

# Implementation of Religious Character Education For students of Junior High School 12 Surabaya

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## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This study analyzes the implementation of religious character education at Junior High School 12 Surabaya, focusing on the effectiveness of programs in shaping students' religious values. Religious character education, when consistently implemented, can foster individuals with high empathy, respect for diversity, and the ability to interact positively within their communities. **Method:** This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews with the vice principal, religious teachers, students, and school document analysis. The study was conducted at Junior High School 12 Surabaya, located on Jl. Ngagel Kebonsari, Wonokromo District, Surabaya City. **Results:** The research results show Implementation of religious values at Junior High School 12 Surabaya has shown positive results, even though there are still some obstacles. Programs such as KKS and Jum'at Taqwa, as well as the habituation and role model approach, have succeeded in strengthening students' religious character. **Novelty:** What is new in this study is the focus on implementation of religious values at Junior High School 12 Surabaya has succeeded in creating a religious and conducive educational environment, which supports the development of students' attitudes, behavior and personality in accordance with religious values.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is a systematic process designed to create a learning environment that supports the optimal development of students' potential. Ki Hajar Dewantara, an Indonesian education figure, emphasized that education aims to liberate humans in various aspects, both physically, mentally, and spiritually (Ferary, 2021). In the modern context, education is not only a medium for transferring knowledge but also a means of character formation that serves as provisions for the younger generation to adapt and contribute to the global community (Nayla et al., 2024). Character education is one of the main focuses in the education system in Indonesia. In the context of a diverse country like Indonesia, a young generation is needed that has a strong character and is based on religious values and nationalism. Permendikbud No. 20 of 2018 emphasizes the importance of implementing Pancasila values in learning. These values include religiosity, tolerance, discipline, creativity, independence, democracy, and good communication skills.

The rapid development of technology in the era of Industrial Revolution 4.0 is making religious character education increasingly important. Furthermore, the increasing cases of violence among adolescents, the use of inappropriate language, decreasing respect for parents and teachers, low individual and group responsibility, and the development of a culture of dishonesty and hatred between people are indications of the need to strengthen character education (Aryani & Yulianti, 2023) (Sher & Mashkoor, 2024). Religious character education offers a solution by forming individuals who have moral integrity, emotional intelligence, and the ability to use technology wisely (Boiliu,

2025). This situation places character education as a priority in the national education system. Character education is one of the important pillars in forming individuals with strong personalities. According to Lickona (2009), character education must include moral knowledge, moral feelings, and moral behavior. These three elements complement each other and become the basis for forming individuals with good morals. In line with this, the goal of Indonesian national education, as regulated in Law No. 20 of 2003, is to produce people who are not only academically intelligent but also have noble character, are creative, and responsible. Character education aims to create students who are not only academically superior but also have a religious attitude and a sense of responsibility towards the nation and state (Ismail, 2016).

In a school-based context, educational institutions not only function as a place to transfer knowledge, but also as a place to form student character based on moral and cultural values (Iksal et al., 2024). Schools are responsible for producing superior generations, not only in terms of knowledge and technology, but also in terms of personality and ethics. This aligns with the concept of holistic education, which emphasizes the importance of balance between academics and character (Lickona, 2009). However, the reality in the field shows challenges in implementing character education. Ramadhani (2021) noted that education that focuses too heavily on academic achievement often sacrifices aspects of character. This condition demands a more comprehensive integration of character values in the education system.

