



The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Shaping the Character of Elementary School Students

Nur Selina¹, Darmayanti², Rusli³

^{1,2,3}Faculty of Islamic Studies, Muhammadiyah University of Buton, Indonesia

*email Correspondence: nurselina897@gmail.com

Abstracts

This study aims to analyze the crucial role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in shaping students' character and to identify both supporting and inhibiting factors that influence their effectiveness at SD Negeri 3 Wameo, Baubau City. The problem addressed in this study lies in the challenges faced by PAI teachers in developing students' moral and behavioral character amid varying family and social environments. This research employs a qualitative method with an inductive and descriptive approach to provide an in-depth understanding of how PAI teachers implement character education and how environmental factors affect the process. The findings reveal that PAI teachers play a significant role in guiding students toward positive character formation through exemplary behavior, moral instruction, and continuous mentoring. The supporting factors consist of internal elements such as students' self-awareness, intrinsic motivation, and family participation, which contribute positively to character development. Conversely, the inhibiting factors include external aspects such as negative social influences and unsupportive peer environments that can weaken the teacher's efforts in shaping moral values. Overall, the study concludes that the success of character education largely depends on the synergy between teachers, families, and the surrounding social environment.

Keywords: *Islamic Religious Education; Character Formation; Elementary Students*



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1. Introduction

Education in Indonesia faces increasingly complex challenges that are difficult to address, ranging from learning quality, human resources, and infrastructure to one of the most pressing issues today, which is character education. The current focus of educational concern lies in the moral crisis experienced by students. Discussions about educational problems seem endless, especially when it comes to character education that involves the moral values embedded within students. Character education has become an essential aspect that must receive serious attention, particularly in the context of Indonesian education, where a moral and character crisis is evident among students, especially adolescents. This crisis largely stems from the lack of early character education provided by both schools and parents as the child's first educators. Moreover, students' unstable mental conditions contribute to the problem, making it difficult for them to control their emotions and filter external influences on their thoughts and attitudes. As a result, many students experience behavioral issues, act impulsively, and struggle to maintain emotional stability. These conditions highlight the urgent need to strengthen character education that emphasizes moral development,

emotional intelligence, and the active roles of teachers and parents in shaping students' personalities from an early age.

A person who possesses good morals or character, both individually and socially, is someone who upholds ethical values and virtuous behavior. Considering the importance of character, educational institutions have a responsibility to instill it through the learning process. Strengthening character education in the current context is highly relevant to addressing the moral crisis that is occurring in the nation today. The moral decline among adolescents can be seen in various forms such as the rise of promiscuity, increasing violence against children and teenagers, crimes among peers, bullying, and other negative behaviors (Fasya, 2022). Character education carries a similar meaning to moral and ethical education. Its primary goal is to shape children into good individuals and responsible members of society and the nation. Therefore, character education in Indonesia emphasizes noble values rooted in the nation's cultural heritage, aiming to build the personality of the younger generation and guide them toward moral integrity and civic responsibility (Gunawan, 2022).

The national education goal is clearly stated in Article 1, Paragraph (1) of Law Number 20 of 2003, which defines education as a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and process that enables students to actively develop their potential in order to gain spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills necessary for themselves, society, the nation, and the state. The purpose of national education explicitly emphasizes the importance of cultivating noble character through faith and piety as crucial elements in shaping the character of the nation's young generation. This vision underscores that education is not merely the process of transferring knowledge but also a transformative effort to develop individuals with moral integrity, strong spirituality, and social responsibility. Through this foundation, education in Indonesia aims to create generations who are intellectually competent, emotionally balanced, and spiritually grounded, capable of contributing positively to the progress of the nation while upholding ethical and moral values in every aspect of life.

