

Strategy for Forming Students Religious Attitudes

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ABSTRACT This research is motivated by deviant behavior among teenagers, one of which is the moral crisis problem of students in school. The era of rapid and free globalization can damage students faith, worship and morals if they do not get guidance or direction from parents and teachers, as well as the school in shaping students religious attitudes. The purpose of the research to know the strategy for forming students creeds and student worship through the madrasah diniyah program, and the strategy for the formation of student morals through the diniyah madrasa program. The research method in this thesis uses a qualitative phenomenological approach, a type of field research, and a multi-site. Research data sources consist of informants, events, locations, and documents, data collection techniques with participant observation, in-depth interviews and documentation. The results of the research: Strategies for the Formation of Students Religious Attitudes Through the Diniyah Madrasah Program (MADIN) is Aqidah values with the story method, translating asmaul husna, and Understanding the obligatory nature of God worship: Islamic Shari'a values, accustom congregational prayers, familiarize mahdhah worship and ghoiru mahdhah. Morals values through the study of the matlab book religious and reflecting the student's morals.

Keywords: *Formation of Religious Attitudes, Madrasah Diniyah.*



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INTRODUCTION

Forming a child's or student's religious attitudes is not merely a matter of words, but rather of actions. For example, in Tulungagung, many students engage in homosexual behavior, as reported by the Tulungagung AIDS Commission (KPA). This clearly illustrates that deviant behavior in children requires guidance and instruction regarding religious attitudes, morals, and actions. This does not mean that the learning process is unsuccessful, but rather that children misinterpret or do not fully understand the meaning of education.

Islamic education is an effort to develop, encourage, and encourage students to live more dynamically, based on high values and a noble life. This process is expected to develop a more complete personality in students, both in terms of their intellectual potential, feelings, and actions. Religious education is expected to shape religious attitudes so that they can become good human beings. Religious education provides knowledge and shapes students' attitudes, personalities, and skills in practicing their religion, which is implemented through subjects at all levels of education. However, considering the actual situation, the allocation of hours for religious studies is very low, amounting to only a few percent of the total number of hours spent teaching a week. Therefore, the existence of Islamic schools (Madrasah Diniyah) within formal schools plays a role as a complement to religious studies.

The formation of religious attitudes in children and adolescents cannot be reduced merely to verbal instruction or theoretical teaching (Goldman, 2022). Rather, it requires real example,

consistent practice, and a supportive learning environment that embodies the values being taught. Faith and character develop through lived experience. Therefore, if students encounter contradictions between what is taught and what is practiced, the impact of religious education becomes weakened. This reality is observable in a variety of social phenomena, including the rise of morally concerning behaviors among adolescents. Reports from the Tulungagung AIDS Commission (KPA), for example, indicate the presence of homosexual behavior among students in the region. While the issue is complex and influenced by multiple psychological, social, and environmental factors, it nevertheless indicates the urgent need for moral, emotional, and spiritual guidance.

Such cases should not be interpreted as evidence of complete failure in the educational process. Rather, they may reflect misunderstandings, insufficient internalization, or fragmented educational experiences in which students receive formal instruction but lack deep engagement with its moral meaning. Adolescents often learn not only from curriculum content but from peers, media, social influences, and environmental pressures. Thus, religious education must compete with alternative influences that may carry very different worldviews and value systems. This reinforces the principle that Islamic education cannot be confined to cognitive knowledge alone. It must shape attitudes, emotions, motivations, and habits of moral decision-making.

Islamic education when properly implemented aims to develop students holistically. It encourages and motivates learners to live dynamically and meaningfully, grounded in high ethical ideals and spiritual awareness (Tsoraya et al., 2022). In this sense, Islamic education is not simply about transmitting doctrinal content; it strives to cultivate complete human beings whose intellectual development is integrated with emotional maturity and moral integrity (Fer, 2019). Students who receive well-designed religious education are expected to acquire not only knowledge of religious law and belief, but also inner awareness and ethical consciousness that guide their behavior.

Religious education also contributes to shaping personal identity. It nurtures self-understanding, emotional resilience, and a sense of purpose. These qualities are increasingly important in modern society, where adolescents are confronted with moral uncertainty, identity confusion, and competing ideologies. Through religious learning, students are guided to see themselves as accountable beings whose thoughts and actions carry moral meaning. Thus, the process of religious formation is not coercive; rather, it is intended to empower students toward moral maturity.