Religious character education is one approach that is considered effective in responding to this challenge. Religious character education aims to instill moral values based on religious teachings, including tolerance, honesty, and responsibility (Syarnubi Syarnubi et al., 2021). This approach is relevant to the diversity of Indonesian society, where religious values can strengthen social solidarity and maintain harmony amidst differences. This kind of education is also an important foundation in building a nation with integrity (Syakroni et al., 2024). However, this implementation is not without challenges, because there's a different orientation between religious and nationalist character education. Religious character education aims to teach students to live according to their religion, while nationalist character education focuses on instilling a sense of love for the homeland and a spirit of unity (B. D. Saputra et al., 2023; Siswantara & Supriyadi, 2024). Religious character education is an important investment to create a harmonious, moral, and highly competitive society (Firdaus & Suwendi, 2025). By integrating religious values into the education system, Indonesia is expected to be able to produce a young generation that is not only academically intelligent but also has a strong character

The implementation of this education system in Indonesia still faces various obstacles, especially in the school-based programs. This is due to the lack of training for teachers, limited resources, and minimal support from families and communities (Jhon et al., 2021). For this reason, synergy is necessary between various parties to enable character education to run more effectively. The combination of roles from the family, school, and community is very important to ensure that character education runs optimally (Cholifah, 2024). Activities such as praying together, involvement in socio-religious activities, and discussing moral values have a significant impact on students'

attitudes and behavior (Munif, 2025; Satiadi, et al., 2024). This finding supports Lickona's theory, which emphasizes that character education must provide space for students to apply these values in everyday life.

Research conducted by Suryadi, R, and Kusnadi, A (2021), entitled "*Evaluasi Pelaksanaan Program Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter (PPK) di Sekolah Berbasis Keagamaan,*" shows that the integration of these values can improve student discipline by up to 78%. The study focused on the curriculum of religious-based schools that directly integrate religious values into formal learning. Therefore, this study was conducted to determine how religious character education is implemented in schools with a formal curriculum. Another research conducted by Hayati, N. R. (2024), entitled "*Peningkatan Karakter Religius Siswa Melalui Kegiatan Pagi Religius di SMKN 3 Purworejo*", focuses only on strengthening students' religious character through morning activities such as communal prayer, recitation, and dhikr before lessons begin. In contrast, the present study seeks to provide a broader analysis by examining all religious activities, the challenges encountered, and the involvement of various parties in their implementation

The focus of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of the school's religious character education program and its impact on students' attitudes and behaviors, both in school and in daily life. This research also highlights challenges such as limited facilities, suboptimal teaching methods, and low family and community involvement. This study emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach in building a young generation that is not only academically superior but also has strong character.

## RESEARCH METHOD

Research method is an approach, ways, and techniques used by researchers to conduct a study, which involves collecting and analyzing data for specific purposes. The location of the study was Junior High School 12 Surabaya. This school was chosen because it has a character education program that is relevant to the study's focus, particularly in its application of religious values. A supportive school environment, such as facilities and an active community, are important factors in the success of the study (Nainggolan, 2024).

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to understand the phenomenon. This approach was chosen because it can describe the real situation in depth, including social dynamics, culture, and interactions between individuals within the school environment (Lim, 2025). The qualitative descriptive method provides researchers with a structured and systematic framework for presenting research results, making them easier to understand and more relevant to the study objectives. This method was chosen because it allows a broader exploration of the overall implementation of the religious education program in its existing practice and its impact on students' behavior.

This study utilizes two types of data sources, namely primary and secondary. Primary data sources come from direct interviews with the vice principal for curriculum, religious teachers, and students. Meanwhile, secondary data are obtained from official school documents, scientific articles, reference books, and other relevant sources. Secondary data are used to enrich and complement the interview results, also provide a broader perspective on the research findings (Pederson et al., 2020). This study uses data collection techniques in the form of in-depth interviews (in-depth interview). The

interview is conducted directly with a face-to-face meeting between the researcher and the informant, using questions that have been prepared in advance to maintain the focus of the discussion. In addition, data were also collected through direct observation at school. This observation was carried out to obtain a real picture without intervention, ensuring authentic and accurate data. Documentation was also used to support the validity of the findings make the research results more reliable (Ahmed, 2024).

The researcher carried out the data processing process through reduction to filter relevant information. The reduced data was then categorized based on main themes such as the role of teachers, student responses, and challenges faced by the school. Data presentation is done in the form of descriptive narratives and thematic tables. Descriptive narratives are used to explain the results of interviews and observations in detail, while thematic tables help organize information concisely and in a structured manner. This data presentation is designed so that readers can easily understand the research findings.

