

## **MORAL EDUCATION STRATEGIES THROUGH THE EXEMPLARY METHOD OF EDUCATORS: EFFORTS TO ENHANCE STUDENTS RELIGIOSITY, DISCIPLINE, AND HONESTY**

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### **Abstract**

The degradation of students moral values has become a serious challenge in education. Teachers play a crucial role in instilling moral values through real examples rather than mere instruction. Therefore, this study aims to describe strategies for developing students moral character through the exemplary method of educators, particularly in aspects of religiosity, discipline, and honesty. This research employed a qualitative approach with a library study design and was analyzed descriptively. The findings reveal three main strategies for moral development through educators exemplary method: (1) educators example in religiosity, including prayer routines, Qur'an recitation, congregational duha and dhuhr prayers, and short sermons; (2) educators example in discipline, including punctuality, maintaining a conducive learning atmosphere, and fulfilling teacher duty schedules; and (3) educators example in honesty, including honesty canteen programs, teachers courage to admit mistakes, and honesty in daily behavior. Teachers exemplary behavior proved effective in internalizing moral values. Students are more likely to imitate real actions, which continuously foster religious, disciplined, and honest character.

**Keywords:** morals education; teachers exemplary behavior; religiosity; discipline; honesty

### **INTRODUCTION**

Moral education is a system of education that helps individuals gain the ability to manage and guide their lives in the right way. Through good moral education, students are encouraged to control themselves in every action, so they can distinguish between what should be done and what should be avoided. Therefore, strong moral education becomes an important foundation for students to live their lives according to good values and stay away from bad or inappropriate behavior (Siti Hawa, 2025). The role of teachers is very important in developing students moral character. This effort not only requires learning materials but also the right method to make moral values truly take root. One effective method is role modeling, where teachers become real examples through their attitudes, behavior, and speech. Through this example, students are expected to be encouraged to follow positive actions and eventually develop better moral character (Sutrani et al., 2022).

The exemplary method in Islamic education is a method in which the teacher gives good examples to students based on Islamic teachings (Ritonga et al., 2024). The exemplary method is expected to help teachers become figures who show real examples to students in building better character. Through the examples shown by the teacher,

students not only understand moral values in theory but are also encouraged to practice them in their daily lives. This method can be seen in the teachers everyday behavior, such as dressing neatly and politely, speaking kindly, and showing a good personality. These simple attitudes and actions have a big influence on students character development. With strong religious guidance and consistent role modeling, students can grow into honest individuals with noble character who are able to apply good values in their lives (Hakim et al., 2024).

Education is not only focused on intellectual achievement but also has an important responsibility to shape students character and morals (Murad & Rizki, 2023). In this context, moral values become the main foundation that determines a children personal quality and the direction of their life. However, the development of the modern era marked by globalization, technological progress, and the rapid flow of information has significantly influenced the way young people think and behave (Ani Nuraeni et al., 2023). Phenomena such as declining politeness, reduced respect for teachers and parents, and the rise of inappropriate behavior in schools are clear signs of a decline in children's moral quality. This condition is often called moral degradation, which refers to a worrying moral decline that can harm the future of the younger generation (Aisyah & Fitriatin, 2025). Therefore, efforts to provide moral education that is systematic, continuous, and based on teachers role modeling are becoming increasingly important. In guiding students moral development, the role of the teacher is highly needed not only to teach academic material but also to guide and nurture students so they can behave well in their daily interactions. This is because teachers are seen as the best examples by children. Their manners, actions, and behavior whether they realize it or not will be imitated by their students, helping shape them into individuals with good morals.