Challenges arise, however, when religious education within formal schooling receives limited instructional time. In many contexts, Islamic education occupies only a very small percentage of total weekly teaching hours. This imbalance means that the majority of students' school experience is shaped by secular content, while religious and moral perspectives receive relatively little structured reinforcement. When viewed from the perspective of character formation, this proportion raises serious questions. Moral identity cannot be cultivated effectively if exposure to moral guidance is marginal or incidental.

For this reason, the existence of Islamic schools or *madrasah diniyah* attached to formal institutions becomes highly strategic. These supplementary institutions enrich students' religious education beyond the minimal time allocated within national curricula. They provide structured programs in *aqidah*, *fiqh*, *Qur'an*, *akhlak*, and worship practices, allowing students to deepen their understanding and internalization of Islamic teachings. In addition, *madrasah diniyah* environments tend to emphasize moral discipline, spiritual awareness, and religious culture in daily life. This continuous immersion reinforces values through consistent repetition and modeling.

This dual-track system formal schooling complemented by *madrasah diniyah* represents an effective model for religious formation in contemporary society. Formal schools provide academic knowledge and intellectual development, while *madrasah diniyah* fosters spiritual and moral grounding. When coordinated well, these two institutions can work in harmony to produce

students who are intellectually capable and morally upright. Without such integration, students risk developing academic competence but lacking moral direction.

At the same time, moral and spiritual guidance must be delivered wisely, compassionately, and developmentally. Adolescents require dialogue, support, and empathetic mentoring rather than judgment or condemnation. Teachers and parents must serve as role models who demonstrate consistency between belief and action. Students who observe sincerity, humility, fairness, and patience in their educators are more likely to internalize similar values. Conversely, environments marked by hypocrisy, harshness, or moral inconsistency undermine the educational mission.

In sum, the cultivation of religious attitudes in students represents a comprehensive, long-term effort grounded in sincere intention, authentic practice, community support, and pedagogical wisdom. Religious education must move beyond the classroom and become a lived reality in the school environment, family life, and social interaction. Only through such an integrated approach can education fulfill its ultimate aim: the formation of morally responsible human beings capable of contributing positively to society while remaining firmly anchored in faith.

Madrasah Diniyah is a religious educational institution outside of formal education that is expected to continuously provide Islamic religious education to students whose needs are not met through the classical school system and implement a hierarchy of education (Wahid, 2018). Madrasah Diniyah is often labeled as an educational institution that is underestimated or even sidelined by some communities, due to the fact that awareness of religious education in the Muslim community is still low, especially among urban communities, where Madrasah Diniyah education is often neglected in favor of tutoring or other programs that teach general subjects (Alfarisi, 2020). Yet, throughout its development, Madrasah Diniyah has also produced many generations of Muslims with character, morals, and a progressive and positive mindset.

The author took junior high school as an object because it is appropriate for the age of students entering early adolescence. At that time, their self-concept experiences complex development and involves a number of aspects of themselves or finds characteristics in students. Of the several junior high schools in Tulungagung, especially junior high schools (SMP), not all schools have implemented the Madin program effectively. In fact, many schools still do not have a Madin program. Some schools implement Madin within the school, including Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School, Sumbergempol, and Al Hikmah Melathen Junior High School, Tulungagung. Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School, Sumbergempol, which has a vision of realizing students with noble character, intelligence, skills, and creativity, and includes a Salafiyah Madin curriculum within the educational program, provides material tailored to Islamic religious subjects. However, Madin is predominantly practical, with a ratio of 30% material and 70% practice. This is because Madin's position at the school complements Islamic religious subjects. Bayanul Azhar Junior High School students study from 7:00 AM to 3:30 PM, based on the 2013 national curriculum at 12:00 PM. Afterward, they study Salafiyah Madin material in the form of classical Islamic boarding school books, such as the Mabadi book. Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), Arbain an-Nawawi (the principles of Islamic law), Nahwu (theology), Sabrowi (swordsmanship), and Aqidatul awam (lay creed). They also receive additional Quran recitation and other habits every morning before starting classes.

