



# The Role of Teachers in Instilling Islamic Values in Young Children



Siti Nurhalimah Abbas<sup>1</sup>, Mimit Pakasi<sup>1</sup>, Junaedi<sup>1\*</sup>, Nurul Amaliah Hasbi<sup>1</sup>,  
Yulmiati Latief<sup>1</sup>

Universitas Islam DDI A.G.H. Abdurrahman Ambo Dalle Polewali Mandar, Indonesia

\*corresponding author: [junaedi@ddipolman.ac.id](mailto:junaedi@ddipolman.ac.id)

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## ABSTRACT

Instilling Islamic values in early childhood is a crucial aspect of shaping children's character and religious habits. However, research on the role of teachers in the process of internalizing values in Islamic early childhood education institutions remains limited. This study aims to analyze the role of teachers in the internalization of Islamic values through habit-forming practices at RA HS Muhtar Tapango. The study employs a qualitative, descriptive approach. The research participants consisted of one principal and two teachers selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that teachers serve as educators, mentors, role models, motivators, and facilitators in the internalization of Islamic values. The internalization process is carried out through the habit formation of prayer, greetings, memorization of short surahs, religious practices, and the cultivation of Islamic ethics. This study offers a novel contribution in the form of conceptualizing the teacher's role as a multidimensional actor within a habit-based value internalization model that integrates ritual and social dimensions. It is hoped that this study will serve as a reference for the development of values education in Islamic-based early childhood education institutions.

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## 1. Introduction

Early childhood education (PAUD) is a fundamental phase in the development of children's character, value systems, and behavioral habits (M. P. D. Putri et al., 2025). During the golden age, children are highly sensitive to environmental stimulation; therefore, education should not only focus on cognitive development but also on the formation of religious and moral values as the foundation of personality (Azizah et al., 2024; Suryana et al., 2022). In the context of globalization and increasingly complex technological developments, religion-based values education has become increasingly important as an effort to build a generation that is of good character, religious, and possesses moral resilience from an early age (Fauziah et al., 2024).

From an Islamic educational perspective, Islamic values are not sufficient when taught merely as normative knowledge; rather, they must be internalized until they become an integral part of children's behavior and daily habits (Kholidah, 2023). The internalization of

values is understood as a process of transforming values from the cognitive to the affective and psychomotor domains through concrete experiences, habit formation, and modeling (Febrian et al., 2025; P. N. Putri & Loka, 2025). In early childhood, this process is crucial because children learn most effectively through direct experience, imitation, and the application of behavior in daily life.

Various studies indicate that methods such as habit formation, modeling, role-playing, and contextual experiences are effective in instilling religious and moral values in young children (Albab & Hidayati, 2022; Mulyani et al., 2025). Internationally, research on Islamic early childhood education also confirms that the success of educational values is significantly influenced by the religious learning environment, teacher engagement, and children's social experiences in daily activities (Aldhilan et al., 2024). This indicates that the internalization of values is not only related to ritual activities but also to the holistic development of children's social behavior and character. In Indonesia, studies on the internalization of Islamic values in early childhood education generally still focus on habit-forming programs and the development of religious curricula, while studies on the integration of the teacher's role in children's daily practices remain relatively limited.

In the process of internalizing these values, teachers occupy a strategic position as key actors who interact directly with children. Teachers serve not only as conveyors of content but also as role models, mentors, facilitators, and managers of the religious learning environment (Aris Suziman & Nur Lian, 2025; Hilda et al., 2025). In Albert Bandura's social learning theory, children learn through observation and imitation of behavioral models in their surroundings, making the teacher's behavior a crucial factor in shaping children's character (Ainurrohman & Minsih, 2022; Nurhayati & Nugraha, 2026). Meanwhile, BF Skinner's behaviorist theory emphasizes that children's behavior can be shaped through conditioning and positive reinforcement carried out repeatedly. Thomas Lickona's character education theory explains that the internalization of values encompasses aspects of moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral actions that develop in an integrated manner through children's learning experiences. These three theories serve as the analytical foundation for understanding the process of value internalization, forms of conditioning, and the integrated role of teachers in shaping children's religious and social behavior through daily learning experiences.

