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The Role Of Teachers In Fostering *Akhlakul Karimah* And Students' Religious Attitudes At MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang In 2026

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Abstract

This study examines the role of teachers in fostering akhlakul karimah and students' religious attitudes at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang in 2026. The research was motivated by the growing importance of strengthening character education in Islamic elementary schools amid contemporary social and technological challenges, as well as the limited studies investigating the collective contribution of all teachers in developing students' moral character and religiosity. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation to explore teachers' educational practices within the natural school setting. The findings reveal that teachers perform multidimensional roles as educators, moral guides, facilitators, counselors, and role models (uswah hasanah) in shaping students' character. The cultivation of akhlakul karimah is implemented through exemplary behavior, religious habituation, classroom instruction, school culture, and continuous guidance. Religious activities, including congregational Dhuha and Dhuhr prayers, Qur'an recitation, respectful communication, discipline, and social responsibility, provide meaningful opportunities for students to internalize Islamic values and strengthen their religious attitudes. The study also highlights that effective character formation is supported by integrating moral values into daily learning activities and by fostering collaboration between teachers, parents, and the school community. This research contributes to Islamic education literature by offering a holistic framework that

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integrates instructional practices, role modeling, religious habituation, classroom management, counseling, supervision, school culture, and family collaboration in developing students' akhlakul karimah and religiosity. The findings suggest that comprehensive character education involving all teachers is essential for producing students with strong faith, noble character, and social responsibility.

Keywords: teacher roles, *akhlakul karimah*, religious attitudes, Islamic character education, Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, qualitative research.

INTRODUCTION

Education is universally recognized as one of the most influential instruments for developing human potential, shaping ethical behavior, and preparing future generations to contribute positively to society. In the context of Islamic education, however, the educational mission extends beyond the transmission of knowledge and intellectual development. Islamic education seeks to nurture individuals who possess strong faith (*iman*), piety (*taqwa*), noble character (*akhlakul karimah*), and a sense of social responsibility rooted in Islamic teachings. Therefore, educational success is measured not only by students' academic achievement but also by the extent to which Islamic values are internalized and reflected in their daily behavior. Character formation is consequently regarded as one of the primary objectives of Islamic educational institutions, particularly Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary schools), where moral and spiritual development begins during children's formative years. Classical and contemporary Islamic educational scholars emphasize that education should integrate cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains to produce individuals who embody both knowledge and virtuous conduct (Al-Attas, 1991; Lickona, 1991).

The concept of *akhlakul karimah* occupies a central position in Islamic education. Derived from the Arabic word *khuluq*, *akhlak* refers to one's moral disposition and ethical behavior, while *karimah* denotes excellence or nobility. Thus, *akhlakul karimah* encompasses commendable qualities such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, humility, respect, compassion, justice, sincerity, patience, and trustworthiness. These values are derived from the Qur'an and the Sunnah and are expected to guide Muslims in their relationships with Allah, fellow human beings, and the environment. Consequently, the cultivation of *akhlakul karimah* is not limited to theoretical instruction but requires continuous practice through habituation, role modeling, and meaningful social interaction.

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Closely related to moral character is the concept of religiosity. Religiosity represents an individual's degree of commitment to religious beliefs, values, rituals, and ethical practices. Glock and Stark (1965) conceptualize religiosity as consisting of five dimensions: ideological belief, ritual practice, religious experience, intellectual knowledge, and consequential behavior. In Islamic educational settings, religiosity is reflected through students' consistency in performing worship, respecting religious values, demonstrating ethical conduct, and applying Islamic teachings in everyday life. Consequently, the development of students' religiosity should not be understood merely as increasing religious knowledge but rather as fostering a holistic transformation that integrates faith, worship, morality, and social behavior.

Teachers play a pivotal role in achieving these educational objectives. Unlike conventional perspectives that regard teachers solely as transmitters of knowledge, Islamic educational philosophy positions teachers as *murabbi* (educators), *muaddib* (moral guides), *murshid* (spiritual mentors), facilitators, counselors, motivators, evaluators, and role models. Their responsibilities include cultivating students' intellectual competence while simultaneously guiding their moral and spiritual development. Through daily interaction with students, teachers become living examples whose attitudes, communication, discipline, and personal integrity significantly influence children's character formation. Social Learning Theory explains that children acquire attitudes and behaviors by observing and imitating significant individuals in their environment, making teachers highly influential models in shaping students' moral development (Bandura, 1986).