Personality is closely related to students' characteristics. Character is not inherited but developed through conscious efforts over a long period. Personality formation is influenced by the environment at home, school, and within the community. In Indonesia, character is an essential component of the learning process emphasized in the *Merdeka Curriculum*. This curriculum promotes character development through the *Pancasila Student Profile*, which consists of six dimensions: faith and piety toward God Almighty, global diversity, mutual cooperation, independence, critical thinking, and creativity (Ain et al., 2023). Character education is not a new concept in the field of education. This is because the direction of development in schools does not only focus on cognitive abilities but also aims to teach students to behave with noble morals. Therefore, the implementation of character education must be carried out more optimally so that character and moral values can become prerequisites for the next generation to walk the path of humanity. All stakeholders, including teachers, play a vital role in the formation and development of students' character. A study conducted by Tutuk Ningsi in 2019 entitled "*The Role of Islamic Education in Shaping Students' Character in the Era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Negeri 1 Banyumas*" used a qualitative-phenomenological approach and aimed to explore the role of Islamic Religious Education in shaping student character.

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the role of Islamic Religious Education in shaping students' character is carried out through two types of activities. The first is intracurricular activities, where teachers integrate character values into the learning process of all subjects such as *Al-Qur'an Hadith*, *Fiqh*, *Islamic Cultural History*, *Arabic Language*, and *Aqidah Akhlak*, in which moral and character education are directly taught. The second is extracurricular activities, which include *Tilawatil Qur'an* (reading the Qur'an) through digital literacy methods, *Tahfidzul Qur'an* (memorizing the Qur'an), *Qitobah* (public speaking), *Hadroh* (Islamic music), and *Calligraphy*. Through these two types of activities, various character traits are developed, including religiosity, honesty, love of reading, responsibility, independence, appreciation of achievement, social awareness, and diligence. With these values, students are better prepared to face challenges in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 (Ningsih, 2019).

Teachers play a crucial role in education, including guiding, nurturing, mentoring, and teaching. They serve as role models whose behavior is often imitated by students, and the outcomes, whether positive or negative, depend on the examples they set. Essentially, the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in elementary schools is similar to that of classroom or subject teachers in shaping students' character. Teachers are not only curriculum implementers but also curriculum developers. Therefore, they must be creative and innovative to provide effective learning motivation for students. Teachers also need to teach the importance of maintaining good and harmonious relationships among students and to instill the understanding that hurting others, being unjust, lying, and fighting are disgraceful actions that have become more common in many schools (Rulan, 2018). Morality distinguishes human character from that of other creatures. Without morality, humans lose their status as the most pious servants of God. As stated in the Qur'an, Surah At-Tiin (95:4-6), Allah created mankind in the best of forms but reminded that those who abandon faith and good deeds will fall into the lowest state. This verse provides a profound moral foundation for Islamic education, emphasizing that character building must be rooted in faith, righteousness, and virtuous behavior, which together uphold the dignity of humankind. "Indeed, We have certainly created mankind in the best form. Then We return him to the lowest of the low, except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for they will have an everlasting reward."

This verse explains that humans are created in the best state when they possess good morals and noble character. However, if they lack moral integrity and virtuous behavior, they will fall into the lowest position. Having good character enables individuals to remain strong and continue progressing toward excellence without being influenced by the changing times. Therefore, moral development is an essential and inseparable part of education, as the ultimate goal of Islamic education is to form individuals who have faith and piety through knowledge, skills, and behavior aligned with Islamic values.

The character of today's young generation, as reflected through various media reports and direct observations, shows that many students have not yet fully understood the importance of character education. This is evident from the decline in politeness, the frequent use of inappropriate language toward peers and teachers, and the tendency to act selfishly. For instance, a video circulating on social media showed a teacher enthusiastically teaching while a student was sleeping in the middle of the lesson. In the video, the teacher appeared very passionate in explaining the material, yet one student slept carelessly, showing indifference. This incident illustrates not only

a lack of respect toward the teacher but also possibly indicates underlying personal or emotional problems faced by the student (Metrojambi, 2024).