Nevertheless, previous studies have tended to address the role of teachers in a fragmented manner. Some earlier studies have primarily focused on teachers' role modeling in shaping children's religious character (Ainurrohman & Minsih, 2022), while others have focused on the effectiveness of habit-forming methods in developing religious and moral values (Mulyani et al., 2025). However, these studies have not thoroughly examined how various teacher roles are carried out simultaneously and integrally in children's daily practices within the RA environment.

Based on initial observations at RA HS Muhdar Tapango, it was found that the process of internalizing Islamic values has been implemented through the habit formation of prayer, greetings, memorization of short surahs, simple acts of worship, and the cultivation of Islamic ethics in children's daily activities. However, the results of the initial observations also indicate that some children still require intensive guidance in developing religious behaviors, such as maintaining discipline during group prayers, practicing greetings, queuing, and observing proper etiquette when interacting with peers. This situation compels teachers to fulfill various roles simultaneously—not only as content providers but also as mentors, motivators, and role models in children's daily activities. Nevertheless, the practice of value internalization through habit formation, which involves this integration of the teacher's roles, has not been extensively examined in previous research.

Given these circumstances, this study aims to analyze the role of teachers in the internalization of Islamic values and how this is implemented through habit-forming

practices for early childhood students at RA HS Muhdar Tapango. The novelty of this study lies in its analysis of the integrated role of teachers as multidimensional actors in the process of habit-based value internalization, which integrates ritual and social dimensions into children's daily experiences. This study is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of a contextual, integrative, and sustainable model for the internalization of Islamic values in Islamic-based early childhood education.

## 2. Method

This study employs a constructivist paradigm with a qualitative approach and a descriptive research design. The qualitative approach is used to gain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena in a natural setting, emphasizing the meanings constructed by the research subjects regarding their experiences (Annasthasya et al., 2025; Waruwu, 2024). The design used is a descriptive case study because this research focuses on a deep understanding of the practice of internalizing Islamic values in a natural context at one early childhood education institution. The research was conducted at RA HS Muhdar Tapango from February to April 2026. The selection of the location was based on the consideration that the institution actively applies the instillation of Islamic values in daily learning activities.

The research informants consisted of one principal and two teachers selected through purposive sampling based on the following criteria: direct involvement in teaching, at least two years of teaching experience, and active participation in religious activities. The purposive selection of informants aimed to obtain in-depth and relevant data in line with the research focus (Fitri Nurpita et al., 2026; Zahroh et al., 2025). The focus of this study was directed at teachers' pedagogical practices in the internalization of Islamic values within the school environment; thus, teachers and the principal were selected as the primary informants, as they were considered to have the most direct understanding of this process.

This study did not involve parents as informants because the focus of the research was directed toward the practice of value internalization occurring within the context of learning and pedagogical interactions in the school environment. Although the family environment also influences the process of children's value internalization, this study specifically limited its scope to the role of teachers and the habit-forming practices that take place within educational institutions.

The limited number of informants is not intended for generalization but rather to obtain depth and rich data within a specific context, consistent with the characteristics of qualitative research. Data collection continued until data saturation was reached—that is, when no new relevant information was found through the interview and observation processes (Creswell, 2024).

The primary instrument in this study is the researcher themselves (human instrument), while supporting instruments include observation guidelines, semi-structured interview guidelines, and research documentation. Observations were conducted repeatedly in natural settings during various daily routine activities to gain a deeper and more consistent understanding of the practices of value internalization taking place in the school environment, while in-depth interviews were used to explore the informants' experiences and perspectives more comprehensively (Triyati et al., 2025).