In Islamic elementary education, teachers' influence extends beyond classroom instruction. They contribute to students' moral development through exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*), religious habituation, classroom management, counseling, emotional support, and the establishment of a positive learning environment. Daily school activities such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, greeting culture, charity programs, discipline, and mutual respect serve as practical opportunities for students to internalize Islamic values. These activities become more meaningful when teachers consistently demonstrate the same values they expect students to practice. Recent qualitative studies indicate that teacher modeling, habituation, and collaboration with parents constitute key elements in strengthening students' *akhlakul karimah* and religious commitment (Suherman, et al 2026).

The importance of teachers' moral leadership has become increasingly significant amid rapid social transformation. Globalization, digital technology, social media, and unrestricted access to online information expose children to diverse values that may conflict with Islamic principles. Elementary school students today encounter challenges such as declining discipline,

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reduced face-to-face interaction, cyberbullying, excessive gadget use, and exposure to inappropriate digital content. These phenomena require schools to reinforce character education by integrating religious values into both formal learning and the broader school culture. Teachers therefore face the dual challenge of improving academic quality while safeguarding students' moral and spiritual development in an increasingly complex social environment. Recent studies emphasize that effective character education requires synergy among teachers, parents, and the school environment to create consistent moral experiences for students (Khairina & Hafidz 2026).

Indonesia has responded to these challenges by strengthening character education as an essential component of national educational policy. The National Education System emphasizes developing learners who are faithful, pious, knowledgeable, creative, independent, democratic, and responsible citizens. For Islamic educational institutions, this mandate aligns naturally with their mission of integrating religious values into educational practice. Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, therefore, are expected to create educational environments where academic excellence and Islamic morality develop simultaneously. Teachers become the central actors responsible for translating these educational ideals into daily learning experiences through instructional planning, classroom interaction, school culture, and collaboration with families.

Numerous studies have investigated teachers' roles in developing students' *akhlakul karimah*. Research consistently reports that Islamic Religious Education teachers contribute to students' moral development through moral instruction, exemplary behavior, habituation, discipline, counseling, and supervision. Teachers' consistency in demonstrating Islamic values positively influences students' honesty, responsibility, worship practices, social interaction, and respect for others. Furthermore, religious school programs such as collective prayer, Qur'anic literacy, and daily moral advice reinforce students' ethical development beyond classroom learning (Nurah & Amalia 2025).

Other studies highlight the importance of school culture in supporting character education. A positive religious climate encourages students to internalize Islamic values through repeated experiences rather than memorization alone. The integration of moral education into school routines, classroom management, extracurricular activities, and teacher–student relationships contributes significantly to sustainable character formation. Similarly, teacher–parent collaboration strengthens consistency between school and home environments, enabling students to practice Islamic values continuously (Khairina & Hafidz 2026).

Despite these contributions, the existing literature still reveals several important research gaps. **First**, most previous studies concentrate specifically on the role of Islamic Religious

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Education (PAI) teachers. Such an approach overlooks the fact that elementary school students spend considerably more instructional time with classroom teachers than with subject-specific religious teachers. Consequently, understanding the collective contribution of all teachers in fostering *akhlakul karimah* and religiosity remains limited. **Second**, previous research often examines either *akhlakul karimah* or religiosity separately. In Islamic education, however, moral character and religiosity are conceptually interconnected because religious commitment is expected to manifest through ethical behavior. Investigating these two constructs simultaneously may therefore provide a more comprehensive understanding of character education in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. **Third**, many existing studies emphasize individual educational strategies such as teacher role modeling or religious habituation. Comparatively fewer studies explore how multiple teacher roles-including instructional leadership, counseling, classroom management, supervision, communication, emotional support, school culture development, and parent collaboration-operate collectively as an integrated system for developing students' character. This indicates a need for more holistic qualitative investigations (Ahmad et al 2024). **Fourth**, empirical studies concerning teacher-led character education in Islamic elementary schools located in West Kalimantan remain relatively scarce. Most published research has been conducted in Java or other major educational centers. Differences in local culture, community participation, institutional leadership, and educational traditions suggest that findings from one context cannot automatically be generalized to other regions. Consequently, context-specific studies are necessary to enrich the diversity of evidence concerning Islamic character education in Indonesia.

Based on these gaps, this study focuses on **MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang** in 2026. As an Islamic elementary school committed to integrating academic excellence with Islamic values, MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang provides an appropriate context for exploring how teachers cultivate students' *akhlakul karimah* and religious attitudes through classroom instruction, religious habituation, exemplary conduct, interpersonal relationships, school culture, and collaboration with parents. Using a qualitative approach based on interviews, observations, and documentation, this study seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of teachers' educational practices rather than merely measuring students' moral outcomes.

