

HOLISTIC APPROACH FOR INTEGRATING RELIGIOUS VALUES IN CHARACTER EDUCATION: CASE STUDY IN DI MI MUHAMMADIYAH 1 PROBOLINGGO

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the holistic integration of religious values into character education at MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo, a primary Islamic school in Indonesia renowned for its innovative programs and strong moral foundations. Using a qualitative case study approach, the research examines how the school successfully implements religious values through structured programs, daily routines, and collaborative efforts with families. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observation, document analysis, and focus group discussions with school principals, teachers, parents, and students.

Findings reveal that MI Muhammadiyah excels in integrating religious values through innovative programs such as *Tahfidz Qur'an*, *Children Kitchen*, *Children Garden*, and bilingual education for English and Mathematics. These programs not only enhance students' academic competencies but also foster their spiritual development. Daily routines, including congregational prayers, infaq practices, and instilling Islamic etiquette, serve as a consistent reinforcement of moral values. Teachers play a pivotal role as spiritual mentors, offering guidance, moral reinforcement, and exemplary behavior. Furthermore, Islamic counseling conducted by homeroom teachers evaluates students' spiritual progress and fosters a partnership between the school and families, ensuring the seamless application of Islamic values at home.

This holistic approach demonstrates the effectiveness of combining academic learning with religious and moral education to develop well-rounded individuals with strong spiritual foundations. The study concludes that the MI Muhammadiyah model can serve as an exemplary framework for other educational institutions seeking to integrate religious values into character education. Recommendations include expanding innovative programs, strengthening teacher training, and adopting collaborative strategies with families. This research contributes to the broader discourse on moral and character education, offering practical insights for schools and policymakers to develop a more comprehensive and values-driven education system.

Keywords: Religious values, character education, holistic approach, Islamic education, MI Muhammadiyah, educational innovation

INTRODUCTION

Character education is an integral component in shaping the next generation, equipping them not only with intellectual competence but also with strong moral values. Within the context of education in Indonesia, religious values serve as one of the primary pillars of character education, aligning with the national education goals that emphasize the development of individuals who are faithful, pious, and possess noble character. However, the implementation of religious values in character education often tends to be partial, focusing on specific aspects without considering a holistic approach that encompasses all dimensions of learners' spiritual, emotional, and social.

Character education in Indonesia plays a vital role in shaping the next generation to be not only intellectually capable but also morally upright. In this context, religious values serve as a foundational pillar of character education, in alignment with national education objectives that emphasize the development of individuals who are faithful, pious, and possess noble character (Ismail, Suhana, & Zakiah, 2021; Salsabilla, Chaerani, & Putri, 2022; Muthma'innah, 2023). Research highlights that effective character education must integrate religious values into the curriculum to holistically shape students' character (Irawati et al., 2022; Fadilah, 2023).

However, the implementation of religious values in character education often tends to be partial. Many educational institutions focus on specific aspects of character education without adopting a holistic approach that addresses all dimensions of learners, including spiritual, emotional, and social aspects (Lisnawati, 2021; Syafi'i, Saied, & Hakim, 2023). For instance, research by Syafi'i et al. indicates that effective educational management can enhance students' character; however, there are often gaps in the comprehensive application of religious values. Furthermore, Subakat emphasizes the importance of holistic, character-based education that encompasses all aspects of a child's development, rather than focusing solely on academic achievements (Subakat, 2022).

Furthermore, research by Mery et al. emphasizes the significance of synergy among students in the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project, which aims to cultivate collaborative attitudes and creativity (Mery et al., 2022). This finding illustrates that character education is not solely about instilling individual values but also involves fostering social interactions among learners. Therefore, a more comprehensive and integrative approach is essential to ensure the effective and holistic implementation of character education (Muncarno et al., 2022).

To achieve the desired outcomes of character education, it is imperative for all educational stakeholders—including teachers, parents, and the community—to work together in creating an environment that supports the holistic development of students' character (Raharjo, 2010; Nurkhaliza, 2023; Salsabilla, Chaerani, & Putri, 2022). By doing so, character education in Indonesia can serve as a strong foundation for shaping a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also morally

upright and prepared to face future challenges (Muthma'innah, 2023; Sholichah, 2019).

MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo is an educational institution long recognized for its commitment to embedding religious values within its curriculum and students' daily activities. The institution's strength lies in its integrative approach, which incorporates religious values not only through Islamic studies but also through daily routines, such as religious activities, character building via extracurricular programs, and a family-oriented approach. These strengths make MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo a highly relevant locus for exploring holistic approaches to integrating religious values.

However, previous studies on character education in Indonesia have predominantly focused on teaching methods or curriculum design, often overlooking in-depth discussions on how holistic approaches can effectively integrate religious values. The existing literature reveals a research gap, indicating a lack of comprehensive studies on the implementation of religious values in faith-based elementary schools, particularly within Muhammadiyah institutions. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the holistic approach implemented at MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo.

The holistic approach explored in this study encompasses the synergy between formal learning, daily habituation of religious values, family involvement, and support from the surrounding community. This focus adds value by illustrating how various components within the educational ecosystem interact to comprehensively shape students' character. Consequently, this study aims not only to provide an empirical description but also to contribute a theoretical concept that can be applied in other educational institutions.

The novelty of this research lies in the implementation model formulated from its findings—a holistic approach based on the integration of religious values in faith-based elementary schools. This model is expected to serve as a practical guide for educators and policymakers to optimize character education rooted in religious values, particularly within Muhammadiyah institutions, which have a strong vision for shaping morally upright individuals.

Additionally, MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo possesses unique characteristics as a school that successfully combines traditional and modern methods in implementing religious values. This advantage offers an opportunity to examine how the school manages the challenges of aligning 21st-century educational needs with its robust religious vision. The study will also highlight best practices that have proven effective in supporting the character development of students.

The significance of this research extends beyond MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo, contributing to the development of religious value-based education models at a national level. In the context of increasingly dynamic social changes, education that harmonizes religious values with contemporary needs is becoming increasingly relevant. Thus, the findings

of this study are expected to serve as a reference for other educational institutions, both within Muhammadiyah and other faith-based schools.

Beyond its practical contributions to education, this study also offers theoretical advancements in the literature on character education. Research on holistic approaches to integrating religious values remains limited, particularly at the elementary school level. By providing a comprehensive and in-depth analysis, this study can enrich insights into character education based on religiosity.

The relevance of this research is heightened in the face of globalization, which often erodes moral and religious values. By adopting a holistic approach that integrates religious values into character education, it is hoped that students will not only excel intellectually but also become individuals of integrity, capable of meeting modern challenges while maintaining their Islamic identity.

Overall, this research offers a novel and applicable approach to developing a generation that is not only highly competitive but also possesses a strong personality grounded in religious values. MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo serves as an ideal locus for this study, given its consistent and systematic implementation of religious values. The success of this approach is expected to inspire other educational institutions to adopt similar models, supporting the achievement of national education goals.

METHOD

This study, conducted in August 2024, aims to explore in depth how religious values are holistically integrated into character education at MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo. A qualitative approach with a case study design was employed to understand the complex interactions among the context, actors, and processes involved in the implementation of religious values. MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo, as the research locus, is renowned for its systematic integration of religious values through its curriculum, daily habituation, family involvement, and school environment. With this focus, the study is expected to make a significant contribution to the field of character education grounded in religious values.

The research subjects encompass various stakeholders within the educational ecosystem at MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo, including the principal, teachers, students, and parents. The principal is identified as the key policymaker responsible for setting the direction for the integration of religious values, while teachers serve as the primary implementers in the classroom. Students are the central focus of the study, highlighting the impact of religious values on their character development, whereas parents play a crucial role in maintaining the consistency of these values at home. By engaging all these elements, this study offers a comprehensive perspective on the implementation of a holistic approach in a faith-based elementary school.

Data collection was carried out using various techniques, including in-depth interviews, participatory observations, focus group discussions

(FGDs), and document analysis. Interviews with the principal, teachers, and parents revealed strategies, practices, and challenges in integrating religious values. Observations of learning activities, religious programs, and daily habituation provided empirical data on the implementation of religious values in the school. FGDs with students offered rich insights into their internalization of religious values in daily life. The collected data were analyzed thematically to identify key elements such as learning strategies, value habituation practices, the role of family, and challenges in implementation.