Research on moral education and teachers role modeling has been carried out before. One relevant study is titled *"Implementation of the Exemplary Method in Moral Education at SMP Muhammadiyah Boarding School Tarakan."* The results show that the exemplary method used in moral learning has a positive impact on students behavior, especially in speaking politely and respecting others. In this study, teachers act as the main role models by demonstrating proper manners in speech according to Islamic teachings (Muadzin & Romelah, 2025). Another study titled *"Teachers Exemplary Behavior in Shaping Islamic Character in Raudhatul Athfal"* also supports this topic. The results show that teachers role modeling includes obedience to Allah commands, such as performing worship, memorizing short surahs, and learning the sayings of the Prophet. Teachers also model Islamic character in daily life by speaking honestly, being polite, and showing good manners. In relation to others, they show respect and help those in need. In caring for the environment, they set examples by throwing trash in the proper place, joining class duties, and maintaining cleanliness (Sufiani, 2024).

This study has its own novelty compared to previous research. In this study, the scope is more systematic. It does not only discuss teachers role modeling in general, but divides it into three main strategic aspects: religiosity, discipline, and honesty. This study also highlights practical programs such as the honesty canteen as a medium for internalizing moral values, which were not explained in earlier studies.

Based on the background presented above, this study is considered important to identify the various forms of teachers role modeling in shaping students moral character. The research focuses on analyzing the importance of teacher role modeling and its implementation in three main aspects: religiosity, discipline, and honesty. This study uses a library research method with a descriptive-analysis approach, allowing the researcher to review relevant theories and previous studies that support the discussion.

Through the exemplary method, it is expected that students weak moral behavior can be improved and developed into better conduct. Furthermore, teachers role modeling is expected to serve as an effective strategy in forming students moral character so that it can be consistently applied in their daily lives.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative method with data collected from various literature sources, then analyzed using a descriptive analysis approach. The qualitative method is used because this research focuses on understanding the meanings, concepts, and values within a phenomenon, rather than numbers or statistical data (Sakinah & Putri, 2025). In the context of research on moral education and teachers role modeling, this approach is used to explore in depth the importance of teacher role modeling and how it can shape students moral character.

The data in this study were collected through library research. The process began by searching for and reviewing various written sources such as books, national and international journals, theses, dissertations, scientific articles, and academic digital platforms (such as Google Scholar, Garuda, Sinta, and DOAJ). After that, the collected sources were grouped according to the research focus and objectives to make the analysis process easier (Rohmah, 2025). The various perspectives found in the literature were then analyzed to enrich the discussion and strengthen the conclusions of the study.

This study was designed in a systematic way so that each step is well-guided and supports the achievement of the research goals. The descriptive analysis used in this study consists of five main stages 1) collecting data from relevant sources, 2) reducing the data by selecting and sorting important information, 3) classifying and presenting the data by organizing it in a clear and structured way, 4) analyzing and interpreting the data to understand its meaning and connections, and 5) drawing conclusions by summarizing the final results of the study (Salsabila Devira et al., 2025).

## **FINDINGS**

### **The Importance of Teachers Role Modeling in Shaping Students Moral Character**

Building students moral character through teachers role modeling is very important to apply in schools, both in formal and non formal activities. Teachers examples are needed as a real form of the moral lessons they have taught in the classroom. In addition, teachers role modeling also motivates students to practice the good behaviors shown by their teachers. According to Sinta Nurhilali and colleagues, a teachers personality such as their behavior and exemplary lifestyle plays a very important role in shaping students character. This shows that a teachers task is not only to teach, but also to become a real model for students.

The first importance of teachers role modeling in shaping students moral character is to improve noble character. As time goes on, the younger generation faces serious challenges in the form of moral decline. In this situation, the teachers example in practicing and understanding noble moral values plays a key role in giving a positive influence on students. Through the real examples shown by the teacher, students are encouraged to imitate them, which helps shape good and commendable behavior that fits the norms of society. According to Rusli, Muhammad Tang, and Sakkirang Mappatunru, the teachers role as a model greatly determines the formation of students morals. A teachers consistency in performing prayer on time in front of students becomes a clear and simple example for them to follow. Therefore, teachers are not

only required to have knowledge of religion but also to show good examples through their daily religious practices (S et al., 2024). According to A. Kamaludin, teachers role modeling in shaping students moral character is shown through three main aspects. The first is building discipline, such as coming to school on time and consistently performing prayer in congregation. The second is religious habituation, which includes praying Dhuhr and Asr in congregation, doing voluntary fasting, praying before and after lessons, and regularly reading the Qur'an. The third is instilling obedience, which is reflected in being committed to worshipping Allah by not delaying prayer, carrying out both voluntary and obligatory fasting, and getting used to giving charity every Friday (Kamaludin, 2020).