The **novelty** of this research lies in four main aspects. First, unlike previous studies that primarily examine the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers, this study investigates the collective contribution of all teachers in shaping students' moral and religious development. Second, it integrates the concepts of *akhlakul karimah* and religiosity into a single analytical framework, recognizing that ethical behavior and religious commitment are mutually reinforcing

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dimensions of Islamic education. Third, the study offers empirical evidence from MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang, a context that has received limited scholarly attention, thereby expanding geographical representation in Islamic education research. Finally, this research develops a holistic description of teacher roles by integrating instructional practices, role modeling, habituation, counseling, supervision, school culture, and family collaboration into a comprehensive framework of character formation.

Therefore, this study is expected to contribute theoretically by enriching the literature on teacher professionalism, Islamic character education, and students' religiosity within Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Practically, the findings may serve as a reference for teachers, school principals, educational policymakers, and Islamic educational institutions in designing integrated character education programs that strengthen students' *akhlakul karimah* and religious attitudes amid contemporary educational challenges.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a **qualitative research approach** using a **descriptive research design** to explore the role of teachers in fostering *akhlakul karimah* and students' religious attitudes at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables researchers to understand social phenomena from the participants' perspectives and to interpret meanings embedded in natural settings rather than measuring variables quantitatively. According to John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth (2018), qualitative research seeks to explore and understand the meanings individuals or groups attribute to social or human problems by collecting detailed data from participants within their natural contexts. Similarly, Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (2018) explain that qualitative inquiry emphasizes the interpretation of social realities through participants' experiences, interactions, and perspectives.

The descriptive qualitative design was considered appropriate because the purpose of this research was not to test hypotheses or determine causal relationships but to provide a comprehensive description of teachers' roles, strategies, and educational practices in developing students' moral character and religiosity. Descriptive qualitative research allows researchers to present an in-depth account of social phenomena as they naturally occur within a specific educational context (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Through this approach, the researcher was able to examine how teachers implemented moral education through classroom instruction, role modeling, religious habituation, interpersonal communication, counseling, supervision, and collaboration with parents.

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The research was conducted at **MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang**, West Kalimantan, Indonesia, during the 2026 academic year. The selection of this site was based on purposive considerations. As an Islamic elementary school, MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang integrates Islamic values into both academic and extracurricular activities, providing a relevant setting for investigating teachers' contributions to the development of *akhlakul karimah* and students' religious attitudes. The participants were selected using **purposive sampling**, which involves choosing individuals who possess relevant knowledge and experience related to the research topic (Patton, 2015). The participants included the principal, classroom teachers, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, and selected students. School administrators and teachers were chosen because they directly implemented character education programs, while students provided insights into their experiences regarding teachers' educational practices. Additional information was obtained from school documents, including school regulations, annual programs, lesson plans, character education programs, and documentation of religious activities.

Data were collected through **observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis**, allowing the researcher to obtain comprehensive information from multiple sources. Observation was conducted to examine naturally occurring teacher–student interactions, religious activities, classroom management, and students' participation in school programs. According to Matthew B. Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldaña (2014), observation enables researchers to obtain contextual information that may not emerge during interviews. Semi-structured interviews served as the primary method for exploring participants' perceptions and experiences. Interview guides were developed based on the research objectives while allowing flexibility for participants to elaborate on issues relevant to the study. The interviews focused on teachers' understanding of *akhlakul karimah*, strategies for cultivating students' religious attitudes, challenges encountered during implementation, and collaborative efforts with parents and the school community. Semi-structured interviews provide opportunities for researchers to obtain rich and detailed information while maintaining consistency across participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

Document analysis complemented observations and interviews by examining institutional records that reflected the implementation of character education. Documents included school vision and mission statements, curriculum documents, lesson plans, religious activity schedules, students' discipline records, photographs of school activities, and other official documents related to character education. Documentary evidence strengthens the credibility of qualitative findings by providing additional sources of information for data triangulation (Bowen, 2009).

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To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, this study applied four criteria proposed by Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba (1985): **credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability**. Credibility was enhanced through prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation, member checking, and triangulation of data sources and collection techniques. Transferability was supported by providing rich descriptions of the research context, participants, and educational practices, enabling readers to determine the applicability of the findings to similar contexts. Dependability was maintained through detailed documentation of research procedures and decision-making processes, while confirmability was achieved by maintaining an audit trail and ensuring that interpretations were grounded in empirical evidence rather than researcher bias.