Conclusions are drawn through data triangulation, which is comparing the results of various data collection techniques to ensure consistency and validity of the findings (Donkoh & Mensah, 2023). Drawing conclusions involves in-depth analysis to identify patterns or relationships between research findings. This research applies an inductive analysis approach, as conclusions are derived from specific data collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, which are then categorized into themes to understand the implementation of religious character education. To increase the validity of the findings, researchers use triangulation of sources and methods. The data obtained are also tested through discussions with experts and sources to ensure the relevance and accuracy of the interpretation.

The results of this study are expected to provide significant contributions in the development of religious character education in junior high schools, especially in facing the challenges of implementation in the modern era. With a systematic and valid approach, this study provides a comprehensive picture of the importance of religious character education in forming a young generation with noble and responsible morals.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

Implementation of religious values at Junior High School 12 Surabaya has yielded significantly positive outcomes in shaping students' character, although several technical and non-technical challenges remain. Programs such as *Kajian Keislaman Siswa* (Islamic Studies for Students) and *Jum'at Taqwa* (Friday Spiritual Reflection) have become essential platforms for instilling and cultivating religious values through regular activities that are not only ceremonial in nature but also educational and reflective. Furthermore, the use of habituation strategies and role modeling by teachers and school staff plays a vital role in reinforcing the internalization of religious values in students' daily behaviour (Lestari, 2023).

The active involvement of all school stakeholders—including teachers, homeroom advisors, parents, the school principal, and the surrounding community—has contributed to a holistic and continuous process of character formation. Although certain obstacles such as inconsistent program implementation, diverse religious backgrounds

among students, and limited supporting facilities still exist, these challenges can be gradually addressed through effective collaboration between the school and students' families.

Therefore, the implementation of religious values at Junior High School 12 Surabaya has not only succeeded in creating a spiritually oriented school environment but has also fostered a meaningful educational atmosphere that supports the comprehensive development of student character. This environment enables students to understand religious values not only on a cognitive level but also to practice them in their daily lives—manifested in attitudes of tolerance, honesty, responsibility, and high social empathy (Cahyanto et al., 2024).

The following is an explanation of the assessment scale given: 1.) Very Good (81-100%): Religious programs are not only implemented but also evaluated periodically. All components of the school, including students, teachers, and parents, actively participate in activities. The impact is seen in the significant improvement of students' morals, spirituality, and behavior; 2.) Good (61-80%): Implementation is going well but some indicators, such as student participation or discipline in worship, need attention. Some programs such as habituation and role models have been implemented but are not yet optimal; 3.) Sufficient (41-60%): Religious activities exist, but are less integrated with other school activities. Student participation remains limited and often formal, lacking deep internalization of values; 4.) Poor (1-40%): Religious activities are only carried out as a formality without strategy or evaluation. Problems such as lack of student awareness and minimal support from the school or parents are the main obstacles.

**Table 1.** Assessment Scale for Measuring the Success of Implementing Religious Values Students at Junior High School 12 Surabaya

No	Activity Name	Score	Category	Description
1	Book Study Holy (KKS) and Friday Taqwa	85%	Very Good	Success this supported by consistency of program implementation involving teachers as mentors and students as active implementers
2	Habituation Prayer and Worship	80%	Good	Teachers play an active role in leading prayers, giving religious advice, and ensuring that students follow along properly
3	Exemplary teachers and staff	88%	Very Good	Teachers and school staff are real role models for students in carrying out worship, being honest, and showing not quite enough answer. Exemplary a conducive and harmonious learning environment
4	Collaboration with people old	90%	Very Good	Cooperation between schools and parents includes supervision of student worship at home, providing support in

No	Activity Name	Score	Category	Description
5	Giving educational sanctions	78%	Good	religious activities, and communication. development This collaboration strengthens the value routine character related study Students who violate religious norms, such as disturbing others while praying or failing to attend congregational prayers, are given sanctions in the form of educational tasks, as well as instilling values of responsibility, including memorizing prayers or helping to clean the prayer room.
6	Integration religious values in learning	75%	Good	Teachers relate subject matter to religious values to increase students' understanding of the importance of practicing religious teachings in everyday life