Interviews were conducted 2–3 times with each informant, lasting 20–30 minutes. In addition to the interviews, the researcher also conducted repeated observations of the children's daily routines in the school environment to obtain more contextual data and reduce reliance on a single data source. All data were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed systematically.

Data analysis utilized the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which encompasses data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. This model allows the data analysis process to be conducted continuously from the data collection stage through to the final conclusions (Sari et al., 2025).

Data validity was tested through methodological triangulation and cross-checking data consistency among informants. Methodological triangulation was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation, while data consistency was established by comparing interview results between the school principal and teachers with field observation findings. To minimize researcher bias in the data collection and interpretation process, the researcher conducted member checks, peer debriefings, and systematic field data recording. Additionally, this study adhered to research ethics principles by obtaining consent from informants prior to data collection.

### 3. Results and Discussion

Based on the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, it was found that the internalization of Islamic values among early childhood students at RA HS Muhdar Tapango takes place through habitual practices integrated into the children's daily activities. The internalization process occurs not only through the verbal delivery of religious material but also through direct experience, social interaction, and the school's religious culture. The research findings indicate that teachers simultaneously fulfill various roles in shaping children's religious and social behavior.

#### The Role of Teachers in the Internalization of Islamic Values

The results of the study indicate that teachers play a multifaceted role as educators, mentors, role models, motivators, and facilitators in the process of internalizing Islamic values. However, the findings of this study suggest that the effectiveness of value internalization does not lie in each of these roles individually, but rather in the integration of these roles, which are carried out simultaneously in children's daily lives.

Teachers introduce Islamic values through the practice of prayer, greetings, and daily etiquette. This process is repeated throughout learning activities so that religious values are not only understood intellectually but also put into practice in daily behavior. Informant N stated: "In our class, we start by getting the children accustomed to simple things first, such as praying before studying, greeting others, sitting neatly, and speaking politely. So, we introduce Islamic values through daily habits, not just through explanations." (Interview with Grade B Teacher, March 10, 2026)

This finding indicates that the internalization of values at RA HS Muhdar Tapango places greater emphasis on concrete experiences rather than verbal instruction alone. Children do not merely receive religious knowledge as material to be memorized, but experience these values through daily routines and social interactions.

Theoretically, the concept of value internalization in Islamic education emphasizes the transformation of values from the cognitive to the affective and psychomotor domains through habit formation and modeling (P. N. Putri & Loka, 2025). However, this study shows that habit formation in the RA environment functions not only as a learning method but also as a mechanism for shaping religious culture in everyday school life. This finding expands upon previous research, which generally still views habituation as a pedagogical strategy rather than as a process of constructing children's social culture within the school environment.

Furthermore, research (Mustofa et al., 2025) also indicates that the internalization of religious values is more effective when consistently integrated through school culture and children's daily activities. The findings of this study demonstrate that the consistency of

habit formation at RA HS Muhdar Tapango not only fosters compliance with religious rules but also helps children develop an emotional attachment to religious practices from an early age.

Teachers directly guide children in the practice of Islamic values, particularly in social behavior and the development of simple religious habits. Informant D explained: “Children at this age cannot simply be left to their own devices. They must be continuously guided and reminded—for example, on how to pray properly, how to line up, how to ask for things, or how to respect teachers and peers.” (Interview with the School Principal, March 10, 2026)

Field data indicates that the internalization of values in young children is a gradual process requiring intensive guidance. Children are not yet able to control their behavior consistently, so teachers must continuously provide guidance, reinforcement, and repetition of behavior in various daily situations. This aligns with research (Alfiannor et al., 2025) stating that intensive guidance strategies can strengthen the process of value internalization through consistent and repeated behavioral reinforcement. In this context, teachers function not only as conveyors of moral rules but also as guides for children’s social behavior in daily life. These findings indicate that the success of value internalization in early childhood depends heavily on the intensity of interpersonal interactions between teachers and children.

