

## **Shaping Character Through Islamic Education: A Systematic Review of Instructional Design Approaches**

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### **Abstract**

Character education in elementary schools has a strategic role in shaping students' personality and moral character. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) serves as a primary medium for internalizing Islamic values so that they are not only understood cognitively but are also manifested in students' attitudes and daily behavior. Based on this background, the focus of this research includes the strengthening of character in the objectives and content of PAI, the principles of effective instructional design, value-based learning approaches and methods, the role of teachers in character formation, and the assessment of students' attitudes and character. The purpose of this study is to identify the design of Islamic Religious Education learning that is oriented toward character strengthening. This research employs a library research method with a descriptive-analytical approach by examining various relevant scholarly sources. The results of the study indicate that character strengthening should be designed in an integrative and holistic manner through the principles of role modeling and habituation. It should be developed through contextual, value-based, and reflective learning approaches, and supported by participatory methods and continuous authentic assessment in order to form students who are faithful and possess noble character.

**Keyword:** Instructional design, Islamic Religious Education, character strengthening.

### **Abstrak**

Pendidikan karakter di sekolah dasar memiliki peran strategis dalam membentuk kepribadian dan akhlak peserta didik. Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam menjadi sarana utama dalam menginternalisasikan nilai-nilai Islam agar tidak hanya dipahami secara kognitif, tetapi juga diwujudkan dalam sikap dan perilaku sehari-hari. Berdasarkan latar belakang tersebut maka fokus penelitian ini meliputi penguatan karakter dalam tujuan dan materi PAI, prinsip-prinsip desain pembelajaran yang efektif, pendekatan dan metode pembelajaran berbasis nilai, peran guru dalam pembentukan karakter, serta penilaian sikap dan karakter siswa. Adapun tujuan penelitian ini untuk mengetahui desain pembelajaran PAI yang berorientasi pada penguatan karakter. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode library research dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis melalui kajian berbagai sumber ilmiah yang relevan. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahwa penguatan karakter harus dirancang secara integratif dan holistik melalui prinsip keteladanan dan pembiasaan, dikembangkan dengan pendekatan kontekstual, nilai, dan

reflektif, serta didukung metode partisipatif dan penilaian autentik berkelanjutan untuk membentuk peserta didik yang beriman dan berakhlak mulia.

**Kata Kunci:** Desain Pembelajaran, Pendidikan Agama Islam, Penguatan Karakter.

## **A. Introduction**

Character education is a crucial issue in the context of education in Indonesia, particularly in elementary schools. Elementary school is a crucial time for the foundational formation of a child's personality and morals. Therefore, character education must be integrated into all aspects of learning, including Islamic Religious Education (PAI). At the elementary school level, PAI not only teaches religious teachings but also serves to shape students' character in accordance with Islamic teachings, such as honesty, discipline, humility, compassion, and tolerance (Yani, 2024).

The general goal of character education is to improve the quality of educational delivery and outcomes, leading to the development of students' character and noble morals in a holistic, integrated, and balanced manner. Through character education, students are expected to be able to independently develop and utilize their knowledge, examine and internalize, and personalize character values and noble morals so that they are reflected in their daily behavior (Muthma'innah, 2022).

Character-oriented religious education requires collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community to create an environment that supports student character development. Therefore, strengthening collaboration between schools, parents, and other social institutions is necessary to optimize character education (Putra, 2025).

Based on this urgency, this study was conducted to examine and describe the design of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning that is oriented towards strengthening character, considering that PAI learning is not enough to only emphasize the cognitive aspect, but must be able to internalize Islamic values into the attitudes and behavior of students in a real way. Without a planned and systematic learning design, the process of instilling character values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and social concern is difficult to implement optimally and sustainably. Therefore, this study aims to provide a conceptual and practical overview of the planning, implementation, and evaluation of PAI learning that integrates Islamic character values in the learning process.

The discussion that will be studied in this research includes: 1) strengthening character in the objectives and materials of PAI, (2) principles of effective PAI learning design, (3) PAI learning approaches that are oriented towards strengthening character, (4) PAI learning methods that are oriented towards strengthening character, (5) the role of teachers in forming student character, and (6) assessment of attitudes and character. student.