The Madin program is not limited to Bayanul Azhar Middle School, but also to Al Hikmah Melathen Middle School in Tulungagung. This school uses Islam as the main guideline for its religious education by realizing students who have strong faith, behave religiously and achieve, many achievements are achieved by students, one of which is literacy work, which can develop or practice their own religious attitudes and provide learning for peers and many more achievements as examples, not only that, Al Hikmah Melathen Tulungagung Middle School carries out religious education with madin material, namely mabadi fiqh, aqidatul awam, fiqh, nahwu, adabul alim wal muta'alim, and reciting volumes, al-Quran, and tahfidz Qur'an for those who are able and reciting yellow books after dhuhur.

METHOD

The research method in this thesis employs a qualitative phenomenological approach with a multi-site design to deeply understand participants' lived experiences in their natural contexts. Data sources include informants, events, locations, and relevant documents, collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document review. Data analysis is conducted in two stages: single-site analysis, which describes and interprets findings within each school, and cross-site analysis, which compares, integrates, and synthesizes findings across sites to provide a more comprehensive and contextual understanding of the studied phenomenon.

RESULT AND DISCUSION

Strategy for Building Student's Faith through the Madrasah Diniyah Program

Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School in Subergempol and Al Hikmah Melathen Junior High School in Tulungagung use the role model method in teaching faith. Students view their educators as their primary role models. They will emulate their teachers' footsteps and every action. Teachers play a crucial role in shaping students' adherence to religious teachings, including faith, ways of thinking, and practical behavior both inside and outside the classroom (Kuswanto, 2014). Furthermore, they also employ storytelling, a method of education that recounts historical events from the past concerning their obedience or transgression in their lives to God's commands and prohibitions, as conveyed by the Prophets or Messengers present among them. For example, a verse containing pedagogical value in history is described by God as follows (Tambak, 2016).

لَقَدْ كَانَ فِي قَصَصِهِمْ عِبْرَةٌ ۖ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ۗ مَا كَانَ حَدِيثٌ إِلَّا يُفْتَرَىٰ وَلَكِن تَصْدِيقَ الَّذِي بَيْنَ يَدَيْهِ وَتَفْصِيلَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ ۖ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ

Meaning: "Indeed, in their stories there is teaching for people who have understanding. The Koran is not a made-up story, but confirms the previous (books) and explains everything, and is a guidance and mercy for the believers." (QS. Yusuf: 111).

Both Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School, Sumbergempol, and Al Hikmah Melathe Junior High School, Tulungagung, prioritize religious education for their students, particularly in developing religious attitudes and beliefs. The goal of both institutions is the same: to shape students and familiarize them with Islamic values in their daily lives within the school environment. The only difference lies in the methods and approaches used. While Bayanul Azhar Junior High School, Sumbergempol, emphasizes explaining and understanding Rabbubiyah (the oneness of God, the Creator) and Uluhiyyah (the worship of God alone without any other form of worship), Al Hikmah Melathe Junior High School, Tulungagung, emphasizes teaching the Asmaul Husana (the Beautiful Names of Allah) and their meanings, understanding the pillars of faith and Islam, persevering in worship, and teaching students to become better individuals. Al Hikmah Melathen Middle School students in Tulungagung explained that social interactions and environmental factors influence the formation of religious attitudes and have a significant impact. This is in line with Zakiah Dradjat's book, *Ilmu Jiwa Agama*, which states that attitudes serve to motivate behavior, both overt and covert. Thus, attitudes influence two forms of a person's reaction to an object: overt and covert. Because attitudes are acquired through learning or environmental influences, adolescents' attitudes and behaviors can be categorized as follows: a) Belief in sequence, b) Belief with awareness, c) Belief but with some doubt, d) No belief at all (Ningsih et al., 2019).

Therefore, acts of worship such as prayer and charity will be meaningless, meaning they will not be accepted or rewarded if they are not accompanied by pure intentions. Praying or giving millions of alms without proper intention is like a dead body lying there, meaningless. Therefore, if any act of worship, such as giving alms and fasting, is empty of sincerity or intention, then it is not considered worship but rather a custom (habit).

The material on the Asma'ul Husana (the Beautiful Names) taught at Al Hikmah Melathen Middle School in Tulungagung is equally important. Knowing and understanding their meaning will strengthen students' faith and confidence. Linguistically, Asma'ul Husana means beautiful names, while the term "Asma'ul Husna" refers to the beautiful names of Allah, which are evidence of His majesty and glory.