This reinforces the idea that a continuous guidance process helps children gradually develop social behavioral norms. This aligns with Albert Bandura’s social learning theory, which explains that children learn through observation, imitation, and reinforcement from their surroundings. Research (Ajriahmuazimah et al., 2022) also indicates that teachers’ guidance and exemplary behavior significantly influence the development of religious character in young children, particularly regarding moral conduct and discipline.

However, this study found that the guidance process at RA HS Muhdar Tapango is not only directed toward adherence to religious rituals but also toward the development of children’s social order, such as queuing discipline, respecting peers, and maintaining proper manners in social interactions. This indicates that the internalization of religious values and the development of social behavior occur in an integrated manner.

Teachers serve as role models for children in their daily lives. This finding confirms that setting a good example is a key factor in the internalization of values. Informant M stated: “If teachers want children to get into the habit of greeting others, then the teachers must first set that example. If they want children to be polite, then teachers must also speak gently and politely to the children.” (Interview with Grade A Teacher, March 10, 2026)

Observation results indicate that teachers’ behavior has a significant influence on children’s responses and behavior within the school environment. Children tend to spontaneously imitate teachers’ behavior, particularly in language use, polite manners, and religious practices. These findings demonstrate that in early childhood, the legitimacy of values is not established through normative explanations but through the consistency of behavior displayed by teachers in daily interactions. Thus, teachers’ behavior serves as the primary source of social validation for children in determining which behaviors are considered correct and worthy of emulation.

Teachers provide motivation through praise, verbal reinforcement, and recognition of children’s religious behavior. Informant N explained: “If a child wants to lead a prayer or can recite a passage from memory, we usually praise them by saying, ‘Masya Allah, you’re so smart,’ so that the children feel encouraged and want to do it again.” (Interview with Class B Teacher, March 10, 2026)

The use of positive reinforcement indicates that teachers strive to build children's self-confidence and motivation in engaging in religious behavior. In practice, praise serves not only as a form of recognition but also as a form of social reinforcement that encourages children to consistently repeat positive behaviors.

However, these findings suggest that positive reinforcement is effective because young children are more responsive to motivation that involves emotional closeness and social recognition from teachers. This aligns with Skinner's behaviorist theory, which explains that positive reinforcement plays a role in shaping and maintaining behavior through consistent repetition.

Teachers create a religious learning environment that supports the process of instilling values in children's daily activities. Informant D stated: "The teachers here strive to ensure that religious values are not merely taught during specific class periods, but are integrated into the children's daily activities. Therefore, the school atmosphere must also be supportive." (Interview with the Principal, March 10, 2026)

Research findings indicate that the learning environment at RA HS Muhdar Tapango is designed to support the internalization of Islamic values through daily routines, social interactions, and a religious school culture. This suggests that the internalization of values cannot be separated from the social environment in which children learn. In this regard, teachers do not merely serve as passive role models but also as active agents who design a values-based learning ecosystem (Jubaeli et al., 2025).

This study found that the success of value internalization is influenced by the integration of habit formation, modeling, positive reinforcement, and the conditioning of the learning environment. Thus, teachers not only perform pedagogical functions individually but also build a social ecosystem that supports the development of children's religious behavior. This study is also consistent with international research by (Aldhilan et al., 2024), which confirms that a conducive learning environment and experience-based learning are critical factors in the success of Islamic education for early childhood.

These findings expand upon previous studies that have largely emphasized the teacher's role in isolation. In this study, the novelty lies not in the types of teacher roles identified, but in how these various roles are carried out simultaneously and integrated into the culture of daily habit formation within the school environment.

### **Forms of Activities for the Internalization of Islamic Values**

The results of the study indicate that the internalization of Islamic values at RA HS Muhdar Tapango is achieved through various routine, simple, and integrated activities that are incorporated into the children's daily routines.