The second importance of teachers role modeling in shaping students moral character is to improve students discipline. Carrying out tasks and responsibilities requires a disciplined attitude. The same applies to behavior and daily duties. Discipline is needed so that all activities can be done on time, correctly, and in accordance with the rules. In this case, the teachers role is very important in showing examples of discipline through daily activities, so students can develop discipline in their own routines. Building students discipline through teachers role modeling can be done in several ways, such as teaching, guiding, and giving examples of coming and leaving school on time, following the agreed rules, speaking politely and correctly, creating classroom rules, and monitoring students discipline at home through activity records or daily reports (Azhar & Subando, 2025). According to Nurul Prihatini, Rusi Rusmiati Aliyyah, and Muhammad Ichsan, teachers are required to be role models in order to build students discipline. This means teachers must follow school rules consistently. The examples include coming to school on time, wearing neat and proper uniforms, and getting used to throwing trash in the right place. These examples show that teachers do not only give instructions but also practice discipline through real actions that students can follow (Prihatini et al., 2024). The development of discipline from an early age is important so that students can grow into future generations who have good morals and behavior. With strong discipline, they can also become human resources with good character.

The third reason why teachers role as a model is important is to help improve students manners. Good manners taught at school will strongly influence students daily lives. When students are used to being polite at school, they will naturally show good behavior wherever they go. Because of that, students need guidance from their teachers to build and practice good manners through real examples. This helps them learn how to respect and appreciate older people, friends, and even those younger than them. Teachers show these values through their own attitudes, such as being sincere, patient, honest, and polite. Sincerity appears in their care without expecting anything in return. Patience is shown in how they deal with students different personalities. Honesty is seen in speaking truthfully and not lying. Politeness is shown through respectful behavior in daily interactions. With these examples, a positive and respectful relationship can grow between teachers and students (Prihatini et al., 2024). According to Rosmiana Abdul Ghani, Ibn Khaldun believed that teachers should show kindness and gentle behavior toward their students. He suggested that teaching should be done with soft attitudes and understanding, not with harsh actions. Ibn Khaldun also explained that students are easily influenced by the examples shown by their teachers. They learn more from the good values they see in their teachers than from advice, lessons, or commands given to them. (Ghani, 2022).

## **Strategies for Building Students Character Through Teachers Role Modeling Improving Students Character Through Teachers Role Modeling in the Aspect of Religiosity**

Religiosity is an attitude that reflects how a person carries out their duties and responsibilities toward their religion. It also teaches how to respect differences in religion and how to live peacefully and in harmony with others who have different beliefs. As a religious person, a teacher should guide students on how to fulfill their religious obligations and how to respect people of different faiths. With the religious knowledge given by the teacher, students are expected to practice these values in their daily lives according to the teachings of their own religion.

Students religious character can be developed through obedience, sincerity, honesty, discipline, tolerance, politeness, helpfulness, and responsibility. Teachers strengthen students religious character by giving real examples through daily school activities, such as the 5S habits (greeting, smiling, saying hello, being polite), praying before and after lessons, performing Duha prayer in congregation, reading the Qur'an, practicing and memorizing short surahs, doing Dhuhr prayer in congregation, joining istighosah, and celebrating Islamic holy days (Mudzakkir & Khurniawati Shinta, 2024). According to Putri Alfia Wardatun and M. Jadid Khadavi, strengthening students religious values can be carried out through various programs, such as praying in congregation, religious studies, and getting students used to practicing good morals in their daily lives. Teachers and school staff play an important role in guiding students and providing real examples. The success of these efforts also depends on a supportive school environment and family involvement. Therefore, the combination of religious education, teacher role modeling, and environmental support becomes a key factor in strengthening students religious values and helping them grow in a holistic way (Alfia Wardatun & Jadid Khadavi, 2025).