Based on these observations, it can be concluded that the teacher's role in shaping the character of fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 3 Wameo has not been functioning effectively. The emergence of character-related problems such as lack of politeness, frequent verbal disrespect toward peers and teachers, and selfish attitudes can be attributed to several factors. These include the lack of positive interaction between teachers and students, the diversity of student behavior, and an unsupportive learning environment, all of which make it difficult for teachers to effectively guide and build students' character.

2. Research methods

The data analysis method applied in this study is a qualitative method with an inductive approach. In this research, data were first collected, then categorized and grouped into relevant themes. Afterward, the data were analyzed and presented according to the researcher's conceptual framework, and the findings were interpreted comprehensively by describing the data as they are. The population refers to the entire set of objects being studied, which may include people, objects, events, values, or other observable phenomena. The population in this study consisted of two Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and 26 fourth-grade students at SD Negeri 3 Wameo, Baubau City. The sample comprised the same participants, meaning 100 percent of the population was included, resulting in a total sample of 28 respondents. According to experts, when the total population is fewer than 100 individuals, it is recommended that the entire population be taken as the research sample to ensure comprehensive and accurate data representation.

The data collection techniques used in this study consisted of observation, interviews, and documentation, all of which were carried out systematically to obtain accurate and comprehensive information. The observation process was conducted directly in the field to observe various conditions related to the formation of students' character. These included the geographical location of the school, the organizational structure, the physical condition of the school environment, the classroom atmosphere during the teaching and learning process, and the adequacy of educational facilities that support learning activities. Through observation, the researcher was able to identify both supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in shaping student character. The interview technique was used to exchange information and ideas between the researcher and the participants, particularly the Islamic Religious Education teachers and fourth-grade students. Interviews allowed the researcher to explore the teachers' experiences, teaching strategies, and challenges in implementing character education, as well as the students' understanding and attitudes toward moral and religious values taught in class. Meanwhile, the documentation technique was employed to collect written records, photos, attendance lists, school activity reports, and other materials that could provide evidence and a deeper understanding of the phenomena being studied. Documentation supported the data obtained from observation and interviews, ensuring that the findings were valid, reliable, and reflective of the real conditions in the field.

Data analysis in this study was carried out using the interactive model developed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three main stages: data condensation, data

display, and conclusion drawing. In the data condensation stage, the researcher filtered and organized the interview transcripts and observation notes to obtain the essential information relevant to the research focus. This process involved selecting, simplifying, and transforming raw data into a more structured and meaningful form to facilitate in-depth analysis. The data display stage involved presenting the information in a systematic and organized manner so that patterns, relationships, and connections between data could be easily understood. The data were displayed in the form of descriptions, tables, or thematic categorizations that reflected the findings obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation. The conclusion drawing stage was carried out using an inductive approach, which began with observations of specific facts and phenomena that served as the basis for forming broader generalizations. Through this process, the researcher was able to interpret and verify the data comprehensively, ensuring that the conclusions drawn accurately represented the real conditions and aligned with the research objectives.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

The process of shaping students' character based on research conducted at SD Negeri 3 Wameo in Baubau City shows that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers play a crucial role in building students' moral and behavioral qualities. Through interviews, it was found that teachers contribute to character formation through four interconnected roles, namely as educators, role models, motivators, and trainers. As educators, teachers integrate moral, ethical, and social values into every learning activity, ensuring that character education is not separated from academic instruction. As role models, teachers consistently demonstrate positive behaviors, such as punctuality and neatness, which serve as examples for students to emulate in their daily lives. As motivators, they encourage students to act and behave positively through continuous guidance, including religious talks held every Friday to strengthen students' spiritual and moral awareness. Furthermore, as trainers, teachers cultivate polite attitudes and consistent good habits by engaging students in routine activities such as congregational prayers, *BTQ* (Qur'an reading and writing) classes every Monday and Thursday, and reciting *Surah Yasin* every Friday. These roles align with the views of educational experts who emphasize that teachers must possess integrity, responsibility, authority, and discipline to effectively guide students. Therefore, the success of character formation depends on how teachers embody these roles and provide consistent moral guidance to students in both academic and spiritual contexts.