Based on the description above, the author is interested in studying and deepening what the author has written in the title Islamic Religious Education Learning Design oriented towards strengthening character.

## **B. Literature Review**

### **Definition of Character and Character Values in Islam**

Character in Islam is known as akhlaq, which is a trait or state of mind embedded within a person, leading to spontaneous actions without much deliberation.

Akhlaq is not merely outward behavior, but a reflection of one's inner state shaped by Islamic faith and values. Therefore, character in Islam is derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, the primary guidelines for a Muslim's life (Nurhadi and Abdul Rahman, 2020). This opinion is reinforced by Majid and Andayani, who assert that character is a trait or disposition embedded within a person and reflected in daily behavior. From an Islamic perspective, character is synonymous with the concept of akhlaq, a state of mind that drives a person to act spontaneously without excessive deliberation (Majid & Andayani, 2012).

In addition, Prophet Muhammad SAW emphasized that the main mission he was sent to was to perfect human morality, as contained in the Prophet's hadith which reads:

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأَتَمِّمَ مَكَارِمَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

Indeed, I was sent only to perfect noble morals." (Narrated by Ahmad).

This hadith reinforces the view that character or morals occupy a central position in Islamic teachings and are the primary goal of Islamic education. Character values in Islam are derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah, encompassing divine and human values as guidelines for developing a well-rounded Muslim personality.

Character in Islam is morality rooted in faith and the values of the Quran and Sunnah. Character is not only evident in outward behavior but also reflects a Muslim's inner state. Therefore, Islamic character formation is a crucial part of Islamic education to develop individuals with faith, noble morals, and consistency in daily life.

Based on this definition, it can be understood that character in Islam does not exist in isolation, but rather forms the primary foundation of all Islamic teachings. Morals, as a manifestation of character, reflect the quality of a person's faith, as seen in everyday behavior. Therefore, character is viewed not only as an individual moral aspect but also as an essential goal in the formation of a complete human being. This understanding emphasizes the strategic responsibility of Islamic education in instilling and internalizing character values in students on an ongoing basis.

### **The Importance of Character in Islam**

In Islam, character or morality is not merely an additional aspect, but rather the core of all teachings. Islam views humans not only as creatures of faith ritually, but also as beings who must demonstrate good moral and ethical behavior towards Allah SWT and fellow human beings. Islam places great emphasis on the importance of character or morality. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) emphasized that his primary mission was to perfect noble morals (Narrated by Ahmad). This demonstrates that character is the core of Islamic education (Anwar, 2017). In line with this view, the importance of character in Islam cannot be separated from normative values derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah. Islam not only emphasizes the ritual aspect of faith but also demands the realization of moral values in real life. Therefore, character education in Islam is realized through the internalization of noble moral values that serve as guidelines for a Muslim in interacting with Allah SWT and fellow human beings.

### **Character Values in Islam**

1. The value of honesty (siddiq)

As a basic value in the formation of Islamic character, honesty (yes(iddiq) is the primary foundation of a Muslim's personality. Honesty encompasses alignment between heart, words, and actions, thus fostering trustworthiness in social life. Islam places honesty as a reflection of one's faith, as stated in Allah SWT:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَكُونُوا مَعَ الصَّادِقِينَ

Meaning: "O you who believe, fear Allah and be with those who are truthful" (QS. At-Taubah: 119). This verse emphasizes that honesty is a moral value that must always be maintained by every Muslim (Majid, 2017).

2. Trust Value

After honesty, the value of trustworthiness is a crucial characteristic that complements a Muslim's integrity in both personal and social life. Trustworthiness demonstrates a sense of responsibility and sincerity in fulfilling obligations, both in safeguarding trusts and carrying out duties in accordance with applicable regulations. In Islam, trustworthiness is a direct command from Allah SWT, as stated in His Word:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَأْمُرُكُمْ أَنْ تُؤَدُّوا الْأَمَانَاتِ إِلَىٰ أَهْلِهَا

Meaning: "Indeed, Allah commands you to convey trusts to those who deserve them" (QS. An-Nisa: 58). This verse emphasizes that trust is a fundamental principle in the life of a Muslim (Nurhadi & Abdul Rahman, 2020).