## Discussion

Religious values formed in the school environment can be actualized in two ways, namely explicitly and implicitly (Maf'udah & Marno, 2022). Explicitly actualization includes real actions such as speaking or behaving according to religious values in everyday life. For example, students openly practice worship or behave honestly as part of their religious values. Meanwhile, implicitly actualization is carried out through certain activities that indirectly direct students to internalize religious values. This actualization serves as the foundation for shaping religious attitudes and behaviors in students. According to Jakandar et al. (2025), integration religious values in character education help shape students into not only high achievers but also individuals with strong character, grounded in faith, discipline, social awareness, and other positive values.

The formation of religious culture in schools is carried out through two main patterns, namely prescriptive and learning process (Hefniy & Ardiyansyah, 2024). The prescriptive pattern refers to the formation of religious culture through direction or scenarios from external parties, such as teachers or the school. In this pattern, students are expected to emulate, imitate, and comply with the religious culture that has been designed, for example by complying with the congregational prayer schedule that has been determined. Meanwhile, the learning process emphasizes internalizing values through direct experience, such as participation in religious activities that are carefully planned and structured. This pattern aims to encourage students develop understanding and commitment to religious values from within.

In developing religious character in students, several activities can be implemented as follows. First, creating a religious atmosphere in schools is a crucial initial step in

instilling religious values in students. A conducive environment helps students recognize and internalize religious values in their daily lives (Khoiriyah & Salim, 2024). This effort can be done by creating a school atmosphere that reflects religious values, for example through religious decoration, providing worship facilities, and integrating religious values into routine school activities (Safitri, 2018). Examples of Implementation: Facilities: Providing a mosque or prayer room that is comfortable for students and teachers to worship; Daily Activities: Praying together every morning before lessons start and actively involving students in worship activities such as congregational prayers; Collaboration: Holding activities with parents and the community, such as regular religious studies or charity bazaars based on religious values. The Importance of a Religious Atmosphere: a religious atmosphere that is consistently built in schools can increase students' spiritual sensitivity, form a culture of mutual respect, and create harmony in social relations. A study by also revealed that a religious environment can increase students' sense of solidarity, thus playing an important role in building a religious personality

Second, internalization of religious values is carried out to ensure that students not only understand religious values in theory, but also apply them in everyday life (Rohmah, 2023). This process includes formal learning in class, religious activities, and extracurricular activities designed to strengthen students' understanding of values such as faith, worship, morals, and responsibility. Examples of Implementation: a. Formal Learning: Islamic Religious Education teachers provide lessons on the importance of prayer, fasting, and noble moral values such as honesty and responsibility; b. Extracurricular Activities: Holding discussion groups on holy books or religious-based social activities such as fundraising for the underprivileged; c. Lectures and Workshops: Presenting religious figures to give lectures on religious values in everyday life.

Third, students' religious attitudes and behaviors are formed through the process of education and habituation in daily activities (Saffana, 2024). All elements of the school, including teachers, staff, and parents, play an important role in providing direction and support for students to live a life that reflects religious values. Examples of Implementation: a. Adab Learning: Teachers provide lessons on manners and etiquette to students, both in how to speak and behave towards others; b. Modeling Activities: Teachers demonstrate disciplined and responsible behavior, for example by arriving on time and performing worship consistently; c. Awards and Reinforcement: Giving awards to students who demonstrate religious attitudes such as telling the truth, helping friends, or performing worship diligently. Lickona (2009) emphasized that the formation of attitudes through role models accelerates the internalization of values compared to just verbal teaching. This shows the result of exemplary teachers and staff activities, which reach 88%, indicating that role models play an important role in enhancing students' character values.