One of the main activities is the practice of reciting prayers before and after activities, such as before studying, before eating, after eating, and before going home. Informant M explained: "Every activity always begins with a prayer. Although sometimes the children haven't memorized everything yet, because they are accustomed to it every day, eventually they join in and get used to it." (Interview with Class A Teacher, March 10, 2026)

In practice, it was found that continuous repetition helps children gradually build religious habits. The repetition of prayers in various daily activities indicates that the internalization of values in early childhood occurs through the mechanism of routine. The more frequently religious behaviors are integrated into daily activities, the greater the likelihood that these behaviors will become habits performed without direct instruction from the teacher. This aligns with research (Kurniyah, 2025) stating that the habituation method is effective in instilling religious and moral values in young children.

Greeting others is also an important part of instilling Islamic values in school. Children are encouraged to greet others when they arrive, enter the classroom, meet teachers, and leave school. Based on observations, teachers actively model and remind children to incorporate greetings into their daily routines. This practice demonstrates that the internalization of values does not occur solely in ritualistic aspects but is also reflected in children's daily social interactions.

These findings indicate that greetings serve as both a religious symbol and a tool for fostering children's social relationships. In practice, the habit of greeting others not only builds religious identity but also teaches children to respect others, establish polite communication, and develop positive social behavior.

Memorizing daily prayers and short surahs is also part of the process of internalizing Islamic values. This activity is carried out gradually, repeatedly, and tailored to the children's abilities. Informant N explained: "We approach memorization slowly. We don't force them to memorize a lot right away. The important thing is that the children get used to hearing and imitating, and eventually memorize them. And every morning before starting lessons, the children recite Surah Al-Fatihah, followed by the Three Qul—Surah Al-Ikhlâs, Al-Falaq, and An-Nas—and a prayer before studying." (Interview with Class B Teacher, March 10, 2026).

This situation demonstrates that the process of internalizing values emphasizes gradual habituation rather than achieving instant memorization targets. This strategy shows that teachers adapt the learning process to the developmental characteristics of young children. Research (Yuris & Khairiah, 2025) also explains that repetition and habituation methods effectively help children internalize religious values through consistent practice. In the context of this study, memorization is not positioned as an academic target alone, but as part of the process of fostering children's familiarity with religious language and symbols in daily life.

Other activities observed included simple religious practices, such as an introduction to the proper way to pray, the movements of prayer, the etiquette of wudu, and maintaining order during religious activities. Informant D stated: "At this school, we do have a special program where every Saturday there is a worship practice session; however, the children here are not yet expected to perform everything perfectly, but are first introduced to the basics. For example, the proper way to perform prayer, how to position one's hands while praying, or how to perform wudu." (Interview with the School Principal, March 10, 2026).

This finding indicates that the internalization of values is carried out gradually in accordance with the child's developmental stage. Teachers focus more on fostering the child's emotional connection to worship activities rather than on the formal mastery of ritual competencies. Thus, positive experiences in worship practices serve as the foundational basis for the development of the child's religiosity.

In addition to ritual activities, teachers also instill Islamic values through the practice of Islamic ethics and manners, such as speaking politely, apologizing, saying thank you, sharing, waiting in line, listening when the teacher speaks, and respecting others. Informant M stated: "We also frequently emphasize daily etiquette, such as speaking politely, not arguing, apologizing, and respecting friends. Because that is also part of Islamic values." (Interview with Class A Teacher, March 10, 2026)

Observation results indicate that the cultivation of moral character and etiquette is an integral part of the school culture at RA HS Muhdar Tapango. These findings suggest that the internalization of values focuses not only on religious practices but also on the development of moral traits such as politeness, empathy, and responsibility. Research

(Risman, 2023) also indicates that holistic values education, which integrates spiritual and social aspects, is more effective in shaping children's character comprehensively.

