers, and other relevant individuals who could provide valuable information.
3. Documentation – Collected data from written records, photographs, and other historical documents relevant to the research topic (Sugiyono, 2022).

E. Research Instruments

According to Sugiyono (2022), in qualitative research, the main research instrument is the researcher, also referred to as the human instrument. The researcher served as the primary tool for gathering data using pre-established techniques, with skills and limitations that shaped the study's outcomes.

Supporting instruments included:

1. Observation Guide – Listed aspects to observe during fieldwork.
2. Interview Guide – Contained structured and semi-structured questions to maintain focus and direction in interviews.

3. Field Notes – Written records of observations and events during data collection.
4. Supporting Documents – Photographs, audio recordings, and written materials related to the research topic.
5. Recording Devices – Audio recorders and other tools for capturing data accurately.

F. Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis involved systematically organizing data from interviews, field notes, and documentation into categories, synthesizing findings, arranging them into patterns, and drawing conclusions (Sugiyono, 2022). The study applied Miles and Huberman's interactive model, consisting of four stages:

1. Data Collection – Conducted through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation, allowing sufficient time for comprehensive data gathering.
2. Data Reduction – Summarized, selected, and prioritized key data relevant to the research focus.
3. Data Display – Presented data in descriptive narratives, tables, and diagrams to illustrate field findings clearly.
4. Conclusion Drawing and Verification – Conclusions were initially tentative and subject to change until supported by consistent and valid evidence from field data.

G. Data Validity Testing

The study applied credibility testing as outlined by Sugiyono (2022) through:

1. Triangulation – Checked data across different sources, techniques, and times. Source triangulation compared data from multiple participants; technique triangulation compared results from interviews, observations, and documentation; and time triangulation collected data at various times of day.
2. Use of Reference Materials – Included authentic supporting documents such as photographs and original records to enhance data trustworthiness.
3. Negative Case Analysis – Searched for cases contradicting the findings to ensure balanced analysis. The absence of negative cases supported the reliability of results.
4. Member Checking – Allowed participants to review and confirm the accuracy of the collected data to ensure alignment with their intended meanings.

RESULTS

A. The Role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers in Shaping Islamic-Based Student Character at SDN 2 Montong Beter

Based on interviews with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SDN 2 Montong Beter, it was found that the role of PAI teachers is central in shaping student character based on Islamic values.

1. Instilling Adab from an Early Age

Instilling *adab* (Islamic manners) from an early age is a character education process emphasizing the formation of attitudes and behaviors in accordance with Islamic values, such as politeness, respect for others, honesty, discipline, and responsibility. In the context of elementary education, *adab* becomes the main foundation for children to absorb more complex knowledge.

Character education in *adab* is not only provided through formal lessons, but also through teacher role modeling, daily routines, and a supportive school environment. Teachers, especially PAI teachers, play a central role in shaping students' character by habituating them to Islamic behaviors in daily life.

The PAI teacher stated:

“Here we always get students accustomed to applying *adab* in daily life, both in and outside the school environment. Every morning, students are encouraged to greet teachers and friends as a sign of respect. They are also taught to kiss the teacher’s hand as a sign of honor and humility toward those who impart knowledge. In addition, we constantly instill polite speech and behavior toward teachers, peers, and the surrounding environment. This habit is carried out consistently through direct supervision, teacher role modeling, and reinforcement through religious activities. Alhamdulillah, most students show positive progress; they begin to habitually greet politely, respect elders, and control their behavior. We believe that *adab* is the fundamental foundation in building strong character and noble morals.” (Interview with Ahmad Fauzi, Tuesday, June 10, 2025)

The school principal expressed a similar view:

“Islamic-based character education in elementary schools plays a very important role, especially in shaping children’s character from an early age. At this stage, children are in the process of forming basic life values, so it is very appropriate to accustom them to showing respect to parents, teachers, and discipline in performing worship. With consistent habituation and proper guidance, Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, cooperation, and compassion can be deeply embedded in children. This not only impacts their school life but will also shape their personality in everyday life.” (Interview with Hj. Fitriani Khadijah, Wednesday, June 11, 2025)

From these interviews, it can be concluded that instilling *adab* in students begins from the very first day they enter school. Teachers consistently model good behavior, such as greeting upon entering class, respecting teachers and peers, and maintaining cleanliness and order in the school environment.

2. Lecture Method and Hands-On Practice

In the process of shaping student character at SDN 2 Montong Beter, PAI teachers use various effective teaching methods, one of which is the lecture method combined with hands-on practice. The lecture method is used to verbally convey religious material, such as values of *adab*, honesty, and responsibility. This verbal delivery aims to ensure students clearly understand the basic concepts of Islam.