Character Formation of Students

Based on the research conducted at SD Negeri 3 Wameo in Baubau City through interviews, it was found that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers hold a crucial role in shaping the character of fourth-grade students. Teachers do not only serve as instructors who deliver religious knowledge but also act as key figures in nurturing students' moral values and behavior. Their efforts in integrating religious teachings into daily school activities help students develop a sense of responsibility, discipline, and respect toward others. By consistently guiding students in moral education, PAI teachers become the foundation for character development in the school environment. In fulfilling their responsibilities, PAI teachers perform several interconnected roles, including being educators, role models, motivators, and trainers. As educators, they

provide moral and ethical guidance alongside academic learning. As role models, they demonstrate good behavior that students can imitate, such as punctuality, neatness, and honesty. As motivators, they encourage students to do good deeds, maintain consistency in worship, and engage actively in learning. Finally, as trainers, they help students develop positive habits through structured activities such as Qur'an recitation, daily prayers, and religious programs. Through these roles, PAI teachers effectively build not only students' academic understanding but also their spiritual and moral foundations, which are essential for lifelong character formation.

Table 1. Interview on the Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Shaping Students' Character

Interview Questions	Teachers' Answers
How is the teacher's role as an educator in shaping students' character?	During learning activities, teachers always incorporate moral, ethical, and social values, not only focusing on academic subjects.
What do teachers do as role models in shaping students' character?	As role models, we as teachers always set a good example for students, such as coming to school on time and dressing neatly.
How is the teacher's role as a motivator in shaping students' character?	As teachers, we constantly motivate students to act and behave positively, such as not being lazy in worship or studying. Therefore, we regularly conduct religious sermons every Friday.
What do teachers do as trainers in shaping students' character?	As teachers who act as trainers, we train students' skills and attitudes to be polite and consistent in doing good deeds. Therefore, we always encourage students to perform daily congregational prayers, hold BTQ (Qur'an reading and writing) classes every Monday and Thursday, and recite Surah Yasin every Friday.

The results of the interviews show that the roles of PAI teachers as educators, role models, motivators, and trainers are interrelated and play an important part in shaping students' character. Teachers not only serve as educators who teach and guide students but also as role models who demonstrate exemplary behavior. As stated by experts, teachers act as models followed by their students. Therefore, a teacher must possess appropriate personal qualities, including responsibility, authority, and discipline (Bafirman, 2016). Moreover, teachers serve as motivators who encourage students to be enthusiastic and behave well. This opinion aligns with Manizar (2015), who stated that teachers act as motivators who inspire students to improve their enthusiasm and develop their learning activities. As motivators, teachers are expected to spark students' learning spirit and encourage them to continue growing and improving. Additionally, teachers must act as trainers who help students think critically and behave politely through consistent practice. Thus, the process of character formation can be carried out effectively. In line with experts' views, teachers act as trainers because the learning process requires continuous practice and skills development, both intellectual and motoric, which demand that teachers function as trainers (Mulyasa, 2013).

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The supporting and inhibiting factors faced by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SD Negeri 3 Wameo, Baubau City, in shaping students' character are divided

into two main categories, namely internal and external factors. Based on interviews with two PAI teachers at the school, it was explained that both types of factors significantly influence the success of character formation.

Table 2. Interview on Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of PAI Teachers in Shaping Students' Character

Interview Questions	Teachers' Answers
What are the internal factors that support character formation in students?	The internal factors that support character formation include students' self-awareness and motivation, as well as their family environment. These aspects strongly influence students' character development because self-awareness, intrinsic motivation, and family upbringing play essential roles in shaping behavior.
What are the external factors that hinder character formation in students?	The external factors that hinder character formation are negative influences from the students' social environment. Social support plays a major role in character formation; therefore, if teachers have already set good examples and habits but the social environment does not support them, students can easily be influenced by negative behaviors around them.