Furthermore, the model of value internalization identified in this study aligns with narrative- and affective-based approaches that emphasize the importance of emotional engagement in the value learning process. Value internalization occurs not only through instruction but also through experiences that touch upon children's emotional aspects and habits. This study indicates that habits integrated into daily activities are a key factor in the successful internalization of values. This is supported by research (Wardati & Ridha, 2024), which states that values education is more effective when incorporated into daily routines rather than taught separately within the formal curriculum.

Thus, the internalization of Islamic values in early childhood is an integrative process involving habit formation, experiences, and social interactions within the context of children's daily lives. These findings indicate that habit formation serves not only as a learning method but also as a mechanism for value internalization that shapes children's behavioral patterns in a sustainable manner. This aligns with research (Arif & Chapakiya, 2024) showing that Islamic character education is more effective when ritual and social values are integrated into children's daily activities. Thus, values that are initially external gradually become habits and ultimately shape children's character in a sustainable manner.

Based on these findings, it can be understood that the internalization of Islamic values in early childhood at RA HS Muhdar Tapango occurs through an integrative habit-based model that involves the teacher's role as a multidimensional actor within a religious learning environment.

### **Challenges Faced by Teachers in Instilling Islamic Values**

The research findings indicate that the process of internalizing Islamic values at RA HS Muhdar Tapango does not always proceed ideally. Teachers face various challenges, particularly regarding the consistency of children's behavior, differences in parenting styles within the family environment, and the limited control teachers have outside of school.

Informant D explained: "Sometimes children have been taught to greet and pray at school, but at home they are no longer taught to do so, so the next day they forget or have to be reminded again." (Interview with the Principal, March 10, 2026). In addition, teachers also face challenges in maintaining children's focus and discipline during habit-forming activities. Young children tend to be easily distracted and exhibit inconsistent behavioral stability, so the process of internalizing values requires continuous repetition. These findings indicate that the success of value internalization is significantly influenced by the stability of the child's social environment. When habits formed at school are not reinforced within the family environment, the internalization process tends to revert to earlier stages.

These findings also indicate that the success of value internalization is influenced not only by teachers' pedagogical strategies but also by the continuity of children's social environments, particularly their families and daily cultural practices outside of school. These conditions demonstrate that value internalization in early childhood is a collective process requiring synergy among schools, teachers, and families.

These findings indicate that the success of value internalization in Islamic-based early childhood education requires synergy between school practices and the family environment. Therefore, values education programs should not be limited to classroom activities but must also involve strengthening collaboration between teachers and parents in shaping children's religious culture.

More broadly, this study demonstrates that the internalization of values cannot be understood merely as a process of transferring religious knowledge, but rather as a process of shaping religious culture in children's daily lives. Therefore, the effectiveness of values education cannot be adequately measured by children's ability to memorize prayers or short surahs, but rather by the consistency of religious and social behaviors formed through their daily experiences.

This study shows that the internalization of Islamic values in early childhood does not occur through a single specific pedagogical intervention, but rather through the integration of various teacher roles that operate simultaneously within the school's daily culture. Unlike previous studies that tend to position the teacher's role in a fragmented manner—such as solely as a role model, guide, or facilitator—this study finds that the effectiveness of value internalization lies precisely in the integration of these various roles within a continuous pedagogical practice. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in the conceptualization of value internalization as a collective process rooted in the culture of a religious school, built through the simultaneous integration of teachers' roles, habit formation, and children's social interactions.

#### 4. Conclusion

The internalization of Islamic values among early childhood students at RA HS Muhdar Tapango occurs through a process of habit formation, modeling, and social interaction integrated into the children's daily activities. In this process, teachers play a multidimensional role as educators, mentors, role models, motivators, and facilitators in shaping the children's religious and social behavior in a sustainable manner. The effectiveness of value internalization is influenced by the consistency of habit formation, positive reinforcement, and a religious learning environment that supports children's contextual learning experiences. The findings of this study indicate that an integrative habit-based model of value internalization can serve as an effective approach in the development of Islamic education for early childhood.

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