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The Role Of Islamic Religious Education Teachers In Habituation Dzuhur Congregational Prayers Among Students

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Abstract

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Daily congregational prayers are commonly practiced in public madrasahs, yet the mechanisms behind how such routines are nurtured particularly through the agency of Islamic Religious Education teachers remain underexplored. This study investigates how Islamic Religious Education teachers cultivate the habit of performing the Dzuhur prayer in congregation at MTs Negeri 4 Klaten, the challenges encountered in the process, and the strategies employed to sustain student participation. Adopting a qualitative single case study design, the research involved two Islamic Religious Education teachers and six students selected through purposive sampling. Data were obtained via participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis, and were processed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model. The findings indicate that the teachers' contribution extends beyond instructional roles; they function simultaneously as role models, motivators, supervisors, and character builders. Key barriers include inconsistent student discipline, limited spiritual awareness, infrastructural constraints, and peer influence. To address these

issues, the teachers implement persuasive educational approaches, exemplary conduct, close monitoring, regular evaluation, and collaborative coordination with fellow educators. Overall, the study affirms that the personal commitment of teachers is pivotal in transforming worship routines into sustainable character-building practices within the school environment.

Abstrak	
Kata Kunci: peran guru, pendidikan agama, pembiasaan beribadah, pendidikan karakter, shalat berjamaah	Fenomena pelaksanaan shalat Dzuhur berjamaah di madrasah negeri sering dianggap rutin, namun belum banyak dikaji secara mendalam dari sisi peran guru Pendidikan Agama Islam sebagai penggerakannya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggambarkan bagaimana guru Pendidikan Agama Islam menumbuhkan kebiasaan ibadah tersebut, tantangan apa yang mereka hadapi, serta strategi apa yang terbukti efektif di MTs Negeri 4 Klaten. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, melibatkan dua guru Pendidikan Agama Islam dan enam siswa yang dipilih secara purposif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi langsung, wawancara mendalam, dan telaah dokumen, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru Pendidikan Agama Islam tidak hanya mengajar secara kognitif, tetapi juga bertindak sebagai teladan, motivator, pengawas, sekaligus pembina karakter. Beberapa kendala yang muncul antara lain kedisiplinan siswa yang fluktuatif, minimnya pemahaman keagamaan, keterbatasan fasilitas, serta pengaruh lingkungan pergaulan. Untuk mengatasinya, guru menerapkan pendekatan persuasif-edukatif, penguatan keteladanan, pengawasan konsisten, evaluasi berkala, dan kerja sama lintas guru. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa keterlibatan personal guru menjadi elemen kunci dalam keberhasilan pembiasaan ibadah di sekolah.

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Introduction

Islamic Religious Education plays a strategic role in shaping students’ personalities by fostering noble character and a strong sense of religious awareness. Within the context of madrasah education, Islamic Religious Education instruction is not merely directed toward the mastery of religious knowledge but also toward the cultivation of sustainable worship habits. One prominent form of this habituation is the practice of congregational Dhuhr prayer

at school. Congregational prayer encompasses interconnected spiritual, social, and educational dimensions, including the development of time discipline, obedience to leadership (the imam), and the strengthening of Islamic brotherhood (ukhuwah Islamiyah). These values are consistent with national education goals that emphasize the formation of faithful, pious, and morally upright individuals and are aligned with the principles of character education promoted in the Merdeka Curriculum (Irawati et al., 2022; Istiqomah et al., 2023).

MTs Negeri 4 Klaten has designated the habituation of congregational Dhuhr prayer as one of its flagship programs for fostering students' religious character. This program not only regulates the technical aspects of prayer implementation but also integrates supporting religious activities, such as the recitation of hadith and brief religious exhortations (tausiyah) following the prayer. This pattern reflects a learning by doing approach, in which students internalize religious values through direct practice and consistent repetition (Knoll, 2017; Nahlawi, 1995; Williams, 2017). In this context, Islamic Religious Education teachers assume a central role as educators, role models, motivators, and supervisors who ensure that the habituation of worship aligns with pedagogical objectives and Islamic legal guidance (Kuraesin, 2020; Munawir et al., 2022).