After delivering the material, the teacher follows with hands-on practice, such as guiding students in performing ablution (*wudhu*) and reciting the Qur’an correctly (*tartil*). By combining these two methods, students not only gain theoretical knowledge but can also apply it in daily life.

As stated by Novi Ririn Handayani, a 6th-grade student:

“During PAI lessons, our teacher once invited us to practice prayer and reciting the Qur’an. This experience made me feel closer to Islamic teachings. I felt happy and enthusiastic because I could directly practice what was taught, not just listen to explanations. I was glad that I could perform ablution and prayer correctly thanks to the patient and thorough guidance from the teacher. This helped me better understand Islam and made PAI lessons enjoyable.” (Interview with Novi Ririn Handayani, Thursday, June 12, 2025)

This aligns with the PAI teacher’s statement:

“We don’t just explain, but directly guide the children in performing *wudhu*, reading the Qur’an, and practicing *adab* toward teachers and peers. This strategy is important to instill Islamic values in students’ daily lives, both in and outside of school. With a consistent and collaborative approach, values such as politeness, discipline, and faith can be strongly embedded from an early age.” (Interview with Ahmad Fauzi, Tuesday, June 10, 2025)

It can be concluded that in the process of shaping Islamic-based student character at SDN 2 Montong Beter, PAI teachers implement two main teaching methods—lectures and hands-on

practice—actively engaging students in meaningful learning so they not only know Islamic teachings but also experience and internalize them directly.

3. Prayer Habituation Before and After Learning

The practice of praying before and after learning is a routine activity for students at SDN 2 Montong Beter as part of shaping Islamic character. PAI teachers consistently guide students to begin and end lessons with prayer.

As the principal explained:

“Every morning before lessons begin, students are accustomed to reciting a prayer, and likewise after learning activities end. This habit is instilled from an early age to encourage students to remember Allah in all their activities, both at school and outside. With this habit, it is expected that a religious character will develop in students as a foundation for thinking, behaving, and acting.” (Interview with Hj. Fitriani Khadijah, Wednesday, June 11, 2025)

The PAI teacher reinforced this:

“We emphasize the importance of praying to students as a form of awareness that all knowledge they acquire comes from Allah SWT. Therefore, every lesson should be accompanied by prayer so that it is blessed and beneficial. We also remind them to be solemn and sincere when praying. If any student is playful or not serious during prayer, they must repeat it until it is done with full awareness and respect.” (Interview with Ahmad Fauzi, Tuesday, June 10, 2025)

From these interviews, the researcher concludes that this simple yet meaningful habit fosters religious attitudes in students. They become accustomed to connecting their learning process with spiritual values, such as gratitude, humility, and the belief that Allah is the source of all knowledge.

4. Providing Role Models in Daily Behavior

Being a role model in daily behavior is one of the main strategies PAI teachers use to shape Islamic character in students at SDN 2 Montong Beter. PAI teachers not only deliver religious material theoretically but also strive to be living examples in speech, behavior, and actions aligned with Islamic values.

The principal stated:

“We greatly expect PAI teachers to be good role models for students in their behavior, attitudes, and speech. Essentially, students are more likely to imitate what they see rather than just listening to advice or lectures. Therefore, role modeling from PAI teachers is very important in shaping student character according to Islamic values.” (Interview with Hj. Fitriani Khadijah, Wednesday, June 11, 2025)

The PAI teacher echoed this:

“As a religious teacher, I always try to be a good example for students, both in words and daily actions. I maintain proper manners, speak politely, and display good *adab* not only toward students but also in interacting with fellow teachers and the entire school community. My hope is that by providing real examples, students will directly imitate positive values through actions, not just words or advice.” (Interview with Ahmad Fauzi, Tuesday, June 10, 2025)

This role modeling has proven to have a positive influence, as one student shared:

“I like seeing the way the PAI teacher speaks and behaves, so I also want to speak and behave politely. When I see the teacher’s calm and caring attitude, I feel motivated to imitate it. I feel proud and touched to become a more polite person at school, and I believe this will be beneficial in my daily life.” (Interview with Novi Ririn Handayani, Thursday, June 12, 2025)

From these interviews, the researcher concludes that teacher role modeling is a key factor in internalizing character values in students. By directly witnessing good behavior every day, students can more easily understand and apply Islamic attitudes in both school and home life.



Picture 1. Mind Map of the Role of PAI Teachers in Shaping Students' Islamic Character

The picture 1 of mind map shows that the role of PAI teachers in shaping students' Islamic character is carried out through several integrated strategies. Teachers instill adab by teaching politeness, respect, honesty, discipline, and responsibility, primarily through their own example and daily routines, such as morning greetings or students kissing the teacher's hand. They also combine lectures with hands-on practice, delivering Islamic values in theory while providing practical activities like performing wudhu, praying, and reading the Qur'an to ensure students can apply these teachings in real life. Additionally, prayer habituation before and after learning fosters spiritual awareness, gratitude, and appreciation of knowledge. Finally, teachers act as role models, demonstrating appropriate speech and behavior, which students observe and imitate, helping internalize core character values through direct experience.

The following Table 1 presents the findings on the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in shaping Islamic-based student character at SDN 2 Montong Beter. The table summarizes four main roles and methods implemented by PAI teachers, supported by direct evidence from interviews with teachers, the school principal, and students.

Table 1. The Role of PAI Teachers in Shaping Islamic-Based Student Character at SDN 2 Montong Beter

No.	Role/Method	Description	Key Evidence from Interviews
1	Instilling Adab from an Early Age	Character education emphasizing politeness, respect, honesty, discipline, and responsibility, implemented through daily routines, teacher modeling, and religious activities.	Ahmad Fauzi (PAI Teacher, 10 June 2025) stated that students are habituated to greet, kiss teachers' hands, and speak politely. Hj. Fitriani Khadijah (Principal, 11 June 2025) emphasized early habituation to respect and discipline in worship.
2	Lecture Method & Hands-On Practice	Combination of verbal explanation of Islamic values with direct practice such as ablution, Qur'an recitation, and proper prayer.	Novi Ririn Handayani (Student, 12 June 2025) expressed enthusiasm for practicing prayers and Qur'an recitation. Ahmad Fauzi (10 June 2025) highlighted the importance of combining theory and

				practice.
3	Prayer Habituation Before & After Learning	Daily routine of reciting prayers before and after lessons to build religious awareness and connect learning with spiritual values.		Hj. Fitriani Khadijah (11 June 2025) stressed remembering Allah before and after activities. Ahmad Fauzi (10 June 2025) reminded students to pray sincerely and with awareness.
4	Providing Role Models in Daily Behavior	Teachers demonstrate Islamic manners, polite speech, and respectful attitudes as living examples for students.		Hj. Fitriani Khadijah (11 June 2025) noted the importance of teachers being role models. Ahmad Fauzi (10 June 2025) stated that he consciously models good manners. Novi Ririn Handayani (12 June 2025) was inspired to imitate

The table 1 highlights that character formation at SDN 2 Montong Beter is implemented through four main strategies. First, instilling adab from an early age emphasizes politeness, respect, honesty, discipline, and responsibility, reinforced through consistent habituation and teacher role modeling. Second, the lecture method combined with hands-on practice integrates theoretical lessons with practical activities such as performing ablution, reciting the Qur'an, and practicing prayer, ensuring students both understand and apply Islamic teachings. Third, prayer habituation before and after learning embeds spiritual values by consistently beginning and ending lessons with prayer, fostering a connection between learning and religious consciousness. Fourth, providing role models in daily behavior ensures that teachers serve as living examples of Islamic manners and attitudes for students to imitate. The evidence indicates that when these approaches are consistently applied, they have a significant and positive impact on students' attitudes, behaviors, and overall character development.

B. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Formation of Islamic-Based Student Character at SDN 2 Montong Beter

1. Supporting Factors

In carrying out the task of shaping students' Islamic-based character, the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher at SDN 2 Montong Beter does not work alone but is supported by various factors that strengthen the success of the program.

a. Support from the Principal

Principal support is one of the key factors that contribute to the success of PAI teachers in shaping students' Islamic-based character at SDN 2 Montong Beter. The principal not only grants permission and flexibility but is also actively involved in facilitating various religious activities held at the school. This role is evident in providing time, space, and moral support for the PAI teacher to consistently carry out religious habituation programs.

In an interview, the principal stated:

"We always give full support to the PAI teacher in every activity related to religious guidance at school. One form of support can be seen in our daily routine, where before the learning process begins, students are accustomed to praying together. Additionally, every Friday, we hold activities for strengthening faith and piety (IMTAQ) as an effort to reinforce students' spiritual values. We facilitate all these activities as much as possible within our capabilities, because we believe that religious guidance is an important part of shaping students' character and noble morals." (*Interview with Hj. Fitriani Khodijah, Wednesday, June 11, 2025*)

The principal also showed her commitment to maintaining a religious school environment and ensuring that all school elements participate in shaping students' character. She added:

"We want religious values not only to be taught in class but also to be applied as part of students' daily habits. We want religious teachings not just to be theories learned from

textbooks, but to be principles that are ingrained in their every action. Therefore, we involve all teachers, not only the PAI teacher, in every religious activity. This way, we hope religious values can be better internalized and become part of the school culture, manifested in students' daily behavior." (*Interview with Hj. Fitriani Khodijah, Wednesday, June 11, 2025*)

From the interview results, it can be concluded that the principal's direct involvement and openness toward Islamic activities serve as a crucial foundation in supporting PAI teachers in instilling Islamic character values in students from an early age.

b. Cooperation Among Teachers

Cooperation among teachers is also a highly supportive factor in implementing the role of PAI teachers in shaping students' Islamic-based character. At SDN 2 Montong Beter, character education is not solely the responsibility of the PAI teacher but is carried out collectively by all educators at the school. Each teacher plays a role in supervising and promoting religious values so that a religious atmosphere is built comprehensively and consistently within the school environment.

The PAI teacher explained:

"If all teachers pay the same attention to shaping students' character, the guidance process will become easier and more effective. This is because children will get used to observing and imitating their teachers' behavior and attitudes in daily life. The consistency and role modeling of all educators will shape students' positive mindset and actions. In addition, to support this character education process, we also ensure that the school's facilities and infrastructure support these objectives. Adequate facilities, such as comfortable classrooms, facilities that support religious activities, and character-building extracurricular activities like scouting and marching band, are essential for creating an environment that supports students' character development." (*Interview with Ahmad Fauzi, Tuesday, June 10, 2025*)

Based on the interview results, it can be concluded that teacher synergy naturally and consistently creates a religious learning atmosphere, thereby strengthening the role of PAI teachers in shaping students according to Islamic values.

2. Inhibiting Factors

In the process of forming Islamic-based character at SDN 2 Montong Beter, teachers face several challenges in implementing Islamic-based character education, which consist of the following aspects:

a. Lack of Parental Support

One of the inhibiting factors in shaping students' Islamic-based character is the lack of support from parents. Although Islamic values have been instilled at school, their success greatly depends on continued reinforcement at home. However, not all parents show sufficient attention to the development of their children's Islamic character. This creates a gap between the habituation process at school and students' lives outside of school.

The PAI teacher explained:

"Often, at school, students are already accustomed to praying, behaving politely, and following the norms taught. However, challenges arise when at home they do not receive the same reminders or examples. As a result, the positive habits built at school are disrupted and do not continue in their daily lives. This indicates the importance of parental and home environment roles in supporting school-based habituation so that positive character and behavior can develop consistently." (*Interview with Ahmad Fauzi, Tuesday, June 10, 2025*)

He added that some parents are not involved even in simple matters, such as asking about religious lessons or guiding their children in worship. As a result, students only practice these good habits while at school, without reinforcement in the family environment.

The principal also acknowledged:

“Some parents still pay little attention to their children’s moral and character development. They tend to focus more on academic achievement and general subjects, without realizing that character is the main foundation in shaping a child’s personality. In fact, strong character education will equip children with attitudes and values that will guide them in facing life’s challenges far longer than mere academic knowledge.” (*Interview with Hj. Fitriani Khodijah, Wednesday, June 11, 2025*)

Based on the interview results, it can be concluded that the lack of parental support poses a particular challenge for PAI teachers in ensuring that students’ Islamic character is formed holistically, as character education should be balanced between school and home.

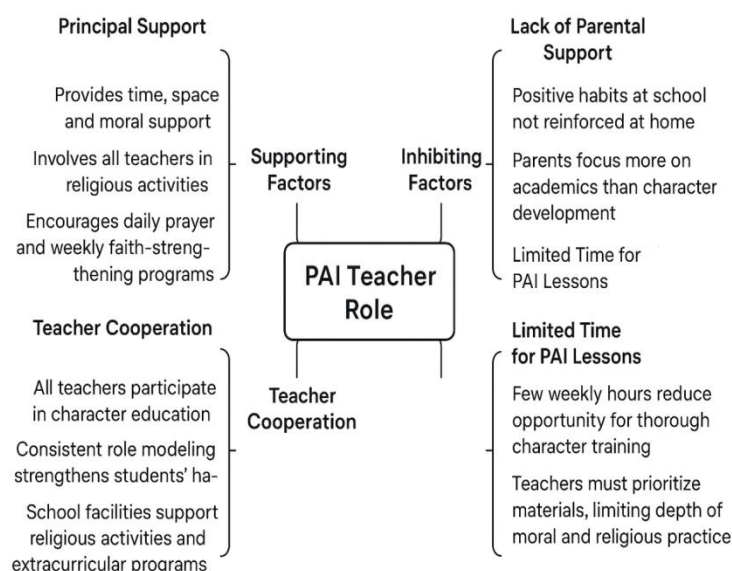
b. Limited Time for PAI Lessons

Limited instructional time is also one of the inhibiting factors in enabling PAI teachers to shape students’ character optimally. The PAI subject, which is only allocated a few hours per week, is considered insufficient to thoroughly instill and habituate all Islamic values. This forces PAI teachers to adjust the material to the time available.

The PAI teacher stated:

“The limited hours for Islamic Religious Education often become an obstacle for us to deliver the material optimally. We have many things we want to teach students, but the available time is not enough to cover everything. As a result, we have to be selective and prioritize the most important materials to instill, so that students can at least have a strong basic understanding within the limited time.” (*Interview with Ahmad Fauzi, Tuesday, June 10, 2025*)

Based on the interview results, it can be concluded that this condition reduces the opportunity for PAI teachers to provide in-depth moral and religious practice training. Character formation, which should be continuous and gradual, becomes less effective due to insufficient time allocation.



Picture 2. Mind Map Title: Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Shaping Students’ Islamic Character

The picture 2 of mind map shows that the role of the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teacher is central in shaping students’ Islamic character, influenced by both supporting and inhibiting factors. Among the supporting factors, the principal plays a crucial role by providing

time, space, and moral support, involving all teachers in religious activities, and encouraging students to participate in daily prayers and weekly programs that strengthen faith. Teacher cooperation further reinforces this process, as all teachers actively engage in character education, consistently model good behavior, and utilize school facilities to support religious activities and extracurricular programs. However, certain inhibiting factors can limit the effectiveness of character development. A lack of parental support means that positive habits formed at school are not reinforced at home, as parents often focus more on academics than on nurturing moral values. Additionally, the limited number of weekly PAI lessons restricts the opportunity for thorough character training, forcing teachers to prioritize curricular material over deeper moral and religious practice. Together, these supporting and inhibiting factors shape the overall impact of PAI teachers in fostering students' Islamic character.

Table 2 presents the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the formation of Islamic-based student character at SDN 2 Montong Beter. These factors were identified through interviews with the principal and PAI teachers, reflecting both institutional strengths and challenges in implementing character education.

Table 2 – Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Forming Islamic-Based Student Character at SDN 2 Montong Beter

Category	Description	Source
Supporting Factors – Principal Support	The principal actively facilitates religious activities, provides time, space, and moral support, and involves all teachers in fostering Islamic values.	Interview with Hj. Fitriani Khodijah (June 11, 2025)
Supporting Factors – Cooperation Among Teachers	All teachers collaboratively promote and supervise religious values, supported by adequate facilities and character-building extracurricular activities.	Interview with Ahmad Fauzi (June 10, 2025)
Inhibiting Factors – Lack of Parental Support	Some parents show insufficient attention to their children's Islamic character development, leading to inconsistency between school and home habituation.	Interview with Ahmad Fauzi & Hj. Fitriani Khodijah (June 10-11, 2025)
Inhibiting Factors – Limited Time for PAI Lessons	The few weekly hours allocated for Islamic Religious Education limit the depth of material delivery and character formation.	Interview with Ahmad Fauzi (June 10, 2025)

The supporting factors include strong principal support—such as facilitating religious activities and integrating Islamic values into the school culture—and close cooperation among teachers, who collectively reinforce positive values through teaching, supervision, and extracurricular programs. On the other hand, inhibiting factors consist of a lack of consistent parental support, which causes a gap between school-based habituation and home environments, and the limited instructional time for Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which restricts the depth and continuity of character development efforts. Together, these findings highlight the need for holistic collaboration between school, family, and community to achieve sustainable character formation.

DISCUSSION

A. Analysis of Results

1. The Role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teachers in Shaping Islamic-Based Student Character

In the realm of primary education, the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers is crucial because this period marks the initial phase of a child's character formation. PAI teachers play a highly strategic role in shaping students' character, particularly those grounded in Islamic

values. In the context of elementary education, the role of a PAI teacher goes beyond delivering lesson materials; they also serve as role models and mentors in the spiritual, moral, and social lives of students. By providing good examples, fostering positive habits, offering advice, and applying teaching methods that touch students' emotions, PAI teachers instill values such as honesty, responsibility, good manners (*adab*), and discipline in line with Islamic teachings. Furthermore, PAI teachers act as motivators, guides, and supervisors in students' character development so they may grow into morally upright individuals.

Based on research findings obtained through observations and interviews at SDN 2 Montong Beter, the role of PAI teachers in developing Islamic-based student character is implemented through several approaches, including:

a. Instilling Adab from an Early Age

Adab refers to behavior that reflects noble character, such as politeness, respect for others, honesty, and responsibility. In Islamic education, *adab* is even prioritized over knowledge. Imam Malik *rahimahullah* once said, "Learn *adab* before knowledge," emphasizing that moral and ethical foundations are essential before engaging in academic pursuits. Instilling *adab* from an early age is of utmost importance in character formation. Wahyuni (2021) states that character is a moral trait embedded in an individual, beginning with an understanding of behavioral patterns that conform to existing norms.

In the Islamic education context, *adab* instillation in early childhood is a vital part of the *ta'dib* concept—one of the foundations of Islamic education. This process can be implemented through role modeling (*uswah hasanah*), habituation, positive reinforcement, and a supportive environment. Abdullah Nashih Ulwan (2003), in *Tarbiyatul Aulad fil Islam*, notes that instilling Islamic values is more effective when demonstrated through real-life examples. A teacher greeting students with *salaam*, showing politeness, and creating a religious classroom atmosphere are examples of this application. This is reinforced by Jean Piaget's moral development theory, which holds that elementary-aged children learn through the social examples around them.

At SDN 2 Montong Beter, PAI teachers implement *adab* education through habitual polite behavior in daily school life. For instance, students are taught to greet upon entering class, kiss their teachers' hands as a sign of respect, and listen attentively when teachers speak. They are also trained to avoid rude language, be honest, and help classmates.

b. Lecture Method and Hands-On Practice

The lecture method and hands-on practice are two approaches frequently used in learning processes, especially in value and skill development. Combining lectures with practical application aligns with David Kolb's (1984) *Experiential Learning Theory*, where students learn through experience. For example, when a teacher not only explains ablution (*wudhu*) but also demonstrates it together with students, it becomes a form of active learning that deepens understanding and internalization (Haryati & Makarim, 2025).

At SDN 2 Montong Beter, PAI teachers employ this combined approach effectively. Lectures are used to verbally convey religious values such as *adab*, honesty, and responsibility. This is followed by practical activities, including guiding students in ablution and reciting the Qur'an with proper *tajwid*. This combination ensures students not only grasp theoretical concepts but also practice them in daily life.

In conclusion, two primary methods—lectures and hands-on practice—are central in shaping Islamic-based student character at the school. Lectures deliver conceptual understanding, while hands-on practice offers direct experience, enabling students to genuinely internalize values.

c. Prayer Habituation Before and After Learning

Praying before and after lessons is a simple yet profound practice in character and spiritual education. At SDN 2 Montong Beter, this is a daily routine guided by PAI teachers, embedding religious consciousness in students. This strategy reflects B.F. Skinner's (1953) Behaviorist Theory, where daily repetition and reinforcement of prayer cultivate lasting religious habits.

In Islam, this is part of ta'dib—the consistent habituation of moral values to develop good character. Interviews revealed that such practices foster religious attitudes naturally, encouraging gratitude, humility, and recognition of Allah as the source of all knowledge. This habituation is not merely ritual but serves to instill constant awareness of God's presence, discipline, respect, and humility.

d. Providing Role Models in Daily Behavior

Role modeling is an educational strategy through visible actions that students can observe and emulate. In character education, it is especially effective because children tend to imitate what they see rather than only what they hear. The teacher's manner of speaking, dressing, and behaving aligns with Albert Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory, which states that learners model the behaviors of figures they perceive as credible and admirable.

In Islamic tradition, Prophet Muhammad SAW is regarded as *uswatun hasanah*—the ultimate role model. PAI teachers at SDN 2 Montong Beter strive to emulate this example, ensuring their behavior aligns with Islamic values (Oleh, n.d.). Interview findings confirm that consistent role modeling by teachers is key to internalizing character values in students.

By witnessing daily examples of positive conduct, students are more likely to adopt Islamic manners both at school and at home. Teachers, parents, and the surrounding community thus become the primary models shaping children's moral compass.

2. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Formation of Islamic-Based Student Character at SDN 2 Montong Beter

a. Supporting Factors

In carrying out the task of shaping Islamic-based student character, Islamic Education (PAI) teachers at SDN 2 Montong Beter do not work alone; they are supported by various factors that strengthen the success of the program.

1) Support from the Principal

The principal is the highest leader within the school environment who not only manages administrative matters but also acts as a director, motivator, and policymaker. According to Bass & Avolio (1994), in *Transformational Leadership in Education*, a principal with a transformational leadership style can inspire, motivate, and support teachers in achieving educational goals. If the principal supports teachers, including PAI teachers, the school environment becomes more positive and religious. In character building, the principal's role is vital, as they set policy directions, support school programs, and foster a positive culture within the school (Permatasari et al., 2023).

Support from the principal is one of the key factors enabling the success of PAI teachers in fostering Islamic-based student character at SDN 2 Montong Beter. The principal not only grants permission and autonomy but also actively facilitates various religious activities in the school. This role includes providing time, space, and moral support to help PAI teachers consistently implement religious habituation programs.

Based on interview results, it can be concluded that the principal's direct involvement and openness toward religious activities form a strong foundation for supporting PAI teachers in instilling Islamic values from an early age.

2) Collaboration Between Teachers

Collaboration among teachers is a crucial part of creating a conducive and sustainable learning environment. According to Dufour & Eaker (1998), in *Professional Learning Community*, collaboration among teachers in a learning community increases educational effectiveness. Such collaboration helps unify visions, plan character-building activities, and reinforce the consistent implementation of Islamic values in the school. In character education—particularly Islamic-based—teacher collaboration becomes the foundation for forming a unified approach and actions in educating students (Setyasari et al., 2025).

Teacher collaboration is one of the most supportive factors for PAI teachers in shaping Islamic-based student character. At SDN 2 Montong Beter, character education is not solely the responsibility of PAI teachers but is implemented collectively by all educators. Each teacher plays a role in monitoring and reinforcing religious values, thereby building a thoroughly religious school environment.

Research findings conclude that with synergy among teachers, a religious learning atmosphere naturally and consistently develops, strengthening the role of PAI teachers in shaping students according to Islamic values. Teachers work not only individually but also collectively in designing strategies, implementing programs, and supporting one another to achieve educational goals. Collaboration is evident in various aspects, from designing habituation programs, carrying out religious activities, to addressing student behavioral issues.

b. Inhibiting Factors

1) Lack of Parental Support

Parents are the first and foremost educators in a child's life. According to Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) in *Ecological Systems Theory*, the family (microsystem) is the primary sphere in a child's character development. When parents do not support the values taught at school, the process of internalizing student character is hindered. Their role is crucial in reinforcing character values instilled at school, especially Islamic values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and respect. Without support and synergy between school and home, character building will not be optimal.

One of the obstacles to forming Islamic-based student character at SDN 2 Montong Beter is the lack of parental support. Although Islamic values are instilled in the school environment, success greatly depends on the continuity of guidance at home. However, not all parents show sufficient concern for their children's Islamic character development. This creates a gap between habituation at school and life outside of school.

Some parents are minimally involved, even in simple matters such as asking about religious lessons or guiding their children in worship. As a result, students often only practice good habits while at school, without reinforcement in the family environment.

Research findings conclude that this lack of parental support poses a challenge for PAI teachers in ensuring students develop a fully Islamic character. Ideally, character education should be balanced between school and home.

2) Limited Time for PAI Lessons

In public elementary schools, Islamic Education (PAI) lessons usually have only about two class hours per week, equivalent to 70 minutes. This is considered insufficient given the broad objectives of PAI, which aim to instill faith, worship, and morality that require continuous guidance. According to Beane (1997) in *Integrated Learning & Hidden Curriculum*, character education should not be confined to specific class time but can be integrated thematically and across subjects.

However, when formal time is limited and there is no reinforcement through non-formal activities, the effectiveness of teaching religious values decreases.

Limited instructional time is also an obstacle at SDN 2 Montong Beter in enabling PAI teachers to optimally shape student character. The few allocated hours per week are not enough to deeply instill and habituate all Islamic values. This forces PAI teachers to adjust the material to fit the available time.

Research findings conclude that this time constraint is a major barrier to instilling Islamic values and student character. It reduces opportunities for PAI teachers to provide in-depth moral education and hands-on religious practice. Ideally, character formation should be continuous and gradual, but the lack of time allocation hinders this process.

B. Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study demonstrate that the PAI teacher at SDN 2 Montong Beter plays a pivotal role in shaping students' Islamic-based character, supported by key factors such as principal leadership and inter-teacher collaboration, while facing challenges like limited parental involvement and restricted instructional time. These results are largely consistent with previous studies. For example, Chaidir, Aly, and Kurnaengsih (2024) also emphasized the significance of teacher roles as both moral exemplars and motivators in developing *akhlaqul karimah*, though their context was a junior high school and focused on personality and social competencies rather than the multi-faceted challenges of a rural elementary setting.

Similarly, the emphasis on collaborative support among teachers mirrors the findings of Dufour and Eaker (1998), who highlighted professional learning communities as a driver of educational effectiveness. However, unlike their context, where collaboration was primarily academic, this study found that teacher collaboration extended into shared responsibility for religious habituation and monitoring moral behavior. The importance of principal support in this study aligns with Bass and Avolio's (1994) transformational leadership theory, where leaders inspire and facilitate teachers' efforts; yet, here, such leadership is also intertwined with the school's religious culture and community identity.

In contrast, this study's identification of minimal parental involvement as a major barrier differs from research in urban or private Islamic schools, such as Nurasiah et al. (2021), where parental engagement was higher and reinforced school values at home. Likewise, the finding on limited PAI instructional time reinforces Beane's (1997) argument that character education should be integrated across subjects, but in this case, the absence of sufficient non-formal reinforcement makes the time constraint more acute.

C. Implications of Findings

The results contribute to the broader understanding of Islamic character education by underscoring the interplay between pedagogical practices, institutional leadership, and community engagement in rural contexts. Theoretically, they reinforce existing models that view character formation as a multi-layered process involving home, school, and community. Practically, the findings suggest that effective Islamic-based character education in rural public elementary schools requires more than classroom instruction; it needs active principal involvement, inter-teacher synergy, and systematic parental engagement.

These findings also carry implications for policy and practice. Teacher training programs could incorporate modules on collaborative planning for character education and strategies for engaging parents in religious habituation beyond the school environment. Furthermore,

policymakers might consider allocating more instructional hours for PAI or integrating its principles into other subjects to mitigate time limitations.

D. Limitations of the Study

This study is not without limitations. First, the research was conducted in a single rural public elementary school, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other contexts, particularly urban or private Islamic institutions. Second, data collection relied heavily on interviews and observations, which may be influenced by participants' social desirability bias, leading to more favorable self-reports of practices and attitudes. Third, the study did not quantitatively measure the outcomes of character formation, focusing instead on qualitative descriptions, which limits the ability to draw causal conclusions about the effectiveness of specific strategies.

Additionally, external variables such as students' peer influences, media exposure, and socio-economic background were not controlled for, even though they could significantly impact character development. These limitations point to the need for multi-site, mixed-method studies in future research to provide a more comprehensive and measurable picture.

Overall, the study reaffirms the critical role of the PAI teacher in Islamic-based character formation, particularly in rural elementary schools where the teacher often serves as both educator and moral role model. Principal support and inter-teacher collaboration emerge as strong enablers of success, while minimal parental involvement and limited instructional time remain persistent challenges.

These partial conclusions suggest that character education is most effective when supported by a whole-school approach and reinforced at home. Without such synergy, even the most dedicated PAI teacher faces constraints in achieving lasting behavioral change among students. The findings thus set the stage for the final conclusion section, which will integrate these insights into broader recommendations for enhancing Islamic character education in rural contexts.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted, several conclusions can be drawn. First, the role of the PAI teacher in character formation encompasses: (1) instilling adab from an early age, (2) combining lecture methods with direct practice, (3) habituating prayer before and after learning, and (4) providing exemplary behavior in daily attitudes. Second, the supporting factors include: (1) strong support from the principal, and (2) collaborative cooperation among teachers. Meanwhile, the inhibiting factors consist of: (1) minimal parental involvement, and (2) limited instructional time for PAI. These findings reinforce the pivotal role of PAI teachers as facilitators of Islamic-based character education, especially in the primary school context. The effective combination of role modeling, religious habituation, and practical instruction underscores the importance of holistic pedagogical approaches supported by school leadership and collegial collaboration. However, challenges such as limited parental engagement and constrained lesson time highlight the necessity for more coordinated home-school partnerships. This study contributes to the existing literature by offering context-specific insights into the implementation of Islamic character education in public elementary schools. Future research could compare Islamic-based character education across different school contexts using mixed methods for deeper evaluation. Fostering Islamic character is a shared responsibility of teachers, school leaders, parents, and the community, requiring stronger collaboration and parental involvement to ensure consistent practice of Islamic values.

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