3. The Value of Patience (patience)

In carrying out the trust, a Muslim cannot escape various trials, so the value of patience is required (yes(abbr) as a character enhancer. Patience in Islam means the ability to restrain oneself from negative attitudes and remain steadfast in obedience to Allah SWT. Allah SWT says:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اسْتَعِينُوا بِالصَّبْرِ وَالصَّلَاةِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ مَعَ الصَّابِرِينَ

Meaning: "Indeed, Allah is with those who are patient." (QS. Al-Baqarah: 153). This verse shows that patience is a spiritual strength that brings a Muslim closer to the help of Allah SWT (Emroni, 2023).

4. Value of Justice (fair)

A Muslim's patience must be manifested in a just attitude to create a harmonious social life. The value of justice ('adl) is a crucial foundation in Islam because it demands an objective attitude and the placement of things according to their rights and due proportions. Allah SWT says:

اعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ

Meaning: "Be just, for justice is closer to piety" (QS. Al-Ma'idah: 8). This verse emphasizes that justice is closely related to piety and is an indicator of a Muslim's moral maturity (Zubaedi, 2019).

5. The Value of Mercy (Rahmah) and Humility (tawadu)

As a perfecting of justice in social life, the values of compassion and humility are highly emphasized in Islamic teachings. Compassion encourages concern and empathy for others, while humility prevents a person from being arrogant. Prophet Muhammad SAW said:

لَا يَدْخُلُ الْجَنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ فِي قَلْبِهِ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ مِنْ كِبَرٍ

Meaning: “No one will enter paradise who has arrogance in his heart, even the size of a mustard seed.” (Narrated by Muslim). This hadith emphasizes that humility is part of the noble character that every Muslim must possess (Meilani, 2025).

### **C. Research methods**

This study uses a qualitative approach with library research. The approach employed is descriptive-analytical, namely reviewing and analyzing various literature to gain a conceptual understanding of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning design oriented toward strengthening student character.

The research data consists of conceptual and theoretical data related to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning design and character education. The focus of the study includes: (1) strengthening character in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) objectives and materials, (2) principles of effective Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning design, (3) character-based learning approaches, (4) character-based learning methods, (5) the role of teachers in shaping students' character, and (6) assessment of students' attitudes and character. Data sources consist of primary sources in the form of relevant scientific books and journals, as well as secondary sources in the form of articles and previous research results that support the study.

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation studies, reviewing, identifying, and classifying literature according to the research focus. Data analysis was conducted through data reduction, systematic data presentation, and drawing conclusions through synthesis and interpretation of various expert perspectives. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation and the selection of references with academic credibility and relevance to the research topic.

### **D. Research Results and Discussion**

#### **Research result**

The design of Islamic religious education learning that is oriented towards strengthening character, includes:

1. Strengthening character in PAI goals and materials

The research results show that character strengthening in Islamic Religious Education learning design is reflected in the formulation of learning objectives that emphasize not only the mastery of religious knowledge, but also the formation of student attitudes and behavior. Islamic Religious Education learning objectives are designed to foster religious character, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect in everyday life. Teachers formulate learning objectives that integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects so that learning not only results in conceptual understanding but also the habituation of Islamic values in student behavior.

Furthermore, research results also show that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning materials are structured by linking character values to each topic. Topics such as faith, worship, and morals are not only taught as concepts but also linked to examples of their application in everyday life. Through contextual presentation, students more easily grasp the meaning of character values such as

honesty, responsibility, and gratitude.

The integration of character values into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning objectives and materials is a crucial foundation for developing students' noble personalities. This demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is not solely oriented toward knowledge but also toward character development, the primary goal of Islamic education.