Fourth, role modeling is one of the most effective methods in forming religious character. Students tend to imitate what they observe from the adults around them, including teachers and school staff (Yusnita et al., 2023). By providing consistent examples, teachers can shape students' religious behavior naturally and sustainably. Examples of Implementation: a. Role Modeling in Worship: Teachers show sincerity in carrying out worship, such as always attending congregational prayer activities; b. Positive Behavior: Teachers demonstrate polite, honest, and responsible attitudes that can then be followed by students; c. Direct Involvement: The principal or vice principal

actively participates in religious activities, such as leading prayers or giving lectures. Effectiveness of Role Modeling: Role models from authority figures in schools can increase students' religious behavior. According to Bandura's Social Learning Theory, individuals learn effectively through the processes of observing, modeling, and imitating the behaviors of others. Teachers who consistently align their actions with what they teach serve as role models, helping to enhance students' discipline, ethical behavior, and engagement in learning (Nurhakim, 2023).

Fifth, habituation is the process of repeating positive behavior until it becomes a habit that is embedded in students. Through habituation, religious values can be internalized more easily and effectively. Examples of Implementation: a. Daily Routine: Getting students used to reading prayers together every morning, performing congregational prayers, and reading holy books at certain times; b. Religious Day: Holding a special day where all students and staff wear clothes that reflect religious values and participate in spiritual activities; c. Joint Commitment: Involving the entire school community to support habituation, for example by creating rules based on religious values. Effectiveness of Habituation: habituation that is carried out consistently can create a strong religious culture in schools.

Religious character education at Junior High School 12 Surabaya is carried out through various religious activities that have become the school's flagship programs. One of these programs is the Holy Book Study which is held before learning on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. This program aims to familiarize students with reading and understanding the Qur'an, both independently and with teacher guidance. In this activity, student representatives from several classes are assigned to lead the reading of the Qur'an, while other students follow in their respective classes. This activity reached 85% score, indicate that there is significant improvement of students' morals, spirituality, and behavior. The emphasis in this activity is on the habituation of religious values, so that students not only understand religious teachings but also practice them in their daily lives. According to Achada et al., (2022), the habituation of reading holy books in schools can increase students' piety.

In addition to reading the Qur'an, Holy Book Study activities also give students responsibility to lead the activities in turns. This aims to train students' confidence in speaking in public and becoming leaders. This direct involvement helps students develop an attitude of responsibility and courage that is in line with religious values. A study by B. C. Saputra (2017) stated that giving students responsibility in religious activities can strengthen their self-confidence by 0.3%, which supports their active participation and subsequently enhances their sense of leadership.

The Friday Taqwa Program is another activity that is also part of religious character education at Junior High School 12 Surabaya. This activity is carried out every Friday morning before learning begins, with various agendas, such as istighosah, getting used to praying dhuhā, and praying dhuhur in congregation. This activity not only involves students but also teachers, thus providing a real example of exemplary behavior for students. According to Khadavi (2023), religious activities that involve the entire school community have a significant impact on the formation of a religious culture in the educational environment. One form of habituation implemented through the Friday Taqwa program is the implementation of Dhuhā and Dhuhur prayers in congregation regularly. This habituation is designed so that students not only know the obligation of worship but also make it a habit in their daily lives. A study by Hidayah et al. (2021)

found that implementing congregational worship regularly in schools can increase students' religious awareness especially in terms of discipline and responsibility.

Through religious activities such as Holy Book Study and Jum'at Taqwa, teachers at Junior High School 12 Surabaya play an active role in shaping the students' religious character. Teachers not only guide but also provide examples of religious behavior, such as discipline in performing worship and showing politeness in daily interactions. Siregar (2021) noted that the role model of teachers and school staff is one of the main factors in forming students' religious character. In addition, religious values are also applied in the daily learning process. Before starting learning, students are invited to pray together led by one of the students in turn. This habit not only teaches religious values but also trains students to develop the courage to speak in public. According to Swastini et al. (2025) the habit of praying before studying can help students develop a sense of gratitude, responsibility, and promotes religious character.