Improving students morals through the teachers role model in the aspect of religiosity can be seen first in the routine of prayer and reading the Qur'an. Building good character in students needs to be done continuously. Praying and reading the Qur'an should be carried out regularly every day before the learning process begins. Teachers guide students in doing these routines so they can develop the habit of praying and reading the Qur'an properly. This activity is done together before class starts, with the aim of helping students read the Qur'an correctly, understand its meaning, and apply its teachings in their daily lives (Alimin, 2020). According to a study by Noor Hikmah, the routine prayer program has a positive influence on building students religious character. The school runs a program where teachers and students pray together in the classroom. The activities start when they enter the class, followed by reading the Qur'an, saying prayers, and applying these practices under the guidance of the subject teacher (Hikmah, 2022). Similarly, according to Pipin Danu Marti, Meilisa Sajdah, and H. Harmono, there is a significant positive effect between the habit of reading the Qur'an and students character. Their study shows that students who regularly read the Qur'an tend to have better behavior compared to those who rarely or never read it. This means that the habit of reading the Qur'an is closely connected to the development of good morals in students (Danu Marti et al., 2024).

Improving students character through the teachers example in the aspect of religiosity can also be seen in the practice of Dhuha prayer, Dhuhr prayer in congregation, and short religious talks. The Dhuha and Dhuhr prayers in congregation aim to strengthen students discipline in worship and build a sense of togetherness and unity among Muslims. After the Dhuhr prayer, students are encouraged to give a short talk to train them to express their thoughts about Islamic values and norms that guide

their daily behavior (Nadila et al., 2024). In the implementation process, the teacher first gives a concrete example by showing the habit of performing Dhuha and Dhuhur prayers in congregation. When the teacher practices it consistently, students become more interested and encouraged to follow the habit because they see their teacher doing it (Hilmiati & Saputra, 2020). The routine practice of performing Dhuha and Dhuhur prayers in congregation, along with regularly listening to short religious talks, helps guide students toward better behavior. With the teachers example, students become motivated to follow their teachers daily habits. According to Siti Alfiyah Bachtiar Hariyadi, students habits such as performing Dhuha prayer in congregation, doing dhikr and prayers, listening to short talks, reciting the Qur'an, and joining Dhuhur prayer in congregation have a significant and positive impact on developing Islamic character in students (Alfiyah & Hariyadi, 2022).

### **Improving Students Character Through Teachers Role-Modeling in the Aspect of Discipline**

Discipline is an attitude of obeying and following rules and responsibilities that apply. It is very important to practice discipline in daily life. A disciplined person values time and fulfills their responsibilities well. As a teacher, showing discipline is a form of responsibility for their duties. This includes coming to school on time, being punctual during teaching and learning activities both inside and outside the classroom, and carrying out other tasks responsibly. These behaviors shown by teachers can help develop students discipline because students learn from their teachers examples. According to Mahila Salsabilla and Muhammad Ariffudin, teachers apply the role-modeling method through several forms of discipline, such as being on time, wearing proper uniforms, and obeying school rules. These habits aim to develop discipline so that students understand and follow school regulations (Salsabilla & Ariffudin, 2022). Basically, disciplining students is not easy. There needs to be an agreement between teachers and students to follow the rules. Teachers also have to be consistent in following the rules they set, so students will feel more willing to obey school regulations. There are several things teachers need to pay attention to, including:

Improving students character through teachers role-modeling in the aspect of discipline, the first point is: 1) teachers arriving at school on time. Teachers have a responsibility to follow school rules, and one of them is being disciplined in attendance. When teachers come to school on time, they indirectly give a clear example for students to also come on time. On the other hand, if teachers arrive late, students may feel that they are not getting a good example. The discipline shown by teachers becomes a model that students tend to follow. This can be seen when teachers arrive at 06.30 a.m., enter the classroom as soon as the school bell rings, and wear the proper uniform according to the schedule. Being a good role model is very important because students observe and imitate almost everything their teachers do (Yuni & Dafit, 2022). According to Muhammad Arif Billah, Faizah, and Siti Masyithoh, teachers role-modeling, such as coming to school on time, has a significant and positive effect on students discipline. This means that whatever actions a teacher shows will likely be copied by the students. When teachers give good examples, it will lead to good behavior and good character in their students (Billah et al., 2024).

Improving students character through teachers role-modeling in the aspect of discipline can also be seen in the second point, which is creating a conducive learning atmosphere. Teachers have the responsibility to build a comfortable and calm environment so students can learn well. If the classroom is not conducive, students may become noisy, distracted, or behave inappropriately. A teacher needs to be firm, but

also able to control emotions, because poor behavior from the teacher will negatively affect the students. By creating a positive learning environment, teachers show good discipline that students can follow. Students will feel safer and more focused when the classroom is well managed. Without a conducive class, students tend to be noisy, lose motivation, disturb others, and create other problems. That is why a conducive classroom is needed so learning activities can run smoothly and students become more disciplined during lessons. As the class manager, the teacher is responsible for guiding, creating, and maintaining a good classroom environment (Restu Rizki Kusumastuti et al., 2024). Likewise, according to Deni Susanto, a teachers discipline has a significant effect on creating a more conducive learning environment and becoming a positive role model. This shows that teacher discipline is a crucial element for improving the quality of education and supporting students growth and development (Susanto, 2025).

Improving students character through teacher role modeling in the discipline aspect can also be seen in the third point, teachers carrying out their duty schedule. A person's level of discipline can be measured by how well they follow the rules. Rules are created to guide people's behavior so that they act in an orderly and responsible way, not carelessly or in ways that harm others. In schools, every member is expected to follow the rules. One example is the teacher duty schedule. Teachers come to school earlier to welcome and greet students at the school gate. This routine becomes a real example of discipline, showing students that they should not arrive late. The presence of teachers and staff at the gate also motivates students to come on time and avoid being late (Sholehah & Nikmah, 2023). According to Ari Widhyastuti and Fauzi, students discipline improved after the school required teachers to welcome students at the school gate every morning. This routine helped students become more independent and more orderly in arriving on time. The morning interaction between teachers and students at the gate also made students feel more comfortable and safe, which created a more positive and calm school environment (Widhyastuti & Fauzi, 2025).

### **Improving Students Character Through Teachers Role-Modeling in the Aspect of Honesty**

Honesty means saying and doing things based on the truth and real facts. Honesty can be seen through a person's words and actions. In the school environment, honesty is very important to teach, so it can become a habit that stays in a child's character. To help students develop honesty, teachers need to be good role models. Besides learning honesty at home, children also learn many things from their teachers at school. This means teachers are not only responsible for teaching lessons, but also for guiding students to build honest behavior. There are several ways to develop honesty in students, such as giving practice activities, working together with parents at home, teaching the values of honesty, using value-building and role-modeling methods, planning lessons that include character education, and giving rewards or consequences when needed (Karmawan & Lestari, 2021).