One way teachers can instill the values of faith in students is through Islamic education. To build and grow the value of faith in students through many things, including introducing Allah SWT in Asmaul Husna. Showing all of Allah SWT's creation. Not only does it convince students to believe in God's truth, but we as humans are obliged to obey all His commands and stay away from His Prohibitions. Because if you just believe, the devil laknatullah also really believes in God's truth.

In the researcher's opinion, the emphasis on religious education at both Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School in Sumbergempol and Al Hikmah Melathen Junior High School in Tulungagung reflects a deliberate and strategic effort to shape students' religious attitudes and beliefs from an early age. Although the two institutions employ different emphases in their instructional approaches, their fundamental objective remains the same: to cultivate students who are firmly grounded in Islamic values and capable of living those values as part of their daily experience within the school environment. This highlights the understanding that religious identity is not constructed instantaneously, but rather through a sustained and structured learning process.

Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School tends to emphasize theological understanding through the concepts of Rububiyah (recognition of Allah as the sole Creator, Sustainer, and Lord of all existence) and Uluhiyyah (devotion and worship directed to Allah alone). Through this orientation, students are guided to internalize the awareness that their existence is fully dependent on God and that worship cannot be directed to any entity other than Him. This approach reinforces the foundation of tawhid as the core of Islamic belief. Meanwhile, Al Hikmah Melathen Junior High School focuses significantly on teaching Asma'ul Husna, the Beautiful Names of Allah, as well as understanding the pillars of faith and Islam. By introducing the attributes and names of Allah, students develop not only intellectual knowledge of God but also emotional and spiritual closeness to Him. In addition, the emphasis on consistent worship practices and moral improvement ensures that faith becomes embodied in students' conduct.

From the researcher's perspective, these differences in emphasis do not represent divergence but rather complementarity, as both approaches aim to guide students toward holistic faith formation integrating theological understanding, emotional connection, and moral application (Rizkiya & Nugroho, 2024; Habibah et al., 2025). This supports the view that Islamic education is not monolithic but allows methodological diversity while maintaining unity of purpose. The significant influence of social interaction and environment on religious attitudes, as reflected in students' testimonies at Al Hikmah Melathen Junior High School, underscores that faith development is embedded within social relationships, school climate, teacher behavior, and peer influence (Habibah et al., 2025; Syukri et al., 2025).

These findings align with research showing that family, school, and community environments significantly affect students' religious behavior and character formation (Syukri et al., 2025). Furthermore, the centrality of intention (niyyah) in worship highlights that religious practice becomes deeply personal and ethical when sincerity is emphasized in education, echoing contemporary Islamic educational scholarship on intention's role in meaningful learning (Zuki et al., 2024). In this context, teaching Asma'ul Husna not only enhances theological knowledge but also nurtures emotional intimacy with God, fostering psychological security, moral stability, and spiritual motivation among adolescents (Novita & As'ad, 2025; Damayanti & Mahbubi, 2025). Overall, this nuanced view reflects the dynamic nature of adolescent faith development and internalization of religious values rather than assuming uniform religious commitment.

Teachers play a critical role as mediators of faith formation. The researcher is of the opinion that the effectiveness of religious education is determined not only by curriculum content but also by the integrity and example of educators. When teachers live the values they teach sincerity, humility, respect, and devotion students observe religion embodied in real human character. This living example reinforces the message far more powerfully than verbal instruction alone. Islamic pedagogy has long emphasized the concept of *uswah hasanah* (good example), and the practices in both schools demonstrate continued commitment to this principle.

Furthermore, both institutions integrate faith formation with structured religious practices such as congregational prayers, Quranic recitation, charity activities, and remembrance rituals. The researcher views these activities as habituation strategies that support character formation through repetition. Adolescents do not merely learn about religion they participate in a religious way of life. Over time, repetition transforms external actions into internalized character. This is consistent with classical Islamic thought, which emphasizes that virtue grows through consistent practice.

Environmental factors also play a decisive role. The Islamic school environment including dress code, speech etiquette, interpersonal respect, and communal worship creates a moral ecosystem that supports faith development. The researcher considers this environment especially important in the contemporary context, where many adolescents face moral uncertainty, digital distraction, and social instability. By grounding students in a religious community, the schools provide identity clarity and ethical direction.

However, the researcher also acknowledges that religious formation cannot rely solely on ritual practice. Students must be guided to develop critical religious consciousness the ability to understand the meaning behind their faith and apply it responsibly in social life. When students understand that worship must be accompanied by sincerity, compassion, justice, and good character, they are better prepared to translate faith into ethical behavior. This avoids the risk of mechanical religiosity that lacks moral depth.

