
EVALUATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENT DIVERSITY AT STATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SUKASARI CILEUNYI BANDUNG

Andewi Suhartini¹

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia
Andewi.suhartini@uinsgd.ac.id

Agus Hidayat²

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia
agushidayat3760@gmail.com

Ujang Koswara³

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia
ujangkoswaraspdi1986@gmail.com

Pipih Santora⁴

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia
Pipih Santora90@gmail.com

Desi Rosulina⁵

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia
rosulinadesi005@gmail.com

Hamdan Maulana⁶

Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati, Bandung, Indonesia
Allbret27@gmail.com

Abstract

The development of students' religious character is a fundamental aspect of character education at the elementary school level. This study aims to evaluate the implementation of religious development programs at State Elementary School Sukasari Cileunyi Bandung and to identify the supporting factors, obstacles, and their contributions to shaping students' religious behavior. Employing a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving Islamic education teachers, homeroom teachers, the school principal, and students. The findings reveal that religious development is carried out through worship habituation, teacher role modeling, reinforcement of Islamic education learning, and extracurricular activities. Key supporting factors include the consistency of teachers' roles, a conducive school environment, and parental involvement, while the obstacles comprise student discipline issues, limited worship facilities, and differences in family religious culture. These findings underscore the importance of habituation and exemplary behavior as core approaches in shaping the religious character of elementary school students. Theoretically, the study enriches the discourse on the effectiveness of habituation-based religious education. Practically, the results provide recommendations for improving religious programs in elementary education institutions so that they may become more systematic and measurable.

Keywords: Religiosity, Habituation, Role Modeling, Elementary School, Religious Education

INTRODUCTION

Religious education at the elementary school level has become an increasingly important concern in the context of current social and technological developments. The 2024 report by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology indicates a rise in cases of intolerance, bullying, and indiscipline among elementary school students. This phenomenon highlights the need to strengthen religious and moral foundations from an early age as the basis for character formation. In an era of information disruption, children are exposed to various values that may not align with universal moral principles, thus requiring schools to provide systematic and sustainable religious development programs.

Religiosity among students is not limited to cognitive understanding of religious teachings but also encompasses affective and psychomotor dimensions reflected in daily behavior. Several studies (Azkiyah et al., 2025; Febriyanti & Supriyadi, 2023; Solihah et al., 2024) emphasize that the formation of religious values in elementary school children is most effectively achieved through habituation, role modeling, and environmental reinforcement. As formal educational institutions, schools play a significant role in facilitating the development of these values through structured, measurable, and integrated programs within the learning process.

However, previous studies indicate that there is still a limited number of research works that specifically evaluate religious development programs in public elementary schools. Most existing studies focus on Islamic Religious Education (PAI) classroom activities or examine character education practices in general (Haerudin, 2025; Muzaini & Salamah, 2023). Consequently, a research gap persists regarding evaluative studies that investigate the relationship between habituation programs, teacher role modeling, and family support in shaping students' religiosity within socially and culturally heterogeneous public school settings.

State Elementary School Sukasari Cileunyi Bandung is a public elementary school that consistently implements various religious programs, such as congregational prayer habituation, daily prayer recitations, Qur'an reading (tadarus), short religious talks (kultum), and PAI learning based on practical worship activities. Evaluating the implementation of these programs is essential to understand their effectiveness in shaping students' religious behavior as well as to identify the supporting factors and obstacles encountered throughout the process.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Concept of Religiosity Among Elementary School Students

Religiosity refers to the overall aspects of belief, understanding, experience, and religious practice that reflect an individual's relationship with spiritual values. Glock and Stark categorize religiosity into five dimensions: belief, ritual practice, spiritual experience, religious knowledge, and the moral consequences reflected in behavior (Mangngalla' et al., 2023). In the context of elementary school students, religiosity is not merely understood as a cognitive ability to recognize religious teachings, but also encompasses affective and psychomotor dimensions manifested in daily behaviors such as discipline in worship, social ethics, and respectful attitudes toward others. Within elementary education, religiosity is viewed as a foundational element in character formation. Emphasizes that character education for school-aged children is most effectively developed through habituation and

role modeling, rather than solely through the transmission of knowledge (Lickona, 2018). Thus, religiosity is the result of a continuous internalization process facilitated through the guidance of teachers, the school environment, and the family (Yusuf et al., 2024).