Based on the interviews, it can be concluded that two main factors influence character formation: internal and external. The internal factors include students' self-awareness, intrinsic motivation, and family environment. Without motivation and family support, teachers often face difficulties in guiding students toward positive character development. This aligns with the statement of Indramawan (2020), who explained that every human action originates from instinctive desires, and the outcome depends on how these instincts are directed. Instincts may lead humans toward disgrace if misused, but they can also elevate one's dignity if guided by truth and virtue. The external factors, on the other hand, involve the social environment. If a student's social environment does not support moral development, it can hinder the teacher's efforts in shaping character. This finding is consistent with the view of Gunawan (2022), who stated that both social and spiritual environments greatly influence personal development. Individuals who live in a positive environment tend to develop good personalities, whereas those who grow up in unsupportive surroundings are more likely to be negatively affected in their moral formation.

3.2 Discussion

Based on Law No. 14 of 2005, Article 1 Paragraph (1) states that a teacher is a professional educator responsible for teaching, guiding, directing, training, assessing, and evaluating students at the early childhood, primary, and secondary education levels. Similarly, Article 39 Paragraph (2) of Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System defines educators as professional personnel responsible for planning and implementing the learning process, assessing learning outcomes, providing guidance and training, and conducting research and community service. According to Husnul Khotimah in the research of H. M. Syarafudin and Hastuti Diah Ikawati, a teacher is an individual who facilitates the transfer of knowledge from learning sources to students. Therefore, teachers are professional educators whose duties include teaching, educating, training, assessing, and evaluating students (Syarafudin & Hastuti, 2020). Endang Syaifuddin Ansari, as cited by Toha Makhshun, explains that education is a

process of guidance carried out by educators toward students to achieve educational goals through appropriate materials, timing, methods, and tools (Makhshun, 2020).

According to Ramayulis, as cited by Evi Susilowati, religious education is a conscious and planned effort to prepare students to recognize, understand, believe in, have faith, develop good morals, and practice Islamic teachings based on its primary sources, namely the Qur'an and Hadith, through teaching, training, guidance, and personal experience (Susilowati, 2022). From these perspectives, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education is a systematic process of nurturing designed to help learners study, understand, and apply Islamic teachings based on their core sources, the Qur'an and Hadith. Its ultimate goal is to cultivate noble character and enable students to play an active role in social life guided by Islamic values.

According to Abd al-Rahman al-Nahlawi, as cited in Ramayulis' book, the educator's responsibilities include nurturing oneself to believe in Allah, implementing His laws, performing righteous deeds, and educating the community to advise one another and remain patient in worship while upholding the truth. This responsibility is not only limited to the educator's moral obligations toward students but also includes accountability before Allah SWT for every duty carried out (Ramayulis, 2008). Furthermore, Koentjaraningrat, as cited in Satira et al., defines the concept of role as a pattern of behavior expected from an individual who occupies a particular status or position within an organization or system. Thus, the term "role" reflects the behavioral expectations attached to one's position and responsibilities in a given social or institutional context (Satira et al., 2021).

It is very important for teachers to play a vital role in the teaching and learning process to ensure that students learn effectively. Teachers are not only responsible for transferring information but also for helping students understand concepts and develop their own perspectives. They must have a deep understanding of students' ways of thinking and viewpoints in order to provide appropriate guidance and support. According to Mulyasa, as cited by Zida Hadiyyah, the roles of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers include several key functions.

Teacher as Educator

Teachers act as educators, figures, role models, and sources of identity for students and their surrounding environment. Therefore, teachers must meet certain professional and personal standards. As educators, they are required to possess a sense of responsibility, independence, authority, and discipline that can be emulated by students.