The data were analyzed using the **interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014)**, consisting of four interconnected stages: **data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification**. Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, coding, and organizing relevant information obtained from observations, interviews, and documents. The organized data were subsequently displayed through thematic matrices and narrative descriptions to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were continuously verified by comparing emerging themes across different data sources to ensure consistency and credibility.

Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the school administration, and informed consent was requested from all participants. Participants were informed about the objectives of the research, the voluntary nature of their participation, and their right to withdraw at any stage of the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained by using pseudonyms or participant codes in all research records and publications. The researcher also ensured that the study did not interfere with teaching and learning activities and that all collected information was used solely for academic purposes. By employing a descriptive qualitative approach supported by multiple data collection techniques and rigorous trustworthiness procedures, this study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how teachers at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang foster *akhlakul karimah* and students' religious attitudes within the natural context of Islamic elementary education.

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FINDING DISCUSSION

1. The Role of Teachers as Moral Educators and Role Models in Fostering Akhlakul Karimah

The findings of this study indicate that teachers at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang play a central role in fostering students' *akhlakul karimah* through their function as educators, moral guides, and role models. In the context of Islamic elementary education, teachers are not merely responsible for delivering academic materials but also for cultivating students' moral awareness, spiritual development, and ethical behavior. This finding confirms the Islamic educational perspective that places teachers as *murabbi*, *muaddib*, and *murshid*, whose responsibilities extend beyond intellectual instruction toward the formation of students' personalities.

The teacher's role as a moral model is particularly significant because elementary school students tend to learn moral values through observation and imitation. The daily behavior demonstrated by teachers, including discipline, politeness, honesty, responsibility, and religious commitment, becomes an implicit form of moral education. This condition supports Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory, which explains that individuals acquire new behaviors through observing, imitating, and internalizing the behavior of significant models in their environment. In this regard, teachers function as important social models who influence students' attitudes and behavioral development. The findings of this studyalso indicate that the implementation of congregational Dhuha prayer before classroom learning and congregational Dhuhr prayer has become an effective strategy for fostering *akhlakul karimah* among students at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang. These religious activities are consistently carried out with the active involvement of teachers, who not only supervise but also serve as role models by participating directly in the prayers alongside the students. Such habitual religious practices cultivate discipline, responsibility, humility, respect, and obedience to Islamic teachings. The daily repetition of these worship activities enables students to internalize positive moral values, making good character a natural part of their behavior both inside and outside the classroom. This finding is consistent with the study of Sufia et al. (2023), which found that the habituation of religious activities in madrasahs significantly contributes to the development of students' *akhlakul karimah*. Similarly, Apriyani et al. (2025) emphasized that teachers play a strategic role in instilling moral values through continuous religious practices and exemplary behavior.

Furthermore, the results reveal that the success of character formation is strongly influenced by the collaboration between teachers and students in maintaining the consistency of congregational worship. Teachers continuously provide motivation, reminders, and guidance regarding the importance of performing prayers on time, while students gradually develop

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positive religious attitudes such as sincerity, mutual respect, cooperation, and self-discipline. This demonstrates that congregational prayers function not only as acts of worship but also as practical media for character education and moral development. These findings support the opinion of Imaduddin et al. (2022), who argued that Islamic Religious Education teachers significantly influence the development of students' *akhlakul karimah* through habituation and exemplary conduct. Likewise, Putri et al. (2025) concluded that continuous teacher guidance in religious activities strengthens students' moral awareness and promotes the internalization of Islamic values, leading to the development of noble character and positive religious attitudes.

The findings also strengthen the argument of Lickona (1991), who emphasizes that character education requires the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Students do not develop noble character merely by understanding moral concepts theoretically; rather, they need continuous opportunities to experience, practice, and reflect on moral values. Therefore, teachers at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang contribute to character formation by creating learning experiences that encourage students to practice honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect, and empathy in daily activities.

Furthermore, the role of teachers as *uswah hasanah* (good examples) becomes an essential strategy in Islamic character education. Islamic educational traditions emphasize that the personal character of educators has a significant influence on students' moral development. A teacher who demonstrates consistency between speech and action provides students with authentic moral learning experiences. This finding is consistent with Ahmad et al. (2024), who found that teacher exemplary behavior significantly contributes to the development of students' *akhlakul karimah*. Their study highlights that students are more likely to internalize Islamic values when teachers consistently demonstrate those values in real-life situations.