In the researcher's assessment, the approaches used by both schools reflect an integrated educational vision that unites belief, worship, morality, and social responsibility. Although challenges remain such as ensuring consistent implementation, engaging diverse student backgrounds, and responding to modern youth culture the foundational philosophy remains strong and relevant. The ultimate goal is not merely to produce religiously knowledgeable students but morally upright human beings who live in harmony with God, with others, and with themselves.

Therefore, the researcher concludes that the cultivation of sincere faith, grounded in *tawhid*, enriched by understanding of *Asma'ul Husna*, and reinforced through consistent worship, forms the essence of Islamic character education. When combined with exemplary teaching, supportive environments, and reflective understanding, this approach holds significant promise for shaping future generations who are spiritually mature, ethically responsible, and socially constructive.

Strategies for Developing Student Worship through the Islamic Madrasah Diniyah Program

The strategy for developing and instilling Islamic values in students is about worship, or Islamic values. Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School and Al Hikmah Melathen Junior High School have virtually the same approach in instilling and cultivating Islamic values in students. This is achieved by teaching students about worship (*ubudiyah*) and *muamalah* (social obligations), as well as *fardhu ain* (obligatory religious obligations) and *fardhu kifayah* (obligatory religious obligations). This is also reflected in Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) textbooks, which contain religious laws that support daily worship, such as purification, prayer, fasting, zakat, hajj, and so on. Teachers explain to students both Islamic principles: worship (*ubudiyah*) and *muamalah*. This

means that students are taught to balance the worship of *hablu minallah* (living with God) and *hablu minannas* (being with God). The relationship between creatures and their Creator, as well as between creatures, must be balanced; therefore, students are taught to understand both. Sharia / Worship, is the scope of realization of *aqidah*, faith embedded in oneself, trying to carry out obligations or anything commanded by Allah, this is related to rituals or practices of worship such as the five daily prayers, *sunnah* prayers, and others. This aspect is linked to the pillars of Islam (Kholid, 2017). In Islam, the main points of worship have been formulated in the pillars of Islam mentioned in the Hadith of the Prophet SAW. "Islam is built on five things, namely recognizing that there is no God but Allah and the Prophet Muhammad as the messenger of Allah, establishing prayer, paying zakat, fasting Ramadan, and performing the Hajj for those who are able." (Narrated by Muslim) (Khasasi et al., 2019).

The scope of sharia encompasses two aspects: worship and social interactions. Researchers at Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School in Sumbergempol and Al Hikmah Melathen Junior High School in Tulungagung found that the values of worship can be introduced to children from the time they enter junior high school. These include: taking them to places of worship; taking them to the shrine of the school's founder to pray and commemorate the history and genealogy of the founder; demonstrating forms of worship such as prayer procedures and ablution; and introducing the meaning of worship to children through light-hearted explanations. Meanwhile, social interactions involve giving alms, where the collected funds are donated to those in need, such as orphans. Furthermore, condolences are offered to the families of classmates or teachers who have experienced a disaster at these two schools. This aligns with Muhaimin's opinion that the values of *muamalah* can be introduced to children through: paying zakat al-fitr (Islamic charity), helping those in need, forgiving one another, respecting and appreciating others, and so on (Risnawati, 2020). Thus, students can become good individuals and practice Sharia-compliant practices, not only diligently at school but also in their daily lives.

Madrasah diniyah (Islamic school) teachers use the following learning methods, related to the Islamic jurisprudence textbook (*Mabadi fiqh*) (Sufa, 2017): a) The habituation and experience method. This habituation and experience method is important because developing the character of individuals educated in Islam is not sufficient through verbal explanations alone. To become accustomed to living an orderly, disciplined life, and adhering to Islamic teachings requires continuous, daily practice. b) The lesson and warning method: No matter how educational efforts are made, if students are unaware of the positive and negative consequences, education is less meaningful. Students who do good will certainly feel happy and enjoy its sweetness. But if you do bad things you will definitely be sad, disappointed and hopeless. The method of taking lessons and warning about goodness and truth in a way that touches the heart will inspire people to practice it. c) The *targhib* and *tarhid* methods are methods that can make you happy and make you afraid. With this method, the good and bad things conveyed to someone can influence them so that they are motivated to do good.