Religious character education implemented at Junior High School 12 Surabaya also combines nationalistic values in its activities. Before learning begins, students sing the song Indonesia Raya together. This activity aims to instill a sense of love for the homeland while fostering national values that are harmonious with religious values. A study by Saputro et al. (2021) states that the integration of religious and nationalistic values in education can create a generation that is not only religious but also patriotic. With various religious programs designed in a structured manner, Junior High School 12 Surabaya has succeeded in creating an educational environment that supports the formation of students' religious character. Habituation, role models, and internalization of religious values that are carried out consistently have proven effective in increasing students' religious awareness.

The implementation of religious values at Junior High School 12 Surabaya begins with a learning process that is integrated with character education-based teaching modules. Based on the result, the integration of religious values in learning reached 75%, which indicates that the implementation is going well. This teaching module is designed to cover various character values, including religious values, so that they are not only symbols but also practiced in every meeting. These religious values are adjusted to the subjects being taught. For example, in Mathematics or Science lessons, teachers insert teachings about honesty and responsibility to students when doing assignments or exams. This finding aligns with research conducted by Sauri et al. (2022), which demonstrates that integrating religious values into learning can increase students' patience by up to 75% and their moral values by 94%.

In addition, learning in the classroom begins with a joint prayer led by one of the students in turn, and ends with the words hamdalah and greetings. This activity aims to accustom students to get closer to Allah in every activity. According to Swastini et al. (2025), the habit of praying before and after learning not only strengthens religious values but also creates a more harmonious and conducive learning atmosphere. Teachers also use moments. This moment is to provide religious advice, such as reminding students that every action is watched by God, so that they are encouraged to be honest and responsible.

Other leading programs that support the implementation of religious values are the Holy Book Study and Friday Taqwa. Carried out before learning on certain days with the aim of getting students used to reading and understanding the Qur'an. This activity also provides an opportunity for students to lead the reading of the Qur'an, train self-

confidence, and build leadership character. This program is in line with Achadah et al. (2022), which found that regular reading of holy books can increase students' spirituality. Friday Taqwa, which is held every morning before learning, involves various religious activities such as istighosah, the habit of praying dhuha, and praying dhuhur in congregation. This activity not only strengthens religious values but also strengthens the relationship between students, teachers, and school staff. Naim et al. (2022) noted that various religious activities carried out routinely in schools play important part to build religious culture.

However, the implementation of religious values at Junior High School 12 Surabaya is not free from various challenge. One of the challenge is the lack of understanding of some students about the importance of worship and prayer. Some students still talk to themselves during group prayers, disturb their friends, or even do not participate in congregational prayer activities. To overcome these obstacles, teachers at Junior High School 12 Surabaya took firm but still educational steps. Students who talked to themselves during group prayers or disturbed their friends were reminded directly by the teacher. If this behavior continued, the student was given educational sanctions, such as memorizing prayers or helping to clean the prayer room. According to Asmira et al. (2023), educational punishment is effective in changing students because they begin to reflect on their actions and accept consequences as part of the learning process. Based on the result, the implementation of giving educational sanctions activities reached 78%, indicating that this system of discipline is working effectively. Futhermore, this finding is aldo connected to Bandura's theory, which emphasizes that motivation to perform learned behavior is shaped by reinforcement and punishment.

In addition to imposing sanctions, the school also works with parents to guide students at home. This collaboration is important so that the formation of students' religious character does not only occur at school but also continues in the family environment (Febriani et al., 2022). Parents are invited to monitor and guide their children in carrying out worship and other religious activities at home. Jacob (2025) noted that parental involvement in religious character education enhances academic and play key role in the spiritual and moral development of students.

One of the challenges faced by schools is differences in students' understanding of religious values. This can happed because some students, especially those from families with less strong religious backgrounds, often find it difficult to understand the importance of worship and religious values in everyday life. As a result, they tend to be less motivated to participate in religious activities and feel that religious activities are too binding or limit their freedom. This creates a gap in the implementation of character education programs in schools. To overcome this situation, teachers should look for creative and persuasive ways so that students not only participate, but also realize the importance of these activities for their lives. In this way, the activeness of students can be increased, allowing them to engage more significantly in religious character education. Teacher can designing interactive activities such as discussions, reflections, and real-life practice that motivate students.