2. Teachers' Strategies Through Religious Habituation and School Culture

The findings reveal that the development of students' religious attitudes at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang is supported through systematic habituation programs and the creation of a religious school culture. Religious practices such as prayer activities, Qur'an recitation, greetings, respect for teachers, discipline, and social responsibility provide students with continuous experiences of practicing Islamic values. These activities demonstrate that religiosity is not formed only through religious instruction but through repeated experiences embedded within the school environment.

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This finding corresponds with Glock and Stark's (1965) theory of religiosity, which explains that religious commitment consists of several interconnected dimensions, including belief, religious practice, religious experience, religious knowledge, and behavioral consequences. In the context of this research, students' religiosity is reflected not only through their understanding of Islamic teachings but also through their participation in religious practices and their moral behavior toward others.

The implementation of habituation programs demonstrates that character formation requires consistency and continuity. Religious values become meaningful when students repeatedly practice them until they become part of their personal habits. This perspective is supported by Al-Attas (1991), who argues that Islamic education aims to develop individuals who possess balanced intellectual, spiritual, and moral qualities. Education should therefore cultivate not only knowledge acquisition but also the internalization of virtues through continuous practice.

The importance of school culture in character formation is also emphasized by Khairina and Hafidz (2026), who argue that effective character education requires cooperation among teachers, parents, and the school environment. A religious school atmosphere provides students with consistent moral experiences, allowing Islamic values to be reinforced both inside and outside classrooms. Therefore, MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang's educational environment functions as an important medium for strengthening students' religious identity and moral behavior.

3. Integration of Instructional Practices and Character Education

Another important finding is that teachers integrate character education into classroom learning rather than treating it as a separate program. Teachers incorporate Islamic values into teaching materials, classroom management, communication patterns, and learning activities. This approach demonstrates that character education is most effective when integrated into the entire educational process.

This finding supports the perspective of Nucci and Narvaez (2008), who argue that moral education should become part of everyday educational experiences rather than being limited to specific subjects. Students develop moral understanding through interactions with teachers, peers, and learning environments. Therefore, classroom activities provide important opportunities for teachers to connect academic knowledge with ethical and religious values.

In Islamic elementary education, academic learning and moral development cannot be separated. Knowledge without moral guidance may not produce individuals capable of applying knowledge responsibly. Therefore, teachers are expected to create learning environments that

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encourage intellectual growth while simultaneously strengthening students' spiritual and ethical awareness.

The integration of character education into classroom practices also reflects the national educational objective of developing students who are knowledgeable, faithful, responsible, and socially aware. The role of teachers at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang demonstrates how Islamic educational institutions can translate national educational goals into practical learning experiences based on Islamic values.

4. Teacher-Parent Collaboration in Strengthening Students' Religious Character

The findings further indicate that teachers' efforts in developing students' *akhlakul karimah* and religiosity require support from parents and the broader community. Character formation cannot be achieved effectively if moral education occurs only within school boundaries. Students need consistent reinforcement between school and home environments.

This finding supports Khairina and Hafidz (2026), who emphasize that successful character education depends on collaboration between teachers, parents, and schools. Teachers may introduce and reinforce Islamic values at school, but parents play an equally important role in ensuring that these values continue to be practiced at home. Therefore, communication between teachers and parents becomes a strategic component in maintaining students' moral development.

The collaboration between school and family also addresses contemporary challenges caused by technological development and social change. Digital media exposure, changing social interactions, and external cultural influences require stronger cooperation among educational stakeholders. Teachers and parents must work together to guide students in using technology responsibly while maintaining Islamic moral principles.

5. Addressing the Research Gap: A Holistic Understanding of Teacher Roles

This study contributes to addressing previous research limitations by examining teachers' roles comprehensively rather than focusing only on Islamic Religious Education teachers. Previous studies have often emphasized the contribution of PAI teachers in developing students' character (Nurah & Amalia, 2025). However, this research demonstrates that all teachers have important responsibilities in shaping students' moral and religious development because character education occurs through continuous interaction across different learning contexts.

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The findings also provide a more integrated understanding of the relationship between *akhlakul karimah* and religiosity. These two concepts cannot be separated because religious commitment should be reflected through ethical behavior. Students who understand religious teachings are expected to demonstrate these values through honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect, and compassion. Therefore, the development of religiosity should ultimately lead to the formation of noble character.

