



Seven Habits of Islamic Education Teachers as Role Models for Students

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Abstract

Islamic Education teachers play a strategic role not only in delivering religious knowledge but also in shaping students' character through exemplary attitudes and behavior. Their daily habits influence both the learning process and the moral and spiritual development of students. This study analyzes seven key habits of Islamic Education teachers that serve as role models for learners. The research employed a qualitative case study approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews, literature review, and classroom reflections. Thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo 12 to identify consistent behavioral patterns. The findings highlight seven essential habits: punctuality, thorough preparation of lesson materials, enthusiastic teaching, empathetic listening, consistent appreciation, continuous self-development, and exemplary conduct. These habits collectively foster discipline, motivation, confidence, and moral integrity among students. The implications of this study emphasize that adopting such habits strengthens the role of Islamic Education teachers as agents of character building. Schools and educational institutions are encouraged to integrate these practices into teachers' daily routines to enhance both academic achievement and moral development.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education in schools plays a highly strategic role in shaping the character, morals, and spirituality of students (Asrori et al., 2025; Bahri et al., 2025; Bin Jamil et al., 2025). It serves not only as a means of transferring religious knowledge but also as a medium for internalizing noble moral values that form the foundation of social life. In this context, Islamic Religious Education teachers play a central role as agents of change and role models for students (Muluk et al., 2019; Rissanen, 2012). The presence of teachers is not merely as instructors who deliver material, but also as figures capable of influencing students' attitudes, behaviors, and ways of thinking through daily exemplary conduct (Aryal, 2022).

A common phenomenon observed in schools suggests that the success of religious education is determined not only by the quality of the materials or methods used, but also by the teacher's personal integrity. Teachers who are disciplined, enthusiastic, and consistent in demonstrating positive behavior are more readily accepted by students (Kurata et al., 2025; Masturin, 2022). Conversely, teachers who

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fail to set a good example often face difficulties in instilling moral values. This aligns with character education theory, which emphasizes the importance of role models in the process of shaping a child's personality (Wardani & Faridah, 2021). Thus, teachers' daily habits become a critical factor that requires in-depth analysis.

In practice, there are a number of habits consistently demonstrated by Islamic Religious Education teachers that have been shown to have a positive impact on students (Mukhlis, 2024). These habits include punctuality, thorough preparation of materials, teaching with enthusiasm, listening to students with empathy, consistently offering praise, continuous learning and self-development, and serving as a role model in attitude and behavior. These seven habits are not only relevant in the context of religious education but also in fostering a positive school culture.

The habit of punctuality, for example, reflects a discipline that students can emulate. When teachers demonstrate a commitment to punctuality, students learn to value order and responsibility. The same applies to the habit of preparing materials, which demonstrates a teacher's professionalism in teaching. Thorough preparation makes learning more focused, effective, and meaningful. Enthusiasm in teaching is also a crucial factor, as a teacher's enthusiasm can be contagious to students and create a lively classroom atmosphere (Andini et al., 2024).

In addition, the practice of listening to students with empathy provides a safe space for them to express their opinions or concerns. This approach fosters self-confidence and strengthens the teacher-student relationship. Consistent appreciation also plays a major role in building students' motivation and self-confidence. Teachers who value students' efforts both small and large create a positive and inclusive classroom atmosphere (Hendriksen et al., 2024; Surendhranatha Reddy & Leelavathi, 2025).

Equally important, teachers who continuously learn and develop themselves demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning. This attitude serves as a model for students to always be open to new knowledge and the changing times. Ultimately, exemplary conduct in daily attitudes and behavior is at the core of religious education. Teachers who demonstrate noble character provide a tangible example for students, ensuring that religious values do not remain mere theory but are embodied in daily practice (Juthi et al., 2025).

The urgency of this research becomes increasingly clear when considering the challenges facing education in the modern era. Globalization, technological advancements, and social changes have had a significant impact on the mindset and behavior of the younger generation. In this context, Islamic Religious Education teachers are expected not only to master the subject matter but also to serve as role models who are relevant to the needs of the times. The positive habits demonstrated by teachers can serve as a moral foundation for students as they navigate the currents of change.