Another challenge is the limited time to carry out religious programs amidst a busy study schedule. The stiation happed because schools must continue to meet academic curriculum targets while implementing character programs. To oevrcone scholl must have a good time management, to the balance between academic education and character can be disrupted, resulting in one aspect being less than optimal.

Parental involvement is also an important factor which is still an obstacle. Even though schools offer many religious programs, if they are not supported at home by parents, students tend to struggle to apply these values consistently (Zulela et al., 2022). Some parents even hand over the responsibility for religious character education entirely to the school, without providing sufficient support or supervision at home. However, there are ways to improve parental involvement by positioning parents as partners, not merely passive audiences but also active collaborators. This can be achieved through regular meetings where parents, teachers, and students discuss both the progress and the challenges students face in developing their religious character. Improving parental involvement plays a key role in supporting the moral development of students (Jacob, 2025).

Religious character education has a positive impact in the form of increasing students' spiritual awareness (Rahmawati et al., 2022). By participating in programs such as group prayer, congregational prayer, and Bible study, students come to understand religious values better. This awareness is not only reflected in worship, but also in everyday attitudes such as honesty, discipline and responsibility. In the long term, these values shape students into principled and moral individuals.

Religious character education also helps create more harmonious relationships in the school environment (Irbathy et al., 2025). Activities such as group prayer or congregational prayers strengthen relationships between students, teachers and school staff. A religious environment makes the learning atmosphere more comfortable and conducive. Research even shows that students who are active in religious activities have a stronger sense of community than those who are not involved (Dunbar, 2021).

Negative impacts may arise if religious character education is not carried out inclusively (Gamaleal, 2024). For example, students who have different religious views may feel uncomfortable or even isolated. This can give rise to a feeling of injustice and create distance between students, which is contrary to the main aim of religious character education itself. Religious activities are considered too excessive or monotonous, which can make students feel burdened. Those who do not understand the importance of religious values may feel compelled to participate in these activities. In the long term, this feeling can make students lose interest in religious activities and view them as less relevant in their lives.

## CONCLUSION

**Fundamentals finding:** The fundamental finding of this study indicates that the implementation of religious values at Junior High School 12 Surabaya has contributed significantly to the development of students' religious character. This has been achieved primarily through school-based programs such as *Kajian Keislaman Siswa* (KKS) and *Jum'at Taqwa*, which are designed not merely as routines but as reflective and participatory activities. These initiatives, though faced with some implementation challenges, have laid a strong foundation for character building in a religious context.

**Implications:** In the implementation of religious character education, schools play a vital role in fostering religious values and moral development when supported by structured programs and consistent adult modeling. Religious character education is most effective when it is embedded into school culture and supported by all stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and the broader school community. The implementation of religious

character education is supported by providing facilities, daily activities, and collaboration with parents and the community. Therefore, educational institutions should consider integrating religious value programs into both the formal and informal curricula to foster holistic student development and ensure that moral and spiritual growth becomes an integral part of students' everyday school experiences. **Limitations:** While this study provides key insights into religious character education, the analysis is based on a single case study, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other school institutions. Additionally, the research primarily utilized qualitative data, which, while rich in context, may not capture broader trends or quantifiable outcomes across larger populations. The study also encountered constraints related to time and access to complete stakeholder perspectives, particularly from parents and external religious figures. As a result, the conclusions drawn from the study may only represent a partial picture of the actual implementation and lean more heavily on the perspectives of teachers and students. **Future Research:** This research is expected to be a source of additional research aimed at examining the implementation of religious character education in a broader range of schools, specifically comparisons between public and private institutions, schools in urban and rural settings, as well as multi-religion school. A mixed-methods approach could be employed to combine the depth of qualitative insights with the generalizability of quantitative data to measure the long-term impacts of religious character education.

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