Teacher as Motivator

The learning process will only be successful if students are motivated to learn. Therefore, teachers must strive to foster motivation among students to achieve optimal learning outcomes. They need to be creative in encouraging students to develop effective learning behavior. As motivators, teachers serve as driving forces who inspire students to increase their enthusiasm and engagement in learning activities. The motivation provided by teachers aims to strengthen students' desire and passion for learning (Arianti, 2019).

Teacher as Trainer

According to Mujtahid, in his book *Teacher Professional Development* as cited by Nur Illahi, teachers must also act as trainers because the educational process requires intellectual, attitudinal, and motor skill exercises. To help students think critically, behave politely, and master various skills, they need regular and consistent practice. Similarly, teaching and learning activities require constant training to deepen understanding and the application of taught theories (Illahi, 2020).

Teacher as Model or Role Model

A teacher serves as a model and example for students as well as for those who consider them a mentor. As role models, teachers' actions and attitudes are always observed by students and others around them. Therefore, teachers must pay attention to various aspects of their conduct, including behavior, communication style, attire, mindset, decision-making, lifestyle, and interpersonal relationships, especially in social interactions (Haniyyah, 2021). From the explanations above, it can be concluded that teachers play a crucial role in education. They are essential figures who help students overcome learning obstacles and work to create an encouraging and motivating environment for achieving educational goals. Specifically, in the context of character formation, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers have a greater responsibility than general teachers. They are not only responsible for imparting knowledge but also for shaping students' character to become faithful individuals who are obedient to Allah SWT.

Based on this explanation, the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers has already been stated in the words of Allah in Surah An-Nahl (16:43): *"And We did not send before you (Muhammad) except men to whom We revealed [Our message]. So ask the people of knowledge if you do not know."* This verse serves as a foundation that highlights the teacher's vital role in providing guidance, particularly in cultivating students' morals and character.

The responsibilities of Islamic Religious Education teachers encompass an important mission in developing students' intellectual and spiritual life. Teaching is a calling that requires love, respect, dedication, and professional commitment to fulfilling educational duties. Teachers are responsible for instilling moral norms in students so that they can distinguish between moral and immoral actions. According to Muslich Masnur, as cited by Azka Salma Salsabila et al., character refers to the set of human behavioral values related to God Almighty, oneself, others, the environment, and nationality, which are reflected through thoughts, attitudes, feelings, speech, and actions in accordance with religious, legal, cultural, and traditional norms (Salsabila et al., 2021). Similarly, Suyanto in his book *Model of Character Education Development in the School Environment* defines character as a way of thinking and behaving that characterizes each individual in living and cooperating within family, community, and national contexts. He adds that a person of good character is someone capable of making decisions and taking responsibility for the consequences of those decisions (Suyanto, 2010). From these definitions, it can be concluded that character represents the distinctive way an individual thinks and behaves in relation to God, oneself, others, society, and the nation, expressed through consistent moral actions and attitudes that differentiate one individual from another.

Character is formed through a process that involves knowledge (knowing), action (acting), and eventually develops into habit. This indicates that character is more than just intellectual understanding, as it also encompasses emotional and behavioral aspects. In character education, according to Thomas Lickona as cited in Suyanto's book, there are three essential components of good character: moral knowing, which refers to moral awareness and understanding; moral feeling, which involves emotional sensitivity toward moral values; and moral action, which is the practice of moral behavior in everyday life (Suyanto, 2010). The formation of character is influenced by various factors that contribute to its development. Scholars generally classify these factors into two main categories: internal and external. Internal factors refer to influences that originate within the individual, such as personality, motivation, conscience, and emotional stability. External factors, on the other hand, come from outside the individual, including family environment, school atmosphere, peer relationships, community, and social culture. Both internal and external factors interact dynamically in shaping an individual's moral reasoning, values, and habitual behaviors, ultimately forming the foundation of one's character.