The findings of this study are summarized in the form of a holistic approach model based on religious values, reflecting the synergy among various educational components at MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo. This model is expected to serve as a practical guide for other educational institutions seeking to integrate religious values more effectively. In addition to its practical contribution, this study offers a theoretical contribution that is highly relevant to the literature on character education, particularly in the context of faith-based education in Indonesia. With its in-depth approach and rigorous methodology, the findings are anticipated to provide fresh insights into fostering a morally grounded and competitive generation capable of navigating global challenges.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings (can be in form of subheading)

The findings of this study reveal that MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo has significant strengths in integrating character education based on religious values through various innovative programs and activities. As a faith-based elementary institution grounded in Islamic values, the school focuses not only on academic excellence but also on comprehensive religious character formation. One of its standout programs is the Tahfidz Qur'an initiative. This program is designed to enable students to memorize the Qur'an intensively, supported by a structured and high-quality system. Through collaboration with the Tajdid Center, MI Muhammadiyah ensures that students receive optimal guidance in TPQ (Taman Pendidikan Qur'an) and tahfidz activities. This process goes beyond rote memorization, fostering discipline, patience, and a profound love for the Qur'an as a guiding framework for life. In addition, the bilingual program implemented at MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo provides an additional advantage for students. With subjects such as English and Mathematics taught in two languages, students are trained to become globally competent while maintaining their Islamic values. This bilingual teaching approach is designed to prepare students for the challenges of the 21st century by equipping them with strong language skills without compromising religious education. Observations revealed that students are confident in interacting in English while consistently applying Islamic manners and ethics in their daily lives. This integration of bilingual education and religious values reflects the school's commitment to

producing well-rounded individuals who are academically capable and morally grounded.

Another creative program supporting the integration of religious values at MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo is the Children Kitchen and Children Garden initiatives. Children Kitchen provides students with opportunities to learn cooking and meal preparation guided by Islamic values, such as reciting prayers before eating, eating with the right hand, and maintaining cleanliness. This activity instills gratitude, independence, and responsibility in students through hands-on practice. Children Garden allows students to engage in gardening and plant care. This activity not only introduces basic scientific concepts but also fosters environmental awareness and a sense of responsibility as stewards (khalifah) of the Earth. These programs combine practical skills with religious and moral teachings, helping students internalize Islamic values while developing essential life competencies.

MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo also offers a rich array of outdoor activities, including outbound, campbond, and outing class programs, all designed to integrate character education with experiential learning. Outbound and campbond activities focus on developing courage, independence, and teamwork among students. Through various games and challenges, students learn to overcome fear, solve problems collaboratively, and support one another in achieving common goals. These activities promote resilience and social skills while embedding Islamic values such as mutual respect and trust. Outing class, a learning activity conducted outside the classroom, provides students with opportunities to directly engage with their surroundings. Visits to historical sites, places of worship, or educational centers link classroom lessons to real-world contexts. This hands-on approach deepens students' understanding of the material while reinforcing the religious values taught in school. These outdoor programs not only enrich the students' learning experiences but also strengthen their character, preparing them to apply Islamic principles in diverse settings.

In addition to its innovative programs, the findings of this study highlight that religious values at MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo are integrated through consistent habituation practices. Congregational prayers, including Dhuha, Dhuhur, and Ashar, are emphasized as daily routines. These activities teach students discipline, togetherness, and the importance of maintaining a spiritual connection with Allah SWT. The Mabit (Malam Bina Iman dan Taqwa) program, specifically for 5th and 6th-grade students, provides more intensive faith-building activities. This overnight program at the school involves a series of worship sessions, religious studies, and reflective practices. Designed to deepen students' understanding of Islamic values, it aims to strengthen their faith and piety in a supportive and engaging environment. These practices not only nurture the students' spiritual growth but also instill critical character traits, such as responsibility and devotion, aligning with the school's mission of holistic religious education.