Furthermore, this research provides contextual evidence from MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang, West Kalimantan, which expands the geographical scope of Islamic character education research in Indonesia. Educational practices are influenced by cultural, institutional, and social contexts; therefore, studying different regional settings contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of Islamic education implementation.

6. Research Novelty and Theoretical Implications

The novelty of this research lies in its holistic examination of teacher roles in fostering students' *akhlakul karimah* and religious attitudes. Unlike previous studies that examine isolated strategies such as role modeling or religious habituation, this study demonstrates that character formation occurs through interconnected processes involving teaching practices, exemplary behavior, school culture, counseling, supervision, and family collaboration.

Theoretically, this research strengthens the understanding that teachers function as agents of moral and spiritual transformation within Islamic elementary education. The teacher's role is multidimensional, involving academic, social, emotional, and spiritual responsibilities. This perspective expands the concept of teacher professionalism by emphasizing that effective teachers in Islamic schools must possess not only pedagogical competence but also moral integrity and spiritual commitment.

Practically, the findings suggest that schools should develop integrated character education programs involving all teachers rather than assigning moral education responsibilities exclusively to religious education teachers. Strengthening teacher training, developing religious school cultures, and improving school–family partnerships are essential strategies for sustaining students' *akhlakul karimah* and religious attitudes in contemporary educational contexts.

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7. The Role of Teachers as Moral Educators and Role Models in Fostering Akhlakul Karimah

The findings of this study indicate that teachers at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang play a central role in fostering students' *akhlakul karimah* through their function as educators, moral guides, and role models. In the context of Islamic elementary education, teachers are not merely responsible for delivering academic materials but also for cultivating students' moral awareness, spiritual development, and ethical behavior. This finding confirms the Islamic educational perspective that places teachers as *murabbi*, *muaddib*, and *murshid*, whose responsibilities extend beyond intellectual instruction toward the formation of students' personalities.

The teacher's role as a moral model is particularly significant because elementary school students tend to learn moral values through observation and imitation. The daily behavior demonstrated by teachers, including discipline, politeness, honesty, responsibility, and religious commitment, becomes an implicit form of moral education. This condition supports Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory, which explains that individuals acquire new behaviors through observing, imitating, and internalizing the behavior of significant models in their environment. In this regard, teachers function as important social models who influence students' attitudes and behavioral development. The findings of this studyalso indicate that the implementation of congregational Dhuha prayer before classroom learning and congregational Dhuhr prayer has become an effective strategy for fostering *akhlakul karimah* among students at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang. These religious activities are consistently carried out with the active involvement of teachers, who not only supervise but also serve as role models by participating directly in the prayers alongside the students. Such habitual religious practices cultivate discipline, responsibility, humility, respect, and obedience to Islamic teachings. The daily repetition of these worship activities enables students to internalize positive moral values, making good character a natural part of their behavior both inside and outside the classroom. This finding is consistent with the study of Sufia et al. (2023), which found that the habituation of religious activities in madrasahs significantly contributes to the development of students' *akhlakul karimah*. Similarly, Apriyani et al. (2025) emphasized that teachers play a strategic role in instilling moral values through continuous religious practices and exemplary behavior.

Furthermore, the results reveal that the success of character formation is strongly influenced by the collaboration between teachers and students in maintaining the consistency of congregational worship. Teachers continuously provide motivation, reminders, and guidance regarding the importance of performing prayers on time, while students gradually develop positive religious attitudes such as sincerity, mutual respect, cooperation, and self-discipline. This

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demonstrates that congregational prayers function not only as acts of worship but also as practical media for character education and moral development. These findings support the opinion of Imaduddin et al. (2022), who argued that Islamic Religious Education teachers significantly influence the development of students' *akhlakul karimah* through habituation and exemplary conduct. Likewise, Putri et al. (2025) concluded that continuous teacher guidance in religious activities strengthens students' moral awareness and promotes the internalization of Islamic values, leading to the development of noble character and positive religious attitudes.

The findings also strengthen the argument of Lickona (1991), who emphasizes that character education requires the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Students do not develop noble character merely by understanding moral concepts theoretically; rather, they need continuous opportunities to experience, practice, and reflect on moral values. Therefore, teachers at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang contribute to character formation by creating learning experiences that encourage students to practice honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect, and empathy in daily activities.