Habit Formation Theory in Religious Education

The theory of habit formation explains that character and religious behavior are developed through continuous repetition of actions within a supportive environment. Rooted in classical behavioral psychology and later strengthened by contemporary character education scholars, habit formation emphasizes that consistent practice shapes stable dispositions (Pawl, 2022). Argues that moral and religious character in children is not formed solely through cognitive instruction, but through repeated engagement in positive behaviors that gradually become internalized as personal habits (Lickona, 2018). In the context of religious education, habit formation occurs when students are routinely involved in structured activities such as daily prayers, recitation of scripture, and the practice of ethical behaviors. Repetition enables these actions to transition from externally guided routines to internally motivated practices. Over time, the consistency of these activities fosters stronger spiritual awareness, self-discipline, and moral sensitivity. This aligns with Aristotle's philosophy that virtue is developed through repeated action children become accustomed to doing what is good by consistently practicing good deeds (Hafidz et al., 2025).

Within the elementary school environment, the success of habit formation relies heavily on the presence of a supportive ecosystem, including teacher guidance, school culture, and family reinforcement at home (Sholikah et al., 2025). When these factors operate in harmony, habituation becomes a powerful pedagogical approach for shaping students' religious character. Consequently, habit formation is viewed not only as behavioral conditioning but also as a developmental process that nurtures internal motivation, emotional attachment to worship, and long-term religious commitment.

Modelling Theory

Modelling is a crucial strategy in the development of students' religious character. Bandura, through his Social Learning Theory, asserts that children learn primarily by observing and imitating the behaviors of significant adults around them (Li et al., 2023). In the context of elementary education, teachers particularly Islamic Education (PAI) teachers serve as the primary role models in shaping students' religious values. Modelling is considered more effective than verbal instruction, as children tend to replicate concrete behaviors such as greeting others politely, performing prayers on time, speaking courteously, and maintaining cleanliness. Furthermore, modelling contributes to what is known as the "hidden curriculum," referring to the moral and spiritual values conveyed implicitly through teachers' everyday actions, even though these values are not formally written in the curriculum. Through consistent role modelling, teachers play a vital role in reinforcing positive behavior, fostering internalization of religious values, and shaping the moral disposition of students in a more natural and influential manner (Pusch, 2024).

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of religious character development in the elementary school setting. This approach was selected because it enables the exploration of meanings, perceptions, and practices that naturally occur within the school context (Creswell, 2017).

The research was conducted at SDN Sukasari Cileunyi Bandung. Data for this study were obtained from three primary sources—Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, the school principal, and students—through in-depth interviews, participatory observations of routine religious activities, and relevant documentation, including work programs, activity records, and photographs. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their level of involvement in the school's religious initiatives. Observations were carried out during congregational prayers, daily supplications, Islamic Education classes, and religious extracurricular activities to capture authentic practices in the school environment. Semi-structured interviews with teachers and the principal explored their perceptions regarding the objectives, strategies, and challenges of religious character development, while informal interviews with students provided insights into their lived experiences and interpretations of these religious practices. All collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by (Miles et al., 2014), encompassing data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The credibility and accuracy of the findings were reinforced through triangulation of sources, techniques, and time, supported by member checking with key informants.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Development of Students' Religious Character Through School-Based Habituation: Effectiveness and Challenges

The findings of this study indicate that religious habituation through activities such as *tadarus*, *salat dhuha*, and daily prayer recitations serves as the primary foundation in fostering students' religious character at SDN Sukasari. These habituation practices are not merely routine religious activities, but rather pedagogical strategies intentionally designed to instill spiritual values in a continuous manner. Field observations reveal that students who consistently participate in these activities demonstrate significant improvements in their religious behavior, particularly in terms of discipline, orderly participation, and accuracy in reciting prayers. In this context, habituation functions as a gradual and structured process of value internalization, enabling religious principles to be embedded more deeply within the students.

Consistent with the habituation theory proposed by (Lickona, 2018), the formation of religious character cannot be achieved solely through cognitive instruction in the classroom, but must be reinforced through the repeated performance of real actions supported by a conducive environment. Regular repetition of religious behaviors strengthens children's spiritual awareness, develops positive habits, and fosters stable worship discipline. This is supported by (Hasanah et al., 2023) study, which found that routines such as *salat dhuha* and *tadarus* not only enhance students' spiritual awareness but also influence their religious attitudes in daily life. Thus, habituation functions as a bridge between the theoretical knowledge of religion taught in class and the practical behaviors expected to emerge in students' conduct.

However, the study also reveals that the effectiveness of habituation is not uniformly experienced by all students. Some students appear inconsistent in their participation, particularly in *salat dhuha*, which requires adequate facilities and better time management. Limited prayer space, insufficient supervision at certain times, and varying levels of student motivation hinder the optimal implementation of habituation activities. These findings

indicate that the success of habituation strategies depends not only on the frequency of activities but also on management quality, the readiness of school infrastructure, and teachers' support in ensuring consistent student participation. Therefore, religious habituation requires strong institutional backing, effective activity management, and continuous evaluation to maximize its impact on students' religious development (Fajri & Hadi, 2025).