The study also reveals that student behavior at MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo is effectively managed through an Islamic values-based

approach. The roles of ustadz and ustadzah extend beyond classroom teaching; they also serve as spiritual guides and moral exemplars for the students. Teachers consistently pay special attention to the development of students' character through advice, reinforcement of Islamic values, and role modeling in their daily attitudes and behaviors. By embodying the principles they teach, teachers at MI Muhammadiyah act as moral mentors, ensuring students feel supported in their spiritual and social journeys. This approach fosters a nurturing environment where students not only learn Islamic values but also see them practiced, helping to internalize these principles as part of their character development.

The approach adopted by teachers at MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo emphasizes the importance of moral values in everyday life. Teachers not only provide guidance when students make mistakes but also actively offer appreciation and motivation for good behavior. For instance, when a student demonstrates Islamic manners such as greeting others with salam, speaking politely, or helping a friend the teacher offers praise and positive reinforcement to encourage these behaviors to become ingrained habits. Through such interactions, teachers act as facilitators, helping students understand that Islamic values are not limited to acts of worship but should also be reflected in their social relationships. This method fosters a supportive environment where students are motivated to internalize and practice Islamic morals in all aspects of their lives, strengthening their character and interpersonal skills.

In addition to direct supervision, MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo implements a routine Islamic counseling program conducted by homeroom teachers. This program is designed to regularly monitor and evaluate students' spiritual progress. Homeroom teachers adopt a personal approach with students, delving into their faith-related conditions, offering guidance when challenges in worship or morality are identified, and motivating them to strengthen their relationship with Allah SWT. This counseling process not only helps students reflect on their spiritual journey but also fosters a stronger bond between students and teachers as spiritual mentors. Through this initiative, students are provided with a supportive environment to address personal struggles and grow both spiritually and morally, ensuring their holistic development aligns with Islamic principles.

This holistic approach fosters a safe, guided, and supportive environment for students to grow not only as academically competent individuals but also as those with strong religious character. With the active presence of ustadz and ustadzah offering continuous guidance and advice, students feel valued and supported in all aspects of their lives. The combination of supervision, role modeling, counseling, and Islamic counseling creates an educational ecosystem that prioritizes not only intellectual development but also the cultivation of noble character rooted in Islamic values. This makes MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo an exemplary model of education for nurturing a generation with strong Islamic morals and principles.

One significant strength of MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo is the proactive approach taken by homeroom teachers in fostering intensive communication with students' parents. This approach aims to ensure that the spiritual values and worship practices taught at school are consistently implemented within the family environment. Homeroom teachers not only take responsibility for guiding students within the school but also act as a bridge between the school and the family, creating a harmonious synergy in shaping the character and spirituality of the students. This collaborative effort strengthens the alignment of values between school and home, fostering a comprehensive support system for the holistic development of students.

The communication established by homeroom teachers includes regular discussions with parents about the students' spiritual development and worship practices. In these discussions, the homeroom teachers provide information on the students' spiritual achievements at school, such as their participation in congregational prayers, their habit of reciting prayers, and the application of Islamic manners in daily life. On the other hand, homeroom teachers also receive feedback from parents regarding how students implement these values at home, such as their consistency in performing the five daily prayers, reading the Quran, and practicing Islamic manners within the family environment.

This interaction is not only informative but also collaborative. Homeroom teachers often offer suggestions and advice to parents on strategies to reinforce the practice of Islamic values at home. For instance, they may recommend family activities such as reading the Quran together before bedtime, performing congregational prayers at home, or discussing stories of the prophets as a way to educate children in a relaxed and insightful atmosphere. As educational partners, homeroom teachers and parents work together to ensure that the values taught at school align with those practiced at home.

This approach strengthens the relationship between the school and families as strategic partners in the character and spiritual education of students. With open communication, homeroom teachers can understand the challenges families might face in applying Islamic values at home and provide appropriate support. Conversely, parents feel actively involved in their children's education, fostering mutual trust and close collaboration. This synergy serves as a strong foundation for shaping students' character, enabling them to not only exhibit noble morals but also to apply Islamic values in all aspects of their lives. This makes MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo a model of effective collaboration-based education between schools, teachers, and families.