Furthermore, the role of teachers as *uswah hasanah* (good examples) becomes an essential strategy in Islamic character education. Islamic educational traditions emphasize that the personal character of educators has a significant influence on students' moral development. A teacher who demonstrates consistency between speech and action provides students with authentic moral learning experiences. This finding is consistent with Ahmad et al. (2024), who found that teacher exemplary behavior significantly contributes to the development of students' *akhlakul karimah*. Their study highlights that students are more likely to internalize Islamic values when teachers consistently demonstrate those values in real-life situations.

8. Teachers' Strategies Through Religious Habituation and School Culture

The findings reveal that the development of students' religious attitudes at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang is supported through systematic habituation programs and the creation of a religious school culture. Religious practices such as prayer activities, Qur'an recitation, greetings, respect for teachers, discipline, and social responsibility provide students with continuous experiences of practicing Islamic values. These activities demonstrate that religiosity is not formed only through religious instruction but through repeated experiences embedded within the school environment.

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This finding corresponds with Glock and Stark's (1965) theory of religiosity, which explains that religious commitment consists of several interconnected dimensions, including belief, religious practice, religious experience, religious knowledge, and behavioral consequences. In the context of this research, students' religiosity is reflected not only through their understanding of Islamic teachings but also through their participation in religious practices and their moral behavior toward others.

The implementation of habituation programs demonstrates that character formation requires consistency and continuity. Religious values become meaningful when students repeatedly practice them until they become part of their personal habits. This perspective is supported by Al-Attas (1991), who argues that Islamic education aims to develop individuals who possess balanced intellectual, spiritual, and moral qualities. Education should therefore cultivate not only knowledge acquisition but also the internalization of virtues through continuous practice.

The importance of school culture in character formation is also emphasized by Khairina and Hafidz (2026), who argue that effective character education requires cooperation among teachers, parents, and the school environment. A religious school atmosphere provides students with consistent moral experiences, allowing Islamic values to be reinforced both inside and outside classrooms. Therefore, MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang's educational environment functions as an important medium for strengthening students' religious identity and moral behavior.

9. Integration of Instructional Practices and Character Education

Another important finding is that teachers integrate character education into classroom learning rather than treating it as a separate program. Teachers incorporate Islamic values into teaching materials, classroom management, communication patterns, and learning activities. This approach demonstrates that character education is most effective when integrated into the entire educational process.

This finding supports the perspective of Nucci and Narvaez (2008), who argue that moral education should become part of everyday educational experiences rather than being limited to specific subjects. Students develop moral understanding through interactions with teachers, peers, and learning environments. Therefore, classroom activities provide important opportunities for teachers to connect academic knowledge with ethical and religious values.

In Islamic elementary education, academic learning and moral development cannot be separated. Knowledge without moral guidance may not produce individuals capable of applying knowledge responsibly. Therefore, teachers are expected to create learning environments that

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encourage intellectual growth while simultaneously strengthening students' spiritual and ethical awareness.

The integration of character education into classroom practices also reflects the national educational objective of developing students who are knowledgeable, faithful, responsible, and socially aware. The role of teachers at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang demonstrates how Islamic educational institutions can translate national educational goals into practical learning experiences based on Islamic values.

10. Teacher-Parent Collaboration in Strengthening Students' Religious Character

The findings further indicate that teachers' efforts in developing students' *akhlakul karimah* and religiosity require support from parents and the broader community. Character formation cannot be achieved effectively if moral education occurs only within school boundaries. Students need consistent reinforcement between school and home environments.

This finding supports Khairina and Hafidz (2026), who emphasize that successful character education depends on collaboration between teachers, parents, and schools. Teachers may introduce and reinforce Islamic values at school, but parents play an equally important role in ensuring that these values continue to be practiced at home. Therefore, communication between teachers and parents becomes a strategic component in maintaining students' moral development.

The collaboration between school and family also addresses contemporary challenges caused by technological development and social change. Digital media exposure, changing social interactions, and external cultural influences require stronger cooperation among educational stakeholders. Teachers and parents must work together to guide students in using technology responsibly while maintaining Islamic moral principles.

11. Addressing the Research Gap: A Holistic Understanding of Teacher Roles

This study contributes to addressing previous research limitations by examining teachers' roles comprehensively rather than focusing only on Islamic Religious Education teachers. Previous studies have often emphasized the contribution of PAI teachers in developing students' character (Nurah & Amalia, 2025). However, this research demonstrates that all teachers have important responsibilities in shaping students' moral and religious development because character education occurs through continuous interaction across different learning contexts.

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The findings also provide a more integrated understanding of the relationship between *akhlakul karimah* and religiosity. These two concepts cannot be separated because religious commitment should be reflected through ethical behavior. Students who understand religious teachings are expected to demonstrate these values through honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect, and compassion. Therefore, the development of religiosity should ultimately lead to the formation of noble character.