Findings from a preliminary study conducted through non-participant observation and brief interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers indicate that the implementation of congregational Dhuhr prayer habituation at MTs Negeri 4 Klaten has not yet reached an optimal level. Initial observations over several days revealed that student attendance in congregational prayer was approximately two-thirds of the total student population, while orderly and focused participation was uneven. Instances of undisciplined behavior, such as joking or playing during prayer, were also observed, along with low student participation in religious roles such as muadzin and hadith reciter. These findings are consistent with previous studies suggesting that worship habituation programs in schools often face challenges related to student

discipline, intrinsic motivation, and the consistency of supervision (Haniyyah, 2021; Harahap, 2024; Yusuf et al., 2024).

These empirical conditions demonstrate that the success of congregational prayer habituation is not determined solely by the existence of a formal program but is highly dependent on the quality of the Islamic Religious Education teacher's role in its implementation. Islamic Religious Education teachers are required not only to function as technical facilitators but also to serve as consistent role models, motivators who cultivate sincere worship awareness without coercion, and supervisors who maintain order and solemnity during prayer (Saputra et al., 2023; Wahyudi & Khoir, 2025). Nevertheless, peer influences, students' digital habits, and the relatively low level of religious awareness among some students pose tangible challenges that affect the effectiveness of these roles (Ramadhani, 2024; Rizkasari, 2023).

A number of previous studies have examined worship habituation in schools, primarily from the perspectives of student motivation and the management of religious activities. However, research that specifically and deeply analyzes the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers as a key determinant of successful congregational Dhuhr prayer habituation particularly within the context of public madrasahs remains limited (Arief et al., 2022; Prasetya & Cholily, 2021). Furthermore, studies that integrate normative Islamic perspectives drawing on the Qur'an, hadith, and classical scholarly views with empirical field findings are still relatively scarce. This is notable, given that Al-Ghazali emphasized that moral character and religious habits are formed through continuous righteous practice guided by proper instruction and supervision (Al Muhlasin & Salik, 2022; Maghfiroh, 2024).

Based on these empirical conditions and the identified research gaps, this study aims to examine in depth the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in the habituation of congregational Dhuhr prayer at MTs Negeri 4 Klaten, to identify the challenges encountered in its implementation, and to formulate effective strategies for overcoming these obstacles. Specifically, this study seeks

to address questions concerning how Islamic Religious Education teachers carry out their roles in habituation congregational Dhuhr prayer, what challenges they face in the process, and what strategies can be employed to ensure that the habituation of congregational Dhuhr prayer is implemented optimally and sustainably.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a field research design, focusing on an in-depth understanding of phenomena from the participants' perspectives. This approach was chosen because it is suitable for examining the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in habituation Dzuhur congregational prayers within the contextual setting of the school environment. Qualitative research enables the researcher to explore the meanings, values, and practices of worship habituation through direct interaction in the field (Sugiyono, 2019).

The research design used was a single case study, which involved an intensive investigation of the Dzuhur congregational prayer habituation program at MTs Negeri 4 Klaten as a single unit of analysis. This design was selected because it provides an in-depth description of the context, processes, challenges, and strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education teachers (Yin, 2018). The case study approach facilitates triangulated data collection to produce valid and richly informative findings (Herlina et al., 2025).

The research participants consisted of two Islamic Religious Education teachers and six students from grades VII and VIII of MTs Negeri 4 Klaten. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, in which subjects are chosen based on specific considerations such as active involvement in the congregational prayer habituation program and willingness to serve as informants (Miles et al., 2014). The total student population of the school was 493 (Class VII: 168 Students, Class VIII: 169 students, and Class IX: 156 Students), and

thus a small sample was deemed sufficient to obtain in-depth data in accordance with qualitative research needs (Handoko et al., 2024).

The primary instrument in this study was the researcher as the key instrument (human instrument), supported by semi-structured interview guides, observation sheets, and photographic documentation. Data were collected through three techniques: (1) Participant observation to directly observe the implementation of Dzuhur congregational prayers, including teacher and student involvement; (2) Semi-structured interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers and students to obtain their views on the implementation, obstacles, and strategies of congregational prayer habituation; and (3) Documentation in the form of activity photos, prayer schedules, and school program archives (Creswell & Poth, 2016). Instrument validity was ensured through expert validation of the interview and observation guides by Islamic education specialists, as well as the use of source and method triangulation (Moleong, 2017).