The findings of this research indicate that the holistic approach implemented at MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo successfully creates an effective synergy between academic education, character development, and religious values. Through various programs focusing on active learning, creativity, and spiritual growth, this school has been able to nurture intelligent, morally upright students who are ready to face future

challenges. The excellence and success of MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo in integrating religious values can serve as an inspiring model for other educational institutions, particularly in developing character education based on holistic and adaptive values.

The findings of this study have broad implications for other educational institutions. The approach of MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo can serve as a model for developing character education based on religious values in other schools. Through its exemplary programs, this school has been able to address the challenges of modern times without compromising fundamental Islamic values. The holistic approach model identified in this study not only provides practical guidance but also contributes theoretical insights to the literature on religion-based character education. This research reinforces the importance of synergy between religious values, educational innovation, and character development in creating a generation that is moral, competitive, and prepared to face the dynamics of the global world (1)

Analysis

This study highlights the success of MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo in integrating religious values into character education through a holistic approach that encompasses multiple dimensions: formal learning, habituation of Islamic values, moral supervision by teachers, and collaboration between the school and families. These findings align with the concept of character education that emphasizes the importance of synergy between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in shaping individuals with noble character (Lickona, 1991). The approach implemented at MI Muhammadiyah also reflects a values-based education model that focuses on the internalization of religious teachings into daily life (Nucci & Narvaez, 2008).

1. Implementation of Religious Values Through Innovative Programs

The implementation of the Tahfidz Qur'an and Quran Education Park (TPQ) programs by Muhammadiyah institutions has demonstrated significant success in enhancing students' memorization skills while strengthening their spiritual values. These programs are specifically supported by collaboration with the Tajdied Center, which plays a crucial role in creating a conducive environment for spiritual growth and education. Research indicates that an educational framework focused on Quran memorization effectively instills discipline and faith among students (Nugroho, 2023). The structured approach of these programs, including consistent habituation activities such as congregational prayers, fosters students' discipline in worship and enriches their overall spiritual experience (Febriyanti et al., 2022).

Moreover, the integration of spiritual practices within the educational environment has been shown to have a positive impact on students' mental and emotional well-being. Spiritual values are recognized as essential elements in reducing stress and improving students' quality of life (KEREZ, 2023). The routine practice of congregational prayers in the school

environment reinforces this spiritual framework, providing structured routines for students while fostering discipline and a sense of community (Surawan and Sobari, 2022). These structured spiritual experiences are critical in developing a holistic educational approach that supports both the intellectual and spiritual dimensions of students' lives.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of the Tahfidz Qur'an program is supported by its ability to meaningfully engage students, creating strong connections to their faith and cultural identity. The emphasis on memorization serves not only educational purposes but also as a means of instilling core values essential for personal development (Sari, Sinaga, and Salim, 2021). Collaborative efforts with institutions such as the Tajdied Center enhance the reach and effectiveness of these programs, ensuring that students receive comprehensive support in their spiritual and educational journey (Muthohharoh et al., 2023).

Creative programs such as Children's Kitchen and Children's Garden add a practical dimension to learning, deeply rooted in experiential learning principles. These programs allow students to engage in hands-on activities that promote an understanding of Islamic values, such as gratitude and responsibility. The importance of experiential learning has been well articulated by Dewey, who asserted that active engagement in the learning process leads to deeper understanding and better retention (Lee, 2021). This aligns with constructivist learning theory, which emphasizes that students construct their understanding through interaction with their environment and collaborative experiences (Chen, 2023).

The integration of experiential learning in educational environments has been shown to enhance the relevance of learning experiences. For instance, Kjærgaard and Meier highlight that situating learning within students' practical contexts not only makes the learning process more meaningful but also aligns it with their daily experiences (Kjærgaard and Meier, 2021). This is especially relevant in programs like Children's Kitchen and Children's Garden, where students can directly apply Islamic values in real-life situations, reinforcing their understanding through practical engagement.

Additionally, the constructivist approach, as discussed by Chen, underscores the importance of active student involvement in their learning process. This engagement is crucial for fostering a sense of ownership over their learning and facilitating a deeper understanding of complex concepts (Chen, 2023). The hands-on experiences provided by creativity-based programs allow students to explore and discover knowledge in a supportive environment, aligning with the principles of constructivism (Deng, 2023).