In line with the method implemented at Bayanul Azhar Islamic Middle School, Sumbergempol and Al Hikmah Melathen Middle School, Tulungagung, by getting used to congregational prayers, reading selected letters and routine activities, while the lesson-taking method is reprimands and punishments given to children, such as not dressing neatly, not attending congregational prayers, being caught smoking and so on, as well as the *targhib* and *tarhid* methods.

In the researcher's view, the strategy of developing and instilling Islamic values through a balance of worship (*ubudiyah*) and social interaction (*muamalah*) represents a holistic and relevant approach to religious education in the modern era. Adolescents at the junior high school level are at a developmental stage where identity formation, moral awareness, and social belonging become increasingly significant. Therefore, by integrating acts of worship with social responsibilities, the schools are not merely transmitting religious knowledge but also shaping the students' character

and worldview. This approach is effective because it connects ritual obedience to God with ethical responsibility toward fellow human beings, thereby preventing a dichotomy between piety and social concern. Religion is not only taught as a doctrine but also lived as a moral and social practice embedded in daily life.

Furthermore, the implementation of habituation, guidance, and moral reinforcement methods demonstrates that Islamic education must move beyond cognitive instruction. Values such as discipline, empathy, honesty, and responsibility require continuous repetition and embodiment in real activities. The practice of congregational prayer, charitable programs, and respectful interactions allows students to internalize Islamic values experientially rather than theoretically. This aligns with character education principles, which emphasize modeling, repetition, and reflection. The *targhib* and *tarhib* approaches, when implemented wisely, also contribute to students' moral awareness by helping them recognize the consequences of their choices. However, these methods should be carefully guided to avoid fear-based learning and instead promote sincere moral consciousness.

Involving students in activities such as visiting religious sites, giving alms, and supporting peers strengthens their emotional connection to Islamic teachings and fosters a sense of belonging and solidarity. Experiencing religion as compassionate and socially constructive encourages intrinsic motivation to practice faith. Complementing these activities with reflective learning, such as discussions, storytelling, or journaling, ensures that religious practice is consciously understood rather than habitual. When applied holistically, Islamic value education can shape students' religious identity while enhancing moral resilience, social harmony, and emotional maturity.

Strategy for Building Student Morals through the Madrasah Diniyah Program

The next step in developing religious attitudes is student morals. This involves the process of learning the Quran, which instills religious values in students at both Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School in Sumbergempol and Al Hikmah Melathen Junior High School in Tulungagung. Instilling moral values in students at both Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School in Sumbergempol and Al Hikmah Melathen Junior High School in Tulungagung is aimed at fostering good morals in addition to academic excellence. The process of forming religious attitudes about moral values in Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School Sumbergempol and Al Hikmah Melathen Tulungagung Junior High School has many similarities, including teaching students *mahmudah* morals and teaching students to avoid *madzmumah* morals which are clearly in the learning books even though in terms of books in both schools there are differences. Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School Sumbergempol uses the *matlab* book as a reference and Al Hikmah Melathen Tulungagung Junior High School uses the book '*adabul 'alim wal muta'alim*'. Teachers also provide good examples to students because with the exemplary method, students will find it easier to follow what is advised by the teacher.

In addition to the positive role models set by teachers, students are also provided with an Islamic environment, even though junior high schools generally lack religious affiliation. Therefore, students' character, personality, and morals are formed through the familiarization they experience within an Islamic environment (Sutarna, 2016). This Islamic environment is fostered by accustoming students to a constant closeness to Allah SWT and by fostering Islamic behavior and dress.

However, the key difference between Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School in Sumbergempol is that it uses the *Matlab* textbook as a reference, while Al Hikmah Melathen Junior High School in Tulungagung uses its own textbook, '*Adabul Alim Wal Muta'alim*.' Both schools have similar madrasah diniyah programs with similar methods. This is done so that students have sufficient religious knowledge to fortify themselves and consistently draw closer to Allah SWT. The habits developed by students in carrying out commendable behavior can be seen in various aspects, including: congregational Dhuhr prayer upon returning from school, Quranic

recitation, Hadroh, and the 5S discipline (smile, greeting, salutation, politeness) implemented at Bayanul Azhar Islamic Middle School. They also maintain discipline in conducting Yasin (the recitation of the Quran) every Friday and istighosah (recitation of the Quran) activities at the end of each month.