Furthermore, this research provides contextual evidence from MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang, West Kalimantan, which expands the geographical scope of Islamic character education research in Indonesia. Educational practices are influenced by cultural, institutional, and social contexts; therefore, studying different regional settings contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of Islamic education implementation.

12. Research Novelty and Theoretical Implications

The novelty of this research lies in its holistic examination of teacher roles in fostering students' *akhlakul karimah* and religious attitudes. Unlike previous studies that examine isolated strategies such as role modeling or religious habituation, this study demonstrates that character formation occurs through interconnected processes involving teaching practices, exemplary behavior, school culture, counseling, supervision, and family collaboration.

Theoretically, this research strengthens the understanding that teachers function as agents of moral and spiritual transformation within Islamic elementary education. The teacher's role is multidimensional, involving academic, social, emotional, and spiritual responsibilities. This perspective expands the concept of teacher professionalism by emphasizing that effective teachers in Islamic schools must possess not only pedagogical competence but also moral integrity and spiritual commitment.

Practically, the findings suggest that schools should develop integrated character education programs involving all teachers rather than assigning moral education responsibilities exclusively to religious education teachers. Strengthening teacher training, developing religious school cultures, and improving school–family partnerships are essential strategies for sustaining students' *akhlakul karimah* and religious attitudes in contemporary educational contexts.

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CONCLUSION

This study concludes that teachers at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang play a fundamental role in fostering students' *akhlakul karimah* and religious attitudes through their multidimensional responsibilities as educators, moral guides, facilitators, and role models. The role of teachers extends beyond the transmission of academic knowledge toward the formation of students' moral character, spiritual awareness, and ethical behavior. Through exemplary conduct (*uswah hasanah*), teachers become significant figures who influence students' attitudes and behaviors through daily interactions, supporting Bandura's Social Learning Theory that emphasizes the importance of observation and imitation in behavioral development.

The formation of *akhlakul karimah* at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang is implemented through continuous habituation, religious practices, and the development of a supportive Islamic school culture. Activities such as prayer routines, Qur'an recitation, respectful communication, discipline, and social responsibility provide students with meaningful experiences to internalize Islamic values. These findings confirm that religiosity is not merely developed through religious knowledge but through consistent practice and integration of faith, worship, moral values, and social behavior, as explained by Glock and Stark's dimensions of religiosity.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that character education is effectively strengthened when integrated into classroom instruction and school activities rather than being treated as a separate educational program. Teachers at MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang incorporate Islamic values into learning processes, classroom management, and teacher–student interactions, enabling students to connect academic knowledge with ethical and religious principles. This finding reinforces the perspective of Lickona and Nucci and Narvaez that character education requires the integration of moral understanding, emotional development, and practical moral action. The study also highlights the importance of collaboration between teachers, parents, and the school community in sustaining students' moral and religious development. The formation of *akhlakul karimah* requires consistency between school and home environments, particularly in responding to contemporary challenges such as technological development, digital media exposure, and changing social behaviors. Therefore, cooperation among educational stakeholders becomes an essential component in ensuring that Islamic values are continuously practiced in students' daily lives.

This research contributes to addressing existing gaps in Islamic character education studies by examining the collective role of all teachers rather than focusing exclusively on Islamic Religious Education teachers. It also provides a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship

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between *akhlakul karimah* and religiosity by demonstrating that religious commitment should be reflected through ethical behavior. The study expands the geographical scope of Islamic education research by presenting contextual insights from MI Ma'arif Labschool Sintang, West Kalimantan. The novelty of this research lies in its holistic perspective that integrates teachers' instructional practices, role modeling, religious habituation, classroom management, counseling, supervision, school culture, and family collaboration as interconnected processes in character formation. The findings emphasize that teachers in Islamic elementary schools function as agents of moral and spiritual transformation who require not only pedagogical competence but also personal integrity and religious commitment.

Practically, this study suggests that Islamic elementary schools should develop comprehensive character education programs involving all teachers and educational stakeholders. Strengthening teacher professionalism, maintaining a religious school culture, enhancing parent–school partnerships, and providing continuous character education programs are necessary strategies to sustain students' *akhlakul karimah* and religious attitudes in the face of contemporary educational challenges. Overall, the role of teachers remains a crucial determinant in producing generations who possess intellectual competence, strong faith, noble character, and social responsibility.

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