Moreover, the importance of experiential learning is supported by various studies demonstrating its effectiveness in enhancing educational outcomes. For example, Roth and Jornet argue that learning experiences become richer when students actively participate and fill gaps in their understanding through interaction with their environment (Roth and Jornet, 2013). This participatory approach not only aids in knowledge

retention but also fosters critical thinking and problem-solving skills, which are crucial in today's educational landscape (Murray, 2018).

2. The Role of Teachers as Spiritual Mentors

In the context of MI Muhammadiyah, teachers referred to as *ustadz* and *ustadzah* play a multifaceted role that extends beyond traditional education to encompass spiritual guidance and moral development. This dual role is crucial in shaping students' character and instilling Islamic values. According to Hastasari et al., character education at Muallimin Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta is significantly influenced by *ustadz*, who serve as role models through behavior that reflects Islamic teachings. This model aligns with Bandura's observational learning theory (1977), which emphasizes that students learn and internalize values through the behaviors demonstrated by their teachers (Hastasari, Setiawan, and Aw, 2022).

Moreover, direct interaction between *ustadz* and students fosters an environment conducive to moral and spiritual growth. Saputra highlights that direct teaching facilitated by *ustadz* enhances student engagement and memory retention, particularly in religious contexts such as Quran memorization (Tahfidz Qur'an) (Saputra, 2023). This direct supervision not only aids academic achievement but also strengthens the moral framework within which students operate, ensuring that their actions align with Islamic principles.

The role of *ustadz* and *ustadzah* as moral exemplars is further supported by Kholil, who notes that these educators act as mentors, guiding students to internalize moral behavior through their actions and teachings (Kholil, 2023). This mentorship is particularly vital in Islamic-based schools, where integrating academic and spiritual education is a top priority. *Ustadz* and *ustadzah* are not merely instructors but embodiments of the values they teach, significantly influencing students' behavior and character development.

Additionally, the importance of teachers as role models is emphasized in the findings of Rahawarin et al., which highlight that the profession of an Islamic teacher entails both moral and social responsibilities. This reinforces the notion that educators must exemplify the values they teach to create a cohesive educational environment that promotes Islamic character (Rahawarin et al., 2020). The alignment between teaching and personal behavior is essential for fostering an environment that supports cohesive character education.

Beyond their role in character education, *ustadz* and *ustadzah* also employ various pedagogical methods to enhance students' learning experiences. For instance, the use of the *Iqra'* method in teaching the Quran, as discussed by Hasnah and Muliati, illustrates how creative teaching strategies can effectively convey religious knowledge while reinforcing moral values (Hasnah and Muliati, 2022). This approach not only improves literacy but also supports students' spiritual development.

In summary, *ustadz* and *ustadzah* at MI Muhammadiyah are integral to fostering a learning environment that blends academic achievement with

spiritual and moral development. Their roles as mentors, role models, and educators ensure that students not only excel academically but also grow into morally upright individuals grounded in Islamic principles

3. Collaboration Between School and Family

A collaborative approach between schools and families forms the cornerstone of effective educational practices, particularly in character development. This partnership is essential to ensure that the values taught in educational settings are reinforced at home, creating a cohesive environment for students. Epstein's framework on school, family, and community partnerships emphasizes that such collaboration enhances educational effectiveness by delivering consistent messages from both the school and home environments (Epstein, 2016). This alignment is crucial for fostering shared responsibility in education, with parents and teachers playing pivotal roles in shaping students' character and values.

Research supports the idea that effective communication between educators and families contributes to improved student outcomes. For instance, a study by Stamatis and Nikolaou revealed that most teachers believe collaboration between schools and families is vital in addressing behavioral issues such as bullying, ultimately leading to positive changes in students' attitudes toward school and their overall behavior (Stamatis and Nikolaou, 2016). These findings align with Epstein's assertion that strong partnerships result in better educational outcomes by creating a supportive network that encourages student engagement and success (Epstein, 2016).