The implications of this research are far-reaching. By identifying and analyzing the habits of Islamic Religious Education teachers, schools can formulate more effective professional development strategies. Teachers can be encouraged to integrate these positive habits into their daily routines. Educational institutions can also use these findings as a basis for teacher professional development programs. Ultimately, the implementation of these habits is expected to improve academic quality while shaping a generation that is knowledgeable, of good character, and of noble morals.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach using case studies (Chanifah et al., 2021; Engkizar et al., 2026; Fanani et al., 2022; Kasmar et al., 2019). The qualitative approach was chosen because the focus of the research is to deeply understand the habits of Islamic Religious Education teachers through their experiences, attitudes, and behaviors demonstrated in real-world contexts. Case studies are used to specifically examine teachers’ habits in a single school or specific setting, ensuring that the research findings provide a detailed and contextualized picture.

The primary data source for this study is Islamic Religious Education teachers who served as case study subjects. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with teachers, while secondary data was obtained from school documents, lesson plans, and literature related to teacher habits and character education. By combining primary and secondary data, this study is able to provide a more comprehensive picture.

The primary instrument used was an in-depth interview guide developed based on the research focus, namely the seven teacher habits. The interview guide contained open-ended questions that allowed teachers to describe their experiences, habits, and personal reflections. In addition, the researcher also used field notes to record observations during the learning process.

To support the analysis, this study utilized NVivo 12 software. NVivo was selected because it assists researchers in organizing interview data, grouping themes, and visualizing relationships among categories of teacher habits. With NVivo’s assistance, the analysis process became more systematic and structured. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Engkizar et al., 2025; Ikhlas et al., 2025; Kaputra et al., 2021; Kassymova et al., 2025; Putri et al., 2025; Saminu et al., 2025). This process involves several stages: first, transcribing the interview results; second, coding the data to identify main themes; third, grouping codes into categories of habits; and fourth, interpreting the results to explain the meaning of teachers’ habits in the context of student character development. Thematic analysis allows the researcher to identify consistent patterns of habits and link them to educational implications.

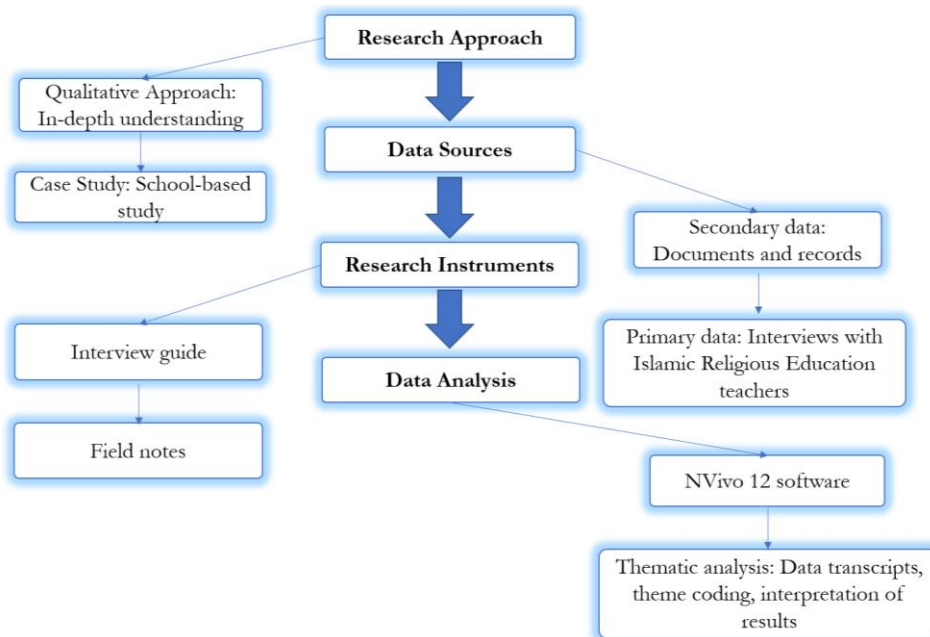


Fig 1. Stages of the research methodology

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study highlight seven key teacher habits that contribute to improving the quality of education: punctuality, thorough lesson preparation, enthusiastic teaching, empathetic listening, consistent praise, continuous professional development, and exemplary behavior. To clarify the relationships among these habits, the results of the NVivo analysis are presented in the following figure.