Teacher Exemplification as a Key Determining Factor

The interview findings indicate that Islamic Education (PAI) teachers and homeroom teachers play a central role in shaping the religious atmosphere at SDN Sukasari. Teachers who consistently greet students with salutations, perform prayers punctually, and demonstrate commendable moral conduct in daily interactions serve as concrete role models for students. This exemplification forms what is commonly referred to as the *hidden curriculum* values that are not explicitly taught in formal lessons but are transmitted through teachers' everyday behavior and habits (Agussalim, 2020; Nurbela & Munawaroh, 2022). Thus, teacher role modeling not only reinforces cognitive learning of religious concepts but also shapes students' character through the daily lived experiences they observe and internalize.

From Bandura's Social Learning Theory perspective, behavior formation is heavily influenced by observation and imitation of significant figures (Bethards, 2014). In the context of primary education, teachers act as significant others whose behavior is closely observed by students. When students witness teachers performing worship with devotion, speaking politely, and treating others with respect, they are naturally encouraged to replicate such behaviors. This explains why role modeling possesses greater pedagogical strength than verbal instruction alone. Teachers, therefore, do not merely serve as transmitters of knowledge but also as behavioral models who shape students' moral and religious orientations (Horsburgh & Ippolito, 2018).

A key contribution of this study is the emphasis that teacher exemplification has a stronger impact within the context of public elementary schools, including SDN Sukasari. This is due to the relatively heterogeneous backgrounds of students' home environments socially, economically, and religiously. Many students do not receive consistent moral guidance at home, making the school the primary space where they learn religious behavior. Teacher exemplification thus functions as a compensatory mechanism for the lack of moral cultivation in the family environment. Consequently, this study underscores that religious education strategies in public schools must prioritize strengthening the role of teachers as moral exemplars, rather than merely as instructors of religious theory.

A Religious School Culture as an Ecosystem for Character Formation

A religious school culture has been shown to be a crucial element in shaping students' religiosity at SDN Sukasari. The physical environment of the school adorned with prayer posters, worship schedules, religious slogans, and daily spiritual routines creates an atmosphere conducive to the internalization of spiritual values. Beyond formal religious activities such as congregational prayer and Qur'anic recitation, the emotional and symbolic ambience fostered within the school environment further strengthens students' religious sensitivity. These findings reinforce Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which emphasizes that the microsystem is the most influential setting in shaping children's behaviors and values. In this context, the school culture serves as a *living curriculum* a

curriculum learned not merely through texts, but through the daily experiences students encounter firsthand (Cahyanto et al., 2024).

However, the study also identifies gaps in the integration of religious culture across different areas of learning. Although the school environment generally supports religious values, spiritual integration is not yet consistently reflected in all subjects. Several non-PAI teachers have not incorporated religious or moral dimensions into their teaching materials, even when such integration would align with the goals of religious character development. This gap indicates that building a religious school culture requires a collaborative, cross-disciplinary approach in which every teacher serves as a value-bearing agent, not solely a transmitter of academic content. Strengthening teacher capacity and collective awareness is essential to ensure that religious culture does not remain partial or symbolic, but is fully embedded across the entire learning ecosystem (Latifah, 2014).

The Role of Families and School–Parent Synergy

Parental involvement in nurturing children’s religious development has proven to be a highly significant supporting factor. Parents who consistently guide their children’s worship practices at home such as reminding them to pray on time, reading daily supplications together, or accompanying them during Qur’anic recitation provide reinforcement that aligns with the religious habituation implemented in schools. Interview results indicate that students who receive routine support from their parents show faster progress in memorizing prayers, maintaining worship discipline, and understanding basic moral values. These findings affirm (Epstein, 2018) tri-center model, which emphasizes that the success of character education is the result of close collaboration among schools, families, and communities. In the context of public schools such as SDN Sukasari, the role of families becomes even more central because the time allocated for religious habituation at school is relatively limited compared to religious-based institutions such as madrasahs.

However, this study also identifies several challenges regarding family involvement, particularly for students who come from home environments with minimal religious attention. For some students, excessive use of digital devices has reduced the time allocated for worship activities an issue consistent with the 2023 report by the Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information on the increasing intensity of gadget use among elementary school–aged children. This condition disrupts the continuity of religious habituation at home, resulting in insufficient reinforcement of the school’s programs. These findings highlight the need for interventions such as parental education and programs on religious digital literacy, enabling parents to facilitate responsible gadget use while consistently supporting their children’s religious development across both school and home environments.