Furthermore, the application of Epstein's model across various educational contexts has shown promising results. For example, Gahwaji's research highlighted that implementing this partnership framework in Saudi kindergartens increased family involvement in the educational process, which is critical for character formation (Gahwaji, 2019). Similarly, findings by Sheldon et al. indicated that the quality of school-home relationships has a direct correlation with students' academic achievements (Sheldon, Epstein, and Galindo, 2010). Such collaborative efforts not only enhance academic performance but also contribute to students' holistic development, emphasizing the importance of character education.

Beyond academic benefits, the emotional and social dimensions of school-family partnerships cannot be overlooked. Research by Bryan and Henry demonstrates how strength-based partnerships empower families and communities, creating environments that support the social and emotional well-being of children (Bryan and Henry, 2008). This holistic approach is critical in nurturing resilient students who are equipped to face challenges both within and outside the classroom.

4. Evaluation and Islamic Counseling

Islamic counseling conducted by homeroom teachers at MI Muhammadiyah is an effective practice for monitoring and evaluating students' spiritual development. This approach aligns with formative evaluation theory, which aims to provide students with feedback on their progress while helping teachers design more effective teaching strategies

(Andrian, 2024). Spiritual evaluation in this context focuses not only on academic achievements but also on the development of religious character, which is a core educational objective at this school (Anwar, 2021). This underscores the importance of integrating character education into the curriculum, ensuring that students excel academically while embodying noble and religious values (Diana, 2024).

The success of MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo highlights the significance of a holistic approach in character education. The school has succeeded in producing students who excel academically and demonstrate strong moral and spiritual qualities (Arianti, 2023). This aligns with the goals of Indonesia's National Education System, which emphasizes the formation of individuals who are faithful, pious, and morally upright, as stipulated in Law No. 20 of 2003 (Lestari and Mashuri, 2023).

The educational model applied at MI Muhammadiyah serves as a valuable example for other institutions aiming to develop comprehensive religious-based education (Permana, 2023). Effective character education requires the involvement of all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and the community (Purandina and Winaya, 2020). Teachers play a vital role as role models, exemplifying values across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Munawwaroh, 2019).

Islamic counseling by homeroom teachers thus serves not only as a tool for evaluation but also as a means to cultivate students' religious character through consistent habituation in the school environment (Aruni, Triwoelandari, and Suhendra, 2023). This demonstrates that character education integrated with religious values can create a learning environment that supports students' spiritual and moral development (Jannah, 2019).

By blending evaluation with counseling, MI Muhammadiyah effectively fosters a culture of spiritual growth and moral integrity, providing a model for achieving holistic education that balances academic success with the cultivation of ethical and religious character.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study indicates that MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo has successfully integrated religious values into character education through a holistic approach. This approach encompasses formal learning, habituation of Islamic values, moral supervision by teachers, and intensive collaboration between the school and families. The school excels in various innovative programs such as Tahfidz Qur'an, Children Kitchen, Children Garden, and outdoor activities like outbound and outing classes. These programs not only strengthen students' spirituality but also shape their character, fostering individuals with noble morals and the competence to face modern challenges. Additionally, daily practices such as congregational prayers, alms-giving (infaq), and adherence to Islamic etiquette provide students with a strong moral foundation. The active role of teachers and mentors as spiritual guides is also significant, offering

consistent advice, moral reinforcement, and exemplary conduct to the students.

Recommendations from this study are directed at various stakeholders. For MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo, it is suggested to enhance the evaluation of spiritual programs using more measurable instruments, expand creative education programs aligned with contemporary developments, and improve teacher capacity through regular training. For other educational institutions, the holistic education model implemented by MI Muhammadiyah can be adopted to effectively integrate religious values into character education, particularly through the habituation of Islamic values and strengthened school-family collaboration. Future researchers are encouraged to conduct comparative studies, incorporate quantitative dimensions, and explore the long-term impacts of religious character education on students' adult lives.

For policy makers, it is recommended to establish a holistic, religious value-based educational approach as a nationally implementable model. This policy should be supported by adequate facilities and funding for religious schools to develop similar innovative programs. Through these measures, the success of MI Muhammadiyah 1 Probolinggo is expected to serve as an inspiration for other educational institutions in nurturing a generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also possesses strong character rooted in Islamic values.

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