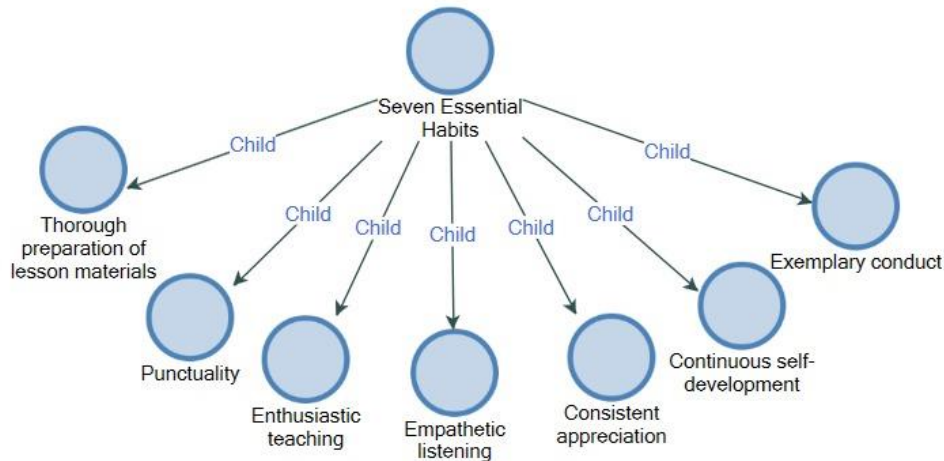


Fig 2. Seven Habits of Islamic Education Teachers as Role Models for Students

Always On Time

The habit of arriving on time reflects a teacher's discipline in carrying out their duties. This attitude demonstrates a commitment to their responsibilities as educators. Punctuality also sends a strong message to students that learning is an activity that should be valued. Through this consistency, teachers foster a culture of discipline at school. Students, in turn, learn to respect time as an important part of life.

"I always try to arrive before the bell rings. In my opinion, if teachers are late, students will also feel that they don't need to respect time. So I want to set an example that discipline is important (informants 1, 5 & 10); For me, being on time isn't just about being present in class, but also starting the lesson on schedule. The students get used to preparing themselves before the lesson starts (informants 2, 6 & 15); Students often tell me they're happy when the teacher isn't late. They feel their learning time is valued. That helps them focus better (informants 3 & 8)"

In addition, teachers' punctuality fosters order in the learning process. Students become accustomed to following a clear schedule, ensuring that no time is wasted. This helps them develop good time management skills. Teachers who consistently arrive on time also foster students' trust in their professionalism. Thus, punctuality serves as a tangible example for students (Nabila et al., 2025; Rizkiani et al., 2026).

Teachers' punctuality also impacts the effectiveness of learning. Lessons can begin as planned without delay. Students feel valued because their time is not wasted (Hakim et al., 2025). This habit fosters a shared sense of responsibility for the learning process. Ultimately, teachers' punctuality reinforces a culture of hard work and commitment within the school environment.

Conversely, when a teacher fails to be punctual, this is not merely a matter of arriving late to class, but also reflects a lack of discipline and professionalism (Dilla

et al., 2026; Shahrukhan et al., 2025). Students will feel that their time is not valued, and this can lead to a culture of indiscipline in the classroom. Repeated tardiness also disrupts the flow of learning, prevents the material from being conveyed effectively, and causes frustration among students who have been waiting eagerly. Ultimately, students' trust in the teacher may diminish because the teacher fails to demonstrate commitment to their responsibilities.

Preparing Materials Thoroughly

Teachers who prepare their materials thoroughly demonstrate professionalism. This preparation ensures that the learning process is well-structured. Teachers do not merely convey theory; they also prepare relevant strategies and methods. Learning materials are selected to meet students' needs. With thorough preparation, students find it easier to understand the material.

"I never enter the classroom without a plan. At the very least, I have prepared the main points I will cover (informants 4, 7 & 11); If the material isn't prepared, the lesson usually becomes unfocused. I always make brief notes so that my delivery is more systematic (informants 5, 9 & 16); I prepare practical examples so that students can understand more easily. That way, they don't just hear the theory, but also see its application (informants 6, 10 & 14)"

Thorough lesson preparation also reflects a teacher's commitment to the learning process. Students see that the teacher takes teaching seriously and does not rely solely on improvisation. This fosters students' respect for the teacher. Thorough preparation also makes lessons more varied and engaging. As a result, students become more actively involved in class.

Additionally, teachers who prepare their materials well are able to anticipate students' difficulties. They can prepare examples, illustrations, or additional exercises. This helps students understand difficult concepts. Teachers are also more confident in delivering lessons. Ultimately, good preparation improves the overall quality of learning (Ahmadi & Hadi, 2023; Masyitoh & Safmi, 2024).

However, if a teacher comes to class without preparing the material, they will struggle to deliver the lesson in a structured manner. As a result, students feel confused, do not receive clear explanations, and lose their way in their learning. Unplanned teaching also makes the classroom atmosphere monotonous and uninteresting, causing students to become easily bored and unmotivated. Furthermore, a lack of preparation can undermine the teacher's credibility in the eyes of students, as they perceive the teacher as not taking their role as an educator seriously (Durisa et al., 2022; Turan-Özpolat, 2020).