In this case, teachers use the necessary methods in learning, especially regarding learning materials for the Matlab book and 'adabul alim wal muta'alim (religious leaders) related to the materials that must be practiced by students (Ardiansah, 2020). By directly practicing the teachings of sharia in class, students will more quickly understand the material being taught. Students also gain hands-on classroom learning experience, which they can then use to implement in real-life situations.

It's important to note that in both schools, Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School and Al Hikmah Melathen Junior High School in Tulungagung, it's rare to find junior high schools offering religious studies, which are typically taught in Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) or madrasas. Furthermore, they also offer a variety of religious activities, such as congregational midday prayer (zuhur), Quran recitation (tadarus), Qiraah (recitation of the Quran), and Hadroh (recitation of the Quran). This means that the majority of students at both institutions are already able to apply religious values, particularly moral values. The educators' efforts in this formation have been successful, although not yet optimal. Therefore, good character development will result in good individual behavior. A harmonious and balanced personality, capable of taking responsibility for all actions, is expected to lead individuals toward greater well-being and progress.

In the researcher's opinion, the cultivation of religious attitudes through moral development constitutes one of the most strategic and sustainable approaches in Islamic education. The process implemented at Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School in Sumbergempol and Al Hikmah Melathen Junior High School in Tulungagung demonstrates that moral development cannot be separated from the study of the Qur'an and classical Islamic texts. By positioning moral education (akhlaq) as an integral component of the curriculum, these institutions emphasize that academic achievement alone is insufficient; students must also be shaped into individuals of strong moral integrity. This approach is consistent with the classical Islamic educational ethos, where knowledge (ilm) must always be accompanied by proper conduct (adab). Thus, the teaching of mahmudah morals (praiseworthy character) and the avoidance of madzmumah morals (blameworthy character) represent not only theoretical instruction but also a vision for producing ethically grounded future generations.

The choice of reference texts Matlab at Bayanul Azhar and Adabul 'Alim wal Muta'alim at Al Hikmah illustrates that although the schools differ in textual resources, they share a common philosophical orientation. Both texts emphasize humility, respect toward teachers, discipline in learning, sincerity in worship, and social responsibility. From the researcher's perspective, this reflects an important continuity within Islamic intellectual tradition, where variations in textbooks do not undermine the unity of educational goals. Instead, these differences enrich pedagogical practice by providing diverse yet complementary frameworks for moral formation. What remains central is the embodiment of Islamic moral ideals in daily student life.

A particularly significant dimension is the role of teacher modeling. The exemplary behavior demonstrated by teachers politeness, discipline, respect, devotion in worship serves as a living curriculum for students. In Islamic pedagogy, moral values are not merely transmitted through speech but embodied through action. The researcher believes that this method is highly effective, especially for adolescents, who tend to imitate figures they admire. When teachers consistently demonstrate Islamic manners, students internalize these values not through coercion but through admiration and repetition. This confirms the long-standing principle that moral education requires meaningful relationships between educators and learners.

Moreover, the creation of an Islamic environment in both schools plays a decisive role in shaping student character. Even though these institutions operate at the junior-high-school level rather than under formal pesantren structures, they successfully cultivate an atmosphere that reflects Islamic identity. The continuous exposure to religious activities such as congregational prayers, Quranic recitation, and remembrance practices helps normalize pious behavior as part of everyday life rather than an occasional ritual. The researcher considers this environmental strategy to be a powerful instrument of moral formation. Students do not merely learn religion cognitively; they live within a miniature Islamic community where faith becomes an experiential reality. Such an environment also reinforces a sense of belonging and spiritual security, which is vital for adolescent development.

The habituation approach observed in both schools demonstrates that moral formation requires repetition and continuity. Activities such as congregational Dhuhur prayers, Yasin recitation every Friday, and istighosah at the end of the month are not just ceremonial obligations but structured opportunities for students to practice discipline, sincerity, and spiritual awareness. The 5S program (smile, greeting, salutation, politeness) likewise encourages social ethics rooted in Islamic manners. From the researcher's standpoint, these practices reflect a deep understanding that morality grows through habit. Virtuous behavior gradually becomes part of students' character because it is performed regularly in supportive social settings.