Improving students character through the example set by educators in terms of honesty, the first of which is the honesty canteen program. Internalizing the value of honesty through the honesty canteen program brings a number of benefits, including accustoming students to being honest, training them to maintain cleanliness, fostering a sense of responsibility, discipline, and obedience to rules. In addition, this activity also builds independence and trains students patience in their daily lives (Tabi'in & Nurlela, 2024). In promoting the existence of honesty canteens, teachers play a very important role in instilling the value of honesty in students. Teachers play an active role in supporting the implementation of honesty canteens by encouraging and inviting

students to shop at these canteens. This effort shows that teachers not only teach honesty in theory, but also provide a real life space for students to practice honest behavior in their daily lives (Azeera et al., 2022). Similarly, according to Widariyati et al., honesty canteens can be used as an effective and innovative medium for teaching students honest character values at school. Honesty canteens train students to conduct transactions independently without direct supervision, teaching them to be honest in their actions. In addition, this activity also trains students independence, discipline, responsibility, and social skills (Widariyati et al., 2025).

Improving students character through the method of role modeling by educators in the aspect of honesty, the second is teachers dare to admit mistakes. A person's activities and actions in their daily life are not immune to mistakes; behavior and speech are often negligent and erroneous. Mistakes need to be acknowledged, whether they are minor or major. In the school environment, it is not only students who can make mistakes, but teachers can also make mistakes in the teaching and learning process, whether intentionally or unintentionally. This is what needs to be corrected so that teachers must set an example for their students to be able to admit their mistakes as well. A teacher must be brave enough to admit mistakes, because teachers teach students not to lie to friends or parents, and when children make mistakes, they must also admit their mistakes. Therefore, teachers serve as role models for children in school, and when teachers admit their mistakes, it becomes one of the factors for the success of education in every school throughout the country. As the saying goes, if you dare to do something, you must also dare to take responsibility (Jumiati et al., 2021). Similarly, according to Nur Haliza, Ahmad Zaki, and Nurmisda Ramayani, the way to instill honesty in students is for teachers to set an example and demonstrate behavior that is in line with the values of honesty, namely by presenting material truthfully, not altering facts, and being open in all matters. When teachers admit their mistakes, students can see that honesty is important, even when it is difficult. Such behaviors have proven effective in fostering honesty in students (Haliza et al., 2024).

Improving students character through the method of role modeling by educators in the aspect of honesty, the third is honesty of teachers in their behavior. The attitude and behavior of an educator become a reflection for their students. This means that the exemplary attitude of an educator will be emulated by their students. When teachers tell students that they will reward students who behave well and excel academically and punish students who behave badly, they must actually do so. This should not just be said, but also done in practice. This is where teachers must be aware that everything they say, do, and act upon at school will be followed by their students (Saeful, 2021). To prepare students to have noble attitudes and personalities, both mentally, spiritually, and socially, the most effective way is through the example set by their teachers. This is because teachers are role models in the eyes of their students. Whether they realize it or not, students will imitate the character and behavior of their teachers (Dirmanto et al., 2021).

## **CONCLUSION**

The exemplary method in Islamic education is considered the most effective and efficient approach in shaping children's personalities. The application of this method in schools, both through formal and informal activities, is very important because it can instill good moral values in students. Through the exemplary behavior demonstrated by educators, students not only understand the concept of morals theoretically, but are also encouraged to practice them in their daily lives. Therefore, educators who want to be

successful in instilling moral values must understand teaching methods that are in line with the educational process, so that the values instilled can be accepted, internalized, and realized in practice by students.

The results of the study found that there are three strategies for character building through the method of educator role modeling, namely improving the character of students through the method of educator role modeling in the aspect of religiosity, including prayer routines, reading the Qur'an, performing the dhuha prayer, praying in congregation at noon, and giving religious lectures. Then, improving students morals through the method of educational role modeling in the aspect of discipline, including teachers arriving at school on time, being conducive during teaching and learning activities, and carrying out teacher duty. Next is the improvement of students morals through the method of educators' exemplary behavior in the aspect of honesty, including an honesty canteen program, teachers daring to admit mistakes, and teachers honesty in their behavior.

This study confirms that the role model method of educators plays a significant role in improving students religiosity, discipline, and honesty. However, this study is still limited to these three main aspects. For further research, it is recommended that the study be expanded to other moral aspects, such as responsibility, tolerance, social awareness, and mutual respect, so that the results are more comprehensive.

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