Teaching with Passion

A teacher's passion for teaching is contagious. Enthusiasm creates a lively classroom atmosphere. This positive energy motivates students to learn. The classroom becomes a fun and interactive environment. Students feel more engaged in the learning process.

Furthermore, a teacher's enthusiasm demonstrates a love for their profession. Students learn that teaching is not merely a duty, but a calling. This fosters a sense of admiration and respect for the teacher. The enthusiasm displayed also encourages students to ask questions more freely. Consequently, the interaction between teacher and student becomes more intensive. As illustrated by the following interview excerpt with an informant.

"I try to show enthusiasm every time I teach. If the teacher is lethargic, the students will be lethargic too (informants 8, 12, and 17); That enthusiasm is contagious. I see the kids become more active when I teach with lots of energy (informants 9, 13 & 20); I want students to feel that

learning religion is fun. So I always try to smile and interact with them (informants 10, 15 & 17)”

Teachers' enthusiasm also impacts student learning outcomes. Students are more focused and eager to participate in lessons. Students' intrinsic motivation increases as they are inspired by their teachers. An enthusiastic classroom atmosphere fosters creativity and innovation. Ultimately, teachers' enthusiasm is a key factor in the success of learning (Utami et al., 2024; Wulandari & Nisrina, 2023).

Previous research findings indicate that if a teacher instructs with a gloomy expression, a flat tone of voice, and a lack of enthusiasm, the classroom atmosphere will feel cold and boring (Maryati et al., 2024; Ubaidillah, 2020). Students tend to become passive, hesitate to ask questions, and show little interest in participating in discussions. In the long run, this can cause students to lose interest in the subject, as they do not feel motivated or inspired by the teacher, who is supposed to be the driving force behind their learning.

Listening to Students with Empathy

Teachers who listen with empathy create a safe space for students. This approach shows that their voices are valued. Empathy helps teachers understand students' needs and challenges. With this approach, the teacher-student relationship becomes more harmonious. Students' trust in their teachers grows.

Furthermore, listening with empathy makes students feel accepted. They become more willing to express their opinions or share their problems. Teachers can offer solutions tailored to the students' circumstances. This fosters self-confidence in students. Consequently, the classroom atmosphere becomes more open and inclusive. As illustrated by the following interview excerpt with an informant.

“Sometimes students share personal problems with me. I listen first without judging, and then I offer advice (informants 7, 9, and 16); I always give students the opportunity to ask questions or express their opinions. That makes them feel valued (informants 11 and 17); Empathy is important. If we don't listen, students can feel neglected. I want them to feel safe in the classroom (informants 12, 16 & 19)”

Teacher empathy also helps create a positive learning environment. Students feel comfortable participating actively. Teachers can adapt teaching methods to students' needs (Gymnastiar, 2024). This enhances the effectiveness of the learning process. Ultimately, teacher empathy strengthens the emotional bond that supports student development.

According to experts, teachers who refuse to listen to students with empathy will create an emotional distance in the teacher-student relationship. Students who feel ignored will be reluctant to speak or express their opinions, resulting in one-sided and unhealthy communication (Maulidayani et al., 2025). When students' concerns go unheard, they may feel unvalued and lose trust in their teachers. Consequently, students might seek support outside the classroom, and the learning relationship which should be warm turns cold and rigid.

Consistently Offering Praise

Praise is one of the most effective ways to build students' self-confidence. If teachers rarely or inconsistently acknowledge students' efforts, students will feel that their hard work is meaningless. This can lower their motivation to learn, make them reluctant to try new things, and even lead to feelings of despair. Without appreciation, students lose the drive to improve, and the classroom atmosphere becomes less positive because there is no recognition of achievements, whether

small or large.

Teacher appreciation builds students' self-confidence. Recognition is given for both small and significant efforts. Students feel valued and motivated to keep trying (Fahrezi et al., 2025). This practice fosters a positive classroom environment. Every achievement is considered important in the learning process. Additionally, teacher appreciation builds students' intrinsic motivation. They learn that effort is more important than results alone. This fosters a never-give-up attitude. Teachers who consistently offer appreciation also strengthen their relationships with students. As a result, students feel closer to their teachers.