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014). Data reduction was carried out by selecting, focusing on, and simplifying data relevant to the research focus. Data were presented in the form of descriptive narratives containing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. Conclusions were drawn inductively by integrating field findings with relevant theories. Data validity was tested through source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking with participants to ensure the accuracy of interpretations (Gustaman et al., 2024).

Result and Discussion

Teacher as Role Model

The study found that Islamic Religious Education teachers at MTs Negeri 4 Klaten play a strategic role in habituation students to perform the Dzuhur congregational prayer. Their roles include imparting an understanding of

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worship values, serving as direct role models, acting as motivators, coordinating cooperation, evaluating implementation, and designing the habituation program. Islamic Religious Education teachers systematically teach the obligation of prayer during lessons, reinforced it with reminders before prayer time, and related the benefits of worship to students' daily lives. As stated by Halimah Sa'diyah: *"Sebagai guru Pendidikan Agama Islam, saya merasa memiliki tanggung jawab besar... saya tidak bosan mengingatkan shalat, pokok e ojo nganti kesel ngandani bocah babagan shalat."* in english (*"As a Islamic Religious Education teacher, I felt I had a great responsibility... I never got tired of reminding students to pray, the point is, never get tired of advising children about prayer."*).

The teachers' exemplary conduct is evident in their daily participation in congregational prayers, which included arranging prayer rows (*saf*), correcting students who joked around, and guiding them in proper worship procedures. The school principal, Umi Muslikhah, stated: *"Kami memulai dari memberikan keteladanan... semua guru dan staf ikut shalat berjamaah"* in english: (*"We started by setting an example... all teachers and staff joined in the congregational prayer."*). Students acknowledged this role, such as Haidar, who noted that the teachers' presence made the prayer atmosphere more solemn and fostered positive habits. Islamic Religious Education teachers also acted as enforcers of discipline by reminding students via loudspeakers, checking attendance, and giving recognition to diligent students. Student Patricia remarked that this habituation made her more disciplined and motivated to maintain her prayers.

Problems and Obstacles

The main challenges faced by Islamic Religious Education teachers included low discipline among some students, limited spiritual awareness, and the perception that congregational prayer is merely a formality. Some students arrive late, joked during prayer, or lack an understanding of the meaning of worship. As Halimah Sa'diyah explained: *"Ada siswa yang ikut hanya karena ikut-ikutan, bahkan masih ada yang bercanda saat shalat."* in English (*"There were students who joined simply because others did, and some still joked around during prayer."*).

Limitations in worship facilities and time also pose challenges, especially when the number of students is large or when academic activities overlap with prayer time. Umi Muslikhah added that the ablution area and mosque had once been considered inadequate, although they were later improved. Psychological factors such as laziness or drowsiness after recess also hindered participation, as Patricia expressed: "*Kadang ada yang lupa atau malas shalat, tapi guru terus mengingatkan.*" in english ("*Sometimes there were students who forgot or were too lazy to pray, but the teachers kept reminding us.*"). Academic pressure and peer influence further affect students' consistency in worship.

Motivational Strategies

To address these challenges, Islamic Religious Education teachers developed strategies that included motivational-educational approaches, role modeling, active supervision, regular evaluations, and cross-teacher collaboration. The motivational approach involved linking lesson material to the virtues of congregational prayer and providing encouragement before its implementation. Teachers also led by example by joining students in prayer, creating positive social control that reduced joking behavior.

To address the various obstacles to habituation congregational Dhuhr prayer, Islamic Religious Education teachers at MTs Negeri 4 Klaten have implemented an integrated strategy that included a motivational-educational approach, direct role modeling, active supervision, ongoing evaluation, and cross-teacher collaboration. This strategy proved effective because it targets not only students' external compliance but also aims to build internal awareness by helping them grasp the meaning of worship. The motivational-educational approach links Islamic Religious Education instructional content to the virtues of congregational prayer and its implications for daily life, and it includes verbal reinforcement delivered before prayer. This is effective because it helps students appreciate both the normative and rational reasons for the practice, thereby reducing the tendency to join prayer solely out of compliance with school rules.

These findings reinforce Haniyyah (2021) and Harahap (2024), who argued that

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worship habituation is more sustainable when value internalization accompanied routine practice rather than when practice remained purely mechanical.

Islamic Religious Education