2. Principles of effective Islamic Education learning design

The research results show that effective Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning design principles are characterized by systematic, directed learning planning that is oriented toward developing student character. Teachers develop learning tools, such as lesson plans, by considering the integration of learning objectives, materials, methods, and evaluation. This principle helps teachers create a more structured and meaningful learning process for students.

Effective Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning design also emphasizes active student involvement in the learning process. Teachers provide opportunities for students to discuss, ask questions, and express opinions regarding the material being studied. This ensures that students are not merely recipients of information but also play an active role in developing religious understanding and attitudes.

Another principle identified in the research is the importance of the relevance of learning materials to students' real-life situations. When learning materials are connected to everyday experiences, students more easily understand Islamic values and are encouraged to practice them in their lives.

3. Character-based learning approach

Research results show that a character-based learning approach in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) integrates moral and spiritual values into every learning activity. Teachers not only convey material theoretically but also encourage students to understand the meaning of these values through real-life learning experiences.

This approach is also evident in teachers' efforts to connect learning materials to students' everyday life situations. For example, when discussing honesty, teachers provide examples of events that frequently occur in the school environment and at home. This approach helps students understand that the values they learn are relevant to their lives.

Furthermore, a character-based learning approach emphasizes the importance of cultivating positive behaviors. Teachers guide students to practice values such as discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect in daily school activities. Through this process, it is hoped that character values will be deeply ingrained in students.

4. Character-based learning methods

Research results show that the learning methods used in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) play a crucial role in supporting the strengthening of students' character. Teachers employ various learning methods, such as discussions, questions and answers, role models, and providing real-life examples related to Islamic values. These methods help students understand the material more deeply while fostering positive attitudes.

Character-based learning methods are also implemented through

habituation activities and hands-on practice. For example, teachers encourage students to recite prayers before and after class, practice greetings, and engage in religious activities at school. These activities serve as a means of instilling religious values in students' lives.

The use of varied methods also makes the learning process more engaging and less tedious. Students participate more actively in learning activities, making the character values taught easier to understand and apply in everyday life.

5. The role of teachers in forming students' character

Research results show that teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' character. Teachers serve not only as transmitters of learning materials, but also as guides, role models, and motivators for students. Teachers' attitudes and behaviors both inside and outside the classroom serve as examples for students to emulate.

Teachers not only explain character values but also guide students in applying these values in their daily lives. Teachers provide direction, advice, and reinforcement for positive behaviors displayed by students. Through this guidance, students gain a better understanding of the importance of having good character.

Research also shows that teacher role models are a highly influential factor in shaping students' character. When teachers demonstrate honesty, discipline, and responsibility, students tend to emulate these behaviors. Therefore, teachers need to be good role models in every aspect of school life.

6. Assessment of student attitudes and character.

The research results show that assessing students' attitudes and character is a crucial part of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, which focuses on character building. Assessment is conducted not only through written tests but also through observations of student behavior throughout the learning process.

Teachers assess attitudes through observations of student behavior, such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, and mutual respect. Teachers also use anecdotal notes and self-assessments to gauge student character development.

Through ongoing attitude assessments, teachers can determine the extent to which character values have been instilled in students. These assessment results are then used as a basis for providing guidance and reinforcement to optimally develop students' positive character.

## **Discussion**

The design of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, which focuses on strengthening character, is essentially a systematic effort to make Islamic teachings the primary source of values in shaping students' personalities. PAI learning is not merely directed at achieving religious knowledge competencies, but rather aims to shape individuals who are faithful, pious, and have noble morals. Muhaimin emphasized that PAI must function as a process of internalizing Islamic values so that students are able to present religious teachings in real-life attitudes and behaviors (Muhaimin, 2015).

1. Strengthening Character in Islamic Education Goals and Materials

Based on the research results, it is known that character strengthening in the design of Islamic Religious Education learning is reflected in the formulation of learning objectives that emphasize not only the mastery of religious knowledge, but also on the formation of student attitudes and behavior. The objectives of

Islamic Religious Education learning are designed to foster religious character, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect in everyday life. Teachers formulate learning objectives by integrating cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects so that learning not only results in conceptual understanding, but also the habituation of Islamic values in student behavior.