At the same time, direct practice of sharia-based moral teachings in the classroom strengthens the internalization process. Students not only read moral lessons; they enact them in real interactions. This experiential learning helps bridge the gap between theory and daily life, which is often a weakness in conventional religious instruction. The researcher believes that this pedagogical approach is essential because adolescents learn most effectively through applied experience. When they experience the positive emotional and social consequences of good behavior, moral commitment becomes internal rather than externally imposed.

Another notable observation is that these schools provide religious education typically associated with pesantren or madrasah, despite functioning as general junior high schools. This hybrid model offers an appealing alternative for parents seeking both academic excellence and strong religious grounding for their children (Habibah et al., 2025; Syukri et al., 2025). From the researcher's perspective, this represents a strategic response to contemporary social challenges, such as moral decline, consumerism, and digital distractions, which increasingly impact young adolescents. By fostering religious and moral competencies alongside academic learning, these schools prepare students not only for scholarly competition but also for ethical participation in society (Damayanti & Mahbubi, 2025; Zuki et al., 2024).

Although moral development programs in both schools are not yet perfect, current outcomes indicate promising trends. Many students display respectful behavior, religious discipline, and social empathy, suggesting that the systematic moral education model has already achieved substantial success. Nevertheless, further refinement is needed, particularly to ensure consistency across teachers and activities. Effective moral formation requires collaborative commitment, continuous evaluation, and adaptation to evolving student needs (Novita Sari & As'ad, 2025; Rizkiya & Nugroho, 2024).

From a broader perspective, the researcher believes that character development rooted in Islamic values contributes not only to individual morality but also to social wellbeing. A person who has internalized noble character discipline, honesty, empathy, humility, and responsibility will tend to act as a positive agent within their community. They can participate constructively in social life while remaining spiritually grounded. This balance between piety and social awareness is one of the essential aims of Islamic education. When schools succeed in instilling such character, they contribute to the development of a morally conscious society.

In conclusion, the researcher is of the opinion that the moral education strategies implemented at Bayanul Azhar Islamic Junior High School and Al Hikmah Melathen Junior High School represent an exemplary model of value-based education. Through structured Qur'anic learning, classical moral texts, teacher modeling, environmental conditioning, and practical application, students are guided toward becoming ethically resilient individuals. Although challenges remain, the existing achievements show that moral formation grounded in Islamic teachings remains highly relevant and necessary in shaping future generations capable of contributing to social harmony, spiritual depth, and human dignity.

Here is a summary table of the research findings

Tabel 1 Research Findings

Focus Area	Site I	Site II	Common Findings
Faith Formation	Rububiyyah & Uluhiyyah (theological focus)	Asma'ul Husna, pillars of faith, moral improvement	Both cultivate holistic faith (cognitive, emotional, moral)
Teaching Methods	Role model, storytelling, habituation, targhib-tarhib	Same as Bayanul Azhar	Experiential learning and teacher modeling strengthen internalization
Worship (Ubudiyah)	Rituals: prayers, fasting, zakat	Same, emphasis on intention (niyyah)	Sincerity and ethics emphasized in worship
Social Obligations (Muamalah)	Alms, helping others, respect, forgiveness	Same	Integrates worship with social responsibility
Moral Education	Matlab textbook; mahmudah morals; teacher modeling	'Adabul 'Alim Wal Muta'alim; mahmudah morals; teacher modeling	Textbooks, modeling, and environment reinforce moral internalization
Islamic Environment	5S program, Quranic recitation, Hadroh, istighosah	Congregational prayers, Quranic recitation, alms, Yasin recitation	Environment supports lived religious practice
Challenges / Notes	Teacher consistency, continuous evaluation	Same	Habitual practice, reflective learning, adaptation needed

CONCLUSION

Developing religious attitudes at the junior high level is crucial amid moral challenges from globalization and social media, such as bullying and student rebellion. The Islamic Madrasah program addresses this by teaching Islamic sciences Fiqh, Tawhid, Akhlak, and Tarikh based on classical texts to build a strong religious foundation and ethical character. At Bayanul Azhar in Sumbergempol and Al Hikmah Melathen in Tulungagung, the program focuses on faith (study of texts, Asmaul Husna, pillars of faith), worship (congregational prayers, prayer lessons, collective dhikr), and morals (religious studies, teacher role models, hadrah, Quranic recitation). With proper methods and infrastructure, the program effectively shapes students who are devout, knowledgeable, and morally upright, offering a strategic solution to contemporary adolescent moral challenges.

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