"I always give praise, even if it's just a small thing. For example, if a student tries to answer, I say 'good' even if the answer isn't quite right (informants 13 & 18); Appreciation makes the children more confident. They become brave enough to try again (informants 14, 17 & 19); I see a more positive classroom atmosphere when teachers frequently give praise. The children come to respect one another as well (informants 3 & 15)"

Appreciation also fosters a culture of recognition in the classroom. Students learn to value their peers' efforts. This cultivates solidarity and cooperation (Muhdar, 2025). Teachers serve as role models in valuing others. Ultimately, consistent appreciation strengthens students' positive character.

Continuous Learning and Professional Development

Teachers who continue to learn demonstrate humility. They are committed to professional development. Their knowledge and teaching methods are constantly updated to keep pace with the times. This ensures that teachers remain relevant in the face of challenges. Teachers become figures who learn alongside their students. As illustrated by the following excerpt from an interview with an informant.

"I often attend training sessions or seminars. That helps me update my teaching methods (informants 4 & 16); If teachers don't keep learning, we'll fall behind. I always read new books or articles (informants 9 & 17); I also learn from experience. Whenever there's a problem in class, I use it as a basis for reflection to improve myself (informants 12 & 18)"

In addition, teachers who continue to learn set an important example. Students see that learning is a lifelong process. This fosters motivation to continue seeking knowledge. Teachers also become more creative in their teaching with new knowledge. As a result, learning becomes more engaging and innovative.

Teacher professional development also impacts the quality of education. They are able to adapt instruction to students' needs. Teachers are better prepared to handle changes in the curriculum or technology. This enhances the effectiveness of the learning process (Riswanto & Mulyanti, 2024; Wati et al., 2025). Ultimately, teachers who continue to learn strengthen their role as agents of change.

However, teachers who stop learning will fall behind the times, both in terms of content and teaching methods. Students living in the digital age need an approach that is relevant to their world, and if teachers do not update their knowledge and skills, learning becomes outdated and uninteresting (Zebua, 2023). This can also lead students to feel that teachers are not worthy of being role models, since the teachers themselves do not demonstrate the attitude of a lifelong learner. Ultimately, the quality of education provided declines.

Setting an Example in Attitude and Behavior

A teacher's exemplary conduct is at the heart of religious education. Daily attitudes and behaviors reflect the values being taught. Teachers who consistently demonstrate noble character set a tangible example. Students learn not only from words, but from actions. Religious education is embodied in the practice of daily

life.

Furthermore, a teacher's exemplary conduct strengthens their credibility. Students trust teachers more when they practice what they preach. This fosters respect and admiration. Teachers become figures who inspire students in their daily lives. Thus, exemplary conduct serves as an effective means of character development. As illustrated by the following excerpt from an interview with an informant.

"I try to be mindful of my daily conduct. If I tell students not to lie, I have to be honest myself (informants 5 & 19); Setting a good example is more powerful than words. Children imitate what they see (informants 7 & 20); I want to show that religion isn't just theory. So I try to be consistent in my behavior, both in class and outside of it (informants 11 & 12)"

Teachers' exemplary behavior also fosters a positive school culture. Students emulate their teachers' positive attitudes in daily interactions. This cultivates a learning environment rich in moral values (Maulana & Basri, 2025; Mufarrohah & Suyadi, 2025). Teachers serve as key agents in building students' integrity. Ultimately, teachers' exemplary behavior reinforces the goals of religious education (Suwahyu, 2025).

Teachers are not merely conveyors of knowledge but also role models for students. If teachers do not demonstrate positive traits such as honesty, responsibility, and courtesy students lose concrete examples to emulate (Shi et al., 2025). Negative teacher behavior can be imitated by students, thereby weakening the moral values and character traits that should be instilled. In the long term, this can damage school culture and reduce the effectiveness of character education, which is one of the primary goals of learning.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that Islamic Religious Education teachers play a strategic role in shaping students' character through consistent daily habits. The seven habits identified always being punctual, preparing materials thoroughly, teaching with enthusiasm, listening to students with empathy, consistently offering appreciation, continuously learning and developing oneself, and serving as a role model in attitude and behavior have been proven to have a positive impact on students' discipline, motivation, self-confidence, and moral integrity. Thus, the research objective to identify teacher habits that influence student character development has been achieved, while also answering the research question that teacher habits not only influence the learning process but also shape a positive school culture. Consequently, schools and educational institutions need to encourage teachers to integrate these habits into their daily routines so that religious education truly produces a generation that is knowledgeable and of noble character.

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Author contribution

Viona Dwi Wulandari: data curation, writing-original draft preparation, **Zaky Habiburrahman:** conceptualization, methodology, **Burhanuddin:** visualization, editing, analysis.

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