Internal Factors

Several internal factors influence the formation of an individual's character. First, instinct is an innate trait that drives human behavior toward achieving specific goals without prior training or conscious planning (Indramawan, 2020). Every human action originates from a desire motivated by instinct. The impact of instinct on an individual depends greatly on how it is directed. If guided properly, instincts can elevate humans to a noble state, but if misused, they can lead to disgraceful behavior. Instinct, therefore, requires moral and spiritual guidance to channel it toward good deeds. Second, habit plays a crucial role in shaping character because attitudes and behaviors that define morality are closely linked to habitual actions. Habits refer to actions performed repeatedly until they become automatic. Since habits are formed through repetition, individuals should cultivate positive behaviors consistently so that these actions eventually become part of their moral character. Third, willpower serves as the inner drive to execute one's ideas and goals despite facing obstacles and challenges. A strong will helps individuals remain steadfast in pursuing what is right, even when confronted with difficulties. Fourth, conscience or inner voice is the moral compass within humans that warns them when their behavior approaches wrongdoing. Its function is to alert individuals to the dangers of immoral actions and to encourage them to choose good deeds. Conscience can be strengthened through spiritual and moral education, helping individuals develop higher levels of moral awareness. Fifth, heredity also influences human behavior. In daily life, it is often observed that children exhibit characteristics similar to their parents or grandparents, even across generations. These inherited traits can be divided into two types: *physical traits*, which include strengths or weaknesses in the muscular and nervous systems passed down from parents; and *psychological traits*, which involve inherited emotional or instinctual tendencies that can affect a person's behavior and moral disposition later in life.

External Factors

In addition to internal factors, external factors also play a significant role in shaping an individual's character. External factors refer to influences that come from outside the individual. Some of these external factors include education and environment, both of which greatly contribute to the development of moral and ethical

behavior. First, education has a profound impact on character formation, as a person's moral quality is often shaped by the type and level of education they receive. Education helps refine a person's personality, and individual behavior usually reflects the kind of education they have experienced, whether formal, informal, or non-formal. As stated by the Father of Indonesian National Education, Ki Hadjar Dewantara, education is an effort to promote the development of character (inner strength and morality), mind, and body in children (Mudana, 2019). This definition highlights that education aims not only to develop intellectual capacity but also to strengthen moral and emotional intelligence. Second, environment encompasses everything that surrounds living beings, such as plants, land conditions, air quality, and social interactions. Humans are social beings who constantly interact with others and their surroundings, and through these interactions, thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors mutually influence one another. The environment can be divided into two categories. The *physical environment*—which includes the natural surroundings—can affect and shape human behavior by either supporting or hindering the development of individual talents. The *social and spiritual environment*, on the other hand, refers to the social context in which individuals live. People who grow up in a positive and nurturing environment tend to develop good personalities, while those in unsupportive or negative surroundings may experience moral decline or behavioral problems (Gunawan, 2022).

4. Conclusion

The formation of students' character can be effectively developed through the teacher's role as both a role model and an educator. Students tend to imitate the behavior and attitude of their teachers; therefore, teachers must demonstrate discipline, responsibility, and good manners, such as arriving at school on time and dressing neatly. In addition, teachers also play a vital role in integrating religious values into daily school activities. This is done by conducting religious sermons every Friday, encouraging students to perform congregational prayers daily, organizing BTQ (Qur'an reading and writing) classes every Monday and Thursday, and leading the recitation of *Surah Yasin* every Friday. These practices not only strengthen students' spiritual values but also help instill consistency, respect, and moral awareness as part of their character development. Furthermore, both internal and external factors influence the success of character formation among students. Internally, students' self-awareness and intrinsic motivation, along with family support, play an essential role in encouraging positive character growth. A supportive family environment reinforces what is taught at school and helps students internalize moral values. Externally, however, negative social influences can hinder this process. The social environment, particularly peers and community interactions, greatly impacts students' behavior. When the surrounding environment does not support moral development, students may be easily influenced by negative behaviors, which can weaken the efforts of teachers in shaping their character.

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