Integration of Findings with Previous Studies (Critical Analysis)

Compared to studies in madrasahs (Arif et al., 2024; Mukhlisin et al., 2025), this study shows a different pattern:

Table 1. Integration With Previous Studies

Aspec	Madrasah	Sukasari Public Elementary School	Difference
Intensity of religious activities	Very high	Moderate	Limited time

Family support	Tends to be strong	Variable	Social diversity
Role models	Completely religious	Relying on teachers	More individual
School culture	Religious focus	Plural	Needs adaptation

Based on the table above, there are significant differences in the patterns of religious development. Madrasahs generally have a higher intensity of religious activities because religious activities are an integral part of the curriculum and institutional culture. In contrast, Sukasari Public Elementary School has a moderate level of intensity because it must balance the general curriculum and religious practices, resulting in more limited time for religious practices. Family support also shows important differences: madrasah students generally come from stronger religious backgrounds, while public elementary school students have more heterogeneous social backgrounds, resulting in highly varied religious guidance at home. This situation requires public schools to develop more adaptive and responsive guidance patterns to meet student needs.

From the perspective of role modeling and school culture, madrasah teachers typically demonstrate religious behavior collectively as part of their institutional identity. At Sukasari Public Elementary School, role modeling relies more on PAI teachers and homeroom teachers, so it is more individual in nature and has not yet fully formed a comprehensive religious culture. In addition, the school culture in madrasahs focuses on symbols, routines, and religious activities, while the culture in public elementary schools is pluralistic, so that the strengthening of religious values must be done creatively and across subjects. This analysis confirms that the model for fostering religious diversity in public elementary schools needs to be designed in a flexible and collaborative manner, given that not all school components have the same religious orientation.

Implementation and Limitations of the Study

This research was conducted using a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing data collection techniques such as field observations, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research process was carried out in stages, beginning with an initial mapping of religious habituation programs, followed by direct observation of the implementation of tadarus, dhuha prayers, daily recitation of prayers, and other religious activities at SDN Sukasari. Interviews were conducted with Islamic education teachers, homeroom teachers, the principal, and a number of parents to gain a comprehensive understanding of the factors that support and hinder the development of students' religious diversity. The data analysis technique used the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The research was implemented in depth to ensure that each finding reflected the actual conditions in the field and was methodologically accountable.

In addition, researchers ensured ethical participant involvement by explaining the purpose of the study and maintaining the confidentiality of informants' identities. The entire research process was conducted in accordance with the principle of data triangulation to enhance the validity of the findings. The use of various data sources, ranging from observation to interviews, enabled researchers to obtain a comprehensive picture of the

dynamics of religious habituation in public schools. This implementation was important to produce findings that were accurate and relevant to the context of basic education, particularly in the development of religious values through habituation, role modeling, school culture, and family involvement.

Although this study provides a rich picture of the process of developing religious diversity at SDN Sukasari, there are several limitations that should be noted. First, the scope of the study is limited to one public school, so the results cannot be generalized to all public elementary schools in Indonesia. The socio-cultural conditions, characteristics of students, and family support at other schools may differ, so the model of habituation and its effectiveness may vary. Second, this study relies on qualitative techniques that prioritize data depth rather than quantitative measurements. Therefore, this study is not yet able to provide numerical measures of the level of effectiveness of religious habituation or how significantly these activities influence changes in student behavior.

Another limitation relates to the possibility of informant bias, especially in interviews with teachers or parents who tend to give positive answers regarding the habituation process. In addition, the time constraints of the study meant that researchers could only observe student behavior within a certain period, so it did not describe long-term behavioral changes. Future research should combine quantitative methods to measure the effectiveness of the accustomation model more objectively, expand the research location, and examine the relationship between school, family, and social environment factors in shaping students' religious character more comprehensively.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that religious development at SDN Sukasari is built upon four key pillars: religious habituation, teacher role modeling, school culture, and parental involvement. Habituation through activities such as *tadarus*, *salat dhuha*, and daily prayer recitations has proven effective in shaping students' religious behavior, particularly when conducted consistently and supported by a conducive environment. Teacher role modeling emerges as a critical factor, as the religious conduct demonstrated by teachers functions as a hidden curriculum that reinforces formal instruction. The school culture, as a value-based ecosystem, also facilitates the internalization of religious character, although its integration across all subjects still requires strengthening. Collaboration between the school and parents further contributes to the success of religious development, although disparities in parental engagement necessitate more adaptive support strategies.

Overall, the findings indicate that religious development in public elementary schools requires a holistic, collaborative, and continuous approach. Despite challenges such as limited facilities, varying levels of student motivation, and insufficient parental support, this study provides an empirical foundation for designing more structured and effective religious development programs. Moving forward, strengthening the teacher's role as a moral exemplar, optimizing the religious school culture, and enhancing family religious literacy should become strategic priorities to ensure that religious development is not merely administrative but genuinely internalized within the students' character.

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