The research findings indicate that character building has become an integral part of the learning objectives of Islamic Religious Education. This aligns with Hasan Langgulung's view that Islamic education aims to shape the whole person through the balanced development of physical, intellectual, and spiritual potential, enabling them to fulfill their roles as servants of God and caliphs on earth (Langgulung, 2014).

The research results also show that the objectives of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning are directed at developing students' religious character and noble morals. This finding supports Ramayulis's opinion that the primary goal of Islamic Religious Education is to develop individuals into faithful, pious, and morally upright Muslims who are able to practice Islamic teachings in all aspects of their lives (Ramayulis, 2015). This demonstrates that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is not only oriented toward cognitive aspects, but also toward developing attitudes and behaviors that reflect Islamic values.

The findings of this study are also relevant to Muhaimin's view, which asserts that the objectives of Islamic Religious Education encompass three main orientations: transcendental, moral, and social (Muhaimin, 2012). Transcendental orientation aims to foster a sense of God, moral orientation aims to develop noble character, and social orientation aims to foster students' social awareness and responsibility. In the learning practices found in the study, these three orientations are reflected through the instillation of religious values, the formation of honest and disciplined attitudes, and the habituation of mutual respect in everyday life.

The research also shows that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning materials are structured by linking character values to each topic, not just to the learning objectives. Topics such as faith, worship, and morals are taught not only as concepts but also connected to examples of their application in everyday life, making it easier for students to understand and internalize character values.

This finding is in line with the view of Quraish Shihab who explains that the main objective of the Qur'an is to form humans who have noble and dignified morals, so that learning the Qur'an must be directed at understanding the meaning and practicing the values, not just reading and memorizing (Shihab, 2013).

Learning about faith in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) also plays a crucial role in shaping students' character. Research shows that understanding faith in God and the basic teachings of Islam helps foster a sense of responsibility and moral awareness in students. This aligns with Hasan Langgulung's opinion that strong faith fosters strong self-control, fostering an internal awareness to behave well without external coercion (Langgulung, 2014).

Morals material in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning also serves as the primary means of character building for students. Research results show that moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline are not only taught theoretically but also practiced in everyday life. This finding aligns with Arifin's opinion that moral education must be carried out through habituation and role

modeling because morals are not sufficiently taught theoretically, but must be practiced and exemplified in everyday life (Arifin, 2016). In addition, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) material also contributes to character building through learning about worship and social interactions, which train students to be disciplined, obedient to rules, and responsible in carrying out obligations. Ramayulis emphasized that fiqh not only regulates human relations with God, but also human relations with others, so that fiqh learning has a strong social character-building dimension (Ramayulis, 2015). Meanwhile, Islamic Cultural History material also serves as a means of role modeling in character building for students. The stories of the struggles of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), his companions, and Islamic figures provide concrete examples of the values of honesty, leadership, courage, and sacrifice. Badri Yatim states that reflective Islamic history learning can help students learn from historical events and use them as inspiration for building personal and social character (Yatim, 2014).

2. Principles of Effective Islamic Education Learning Design

The research revealed that the principles of effective Islamic Religious Education learning design are characterized by systematic, focused learning planning, and a focus on developing student character. Teachers develop learning tools, such as lesson plans, by considering the integration of objectives, materials, methods, and learning evaluations, so that the learning process can proceed in a structured and meaningful manner. Furthermore, learning is designed to actively engage students through discussions, questions and answers, and opportunities for students to express their opinions. This learning design allows students not only to receive information but also to play an active role in developing religious understanding and attitudes.

The research findings indicate that effective Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning design requires integration between various learning components and active student involvement in the learning process. This aligns with the integrative and holistic principles in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning design, which emphasize that religious learning must fully integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. Religious knowledge is not only presented as material to be understood, but also directed towards developing Islamic attitudes and behavioral habits in everyday life. Daradjat explained that Islamic education will lose its meaning if it only emphasizes mastery of material without being accompanied by fostering students' attitudes and morals (Daradjat, 2014).

The active involvement of students in the learning process, as found in research, is also related to the principle of role modeling in Islamic education. In Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, teachers not only serve as transmitters of material but also as role models for students in practicing Islamic values. Teachers' exemplary behavior in their attitudes, speech, and daily behavior is a crucial part of shaping students' character. Nata stated that teacher role modeling is the most effective method of character education because students tend to learn through imitation and identification with figures they consider important (Nata, 2016).

The research also shows that the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning design is influenced by the relevance of the learning material to students' real-life situations. When learning material is linked to

everyday experiences, students more easily understand Islamic values and are encouraged to practice them in their lives. This finding is closely related to the principles of habituation and consistency in Islamic character education. Character is not formed instantly, but rather through a process of habituation carried out continuously in daily life. Zubaedi explains that consistent habituation will shape a religious culture that ultimately gives rise to positive character in students (Zubaedi, 2015).

3. Islamic Education learning approaches that are oriented towards strengthening character

Research shows that a character-based learning approach in Islamic Religious Education integrates moral and spiritual values into every learning activity. Teachers not only deliver material theoretically but also engage students in understanding the meaning of these values through real-life experiences. Furthermore, teachers relate the learning material to students' daily lives, ensuring the values learned are relevant to their lives. This approach is also reinforced by fostering positive behaviors such as discipline, responsibility, and mutual respect in daily school activities.

The findings of this study indicate that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning oriented toward character building not only emphasizes understanding the material but also directs students to internalize Islamic values in real life. This finding aligns with the contextual approach to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, which emphasizes the importance of linking Islamic teachings to students' life experiences. This approach makes learning more meaningful because students can understand the relationship between religious values and the realities of their lives. Rusman explains that a contextual approach can help students understand the meaning of the values they learn and encourage them to apply them in real life (Rusman, 2017).

The integration of moral and spiritual values into the learning process, as found in research, also strengthens the value-based approach to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. This approach places moral values at the core of the learning process, enabling students not only to learn Islamic teachings theoretically but also to understand and internalize these values in their daily lives. Lickona explains that character education must involve three main processes: knowing the good, feeling the good, and doing the good, so that moral values are truly ingrained in students (Lickona, 2013).

The practice of positive behaviors in learning activities also demonstrates alignment with the reflective and self-reflective approach in Islamic education. This approach encourages students to reflect on their behavior and life experiences based on Islamic values, thereby fostering moral awareness. Sanjaya states that reflection is an important tool for building moral awareness and personal responsibility in students (Sanjaya, 2016).

4. Islamic Education learning methods that are oriented towards strengthening character

Research shows that learning methods in Islamic Religious Education play a crucial role in strengthening students' character. Teachers use methods such as discussions, questions and answers, role models, and the introduction of religious

activities, so that students become more active in learning and Islamic values can be more easily understood and applied in everyday life.

The findings of this study indicate that learning methods play a crucial role in instilling character values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. These findings align with the theory of discussion methods in character-based learning. Through discussion activities, students not only learn to understand the material but also learn to express their opinions politely, respect the views of others, and collaborate in problem-solving. Kunandar explains that discussions in character-based learning can foster democratic attitudes, responsibility, and cooperation in students (Kunandar, 2014).

The use of methods that involve active student participation is also related to role-playing in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Through this method, students can act out specific moral situations, allowing them to directly understand the consequences of an attitude or behavior. Rusman states that role-playing can develop empathy and moral sensitivity in students because they learn through emotional and social experiences (Rusman, 2017).

Furthermore, the use of exemplary stories in learning, as found in research, also strengthens the theory of the exemplary story method in Islamic character education. The stories of prophets, companions, and Islamic figures provide concrete examples of moral values that students can emulate. Nata emphasized that the story method is highly effective in character education because it can tap into the affective and spiritual dimensions of students, allowing moral values to be understood without being patronizing (Nata, 2016).

#### 5. The Role of Teachers in Character Formation

Research shows that teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' character. Teachers serve not only as transmitters of learning materials but also as mentors, role models, and motivators for students. Teachers' attitudes and behaviors, both inside and outside the classroom, serve as examples for students to emulate, thus influencing their character development.

The findings of this study indicate that the success of character education is greatly influenced by the role of teachers in guiding and providing role models for students. This finding aligns with Sabrina Mufida's opinion that teachers are a crucial factor in determining the success of character education in schools because they are the primary role models for students. Therefore, in character education, teachers must start with themselves so that the values they teach can have a positive influence on students (Sabrina Mufida: 2024).

The research results which show that teacher behavior is an example for students also strengthen the theory about the role of teachers as moral role models. (role model). The honesty, discipline, responsibility, and respect demonstrated by teachers in their daily school life can influence students' mindsets and behaviors. Students tend to imitate the behavior they see in figures they respect, including teachers.

The guidance and direction teachers provide to students, as found in the research, also demonstrates their role as motivators and inspirators in character education. Teachers not only teach moral values theoretically, but also provide encouragement and motivation to students so they can apply these values in their daily lives.

Teacher involvement in guiding students to practice positive behavior also demonstrates their role as facilitators and moral guides in character education. Teachers not only deliver material but also create a conducive learning environment and provide guidance when students face various moral challenges in their lives. This aligns with the view that moral guidance by teachers is crucial in helping students make informed decisions based on moral and ethical values (Bintang Ridzky Dwi Putra: 2025).

6. Assessment of Student Attitude and Character

The research findings indicate that assessing students' attitudes and character is a crucial component of Islamic Religious Education, which focuses on character building. Assessment is conducted not only through written tests but also through observation of student behavior throughout the learning process. Teachers assess attitudes through observations of student behaviors such as discipline, honesty, responsibility, and mutual respect. Furthermore, teachers utilize anecdotal notes and self-assessments to assess students' character development, thus providing a basis for character development and strengthening.

The findings of this study indicate that assessment in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning not only focuses on cognitive aspects but also encompasses aspects of students' attitudes and character. This finding aligns with the opinion of Choiriyah & Muharom, who stated that assessing students' attitudes and character in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning is a process of collecting and processing information to determine the development of students' spiritual and social attitudes based on Islamic values, such as religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, and social attitudes that reflect noble morals (Choiriyah & Muharom, 2023).

The practice of continuous attitude assessment, as found in research, also reinforces the purpose of character assessment in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning: to determine the development of students' spiritual and social attitudes and to assist teachers in fostering student behavior in accordance with Islamic values. This assessment also serves as a basis for decision-making regarding student character development (Eprianto, Koswara, & Duski, 2025).

The use of various assessment techniques, such as observation, self-assessment, and student behavior records in this study, also demonstrates alignment with theories regarding attitude assessment techniques in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning. Teachers can use various techniques, such as observation, self-assessment, peer assessment, and attitude journals, to ensure objective and continuous assessment of student character (Febriyana et al., 2024).

Consistent attitude assessment also plays a crucial role in developing positive behavioral habits in students. Through ongoing assessment, teachers can guide students to cultivate religious behaviors such as politeness, honesty, discipline, and responsibility in their daily lives. This aligns with the view that attitude assessment in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning plays a strategic role in shaping students' religious character (Amri, 2024).

## **E. Conclusion**

The design of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning that is oriented towards strengthening character plays an important role in shaping the personality of

students as a whole. This is reflected in several main aspects, namely: 1) strengthening character in PAI objectives and materials that integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects so that Islamic values are not only understood but also practiced; 2) the application of effective PAI learning design principles through systematic planning, integration between objectives, materials, methods, and evaluation, as well as active student involvement; 3) the use of character-based learning approaches such as contextual, value, and reflective approaches that link material to real life; 4) the application of varied learning methods such as discussions, role-playing, and exemplary stories that can help internalize character values; 5) the very strategic role of teachers as role models, motivators, facilitators, and moral guides in shaping student character; and 6) the implementation of continuous assessment of student attitudes and character through observation, self-assessment, and behavioral recording as a basis for character development so that Islamic values can be embedded more deeply in the lives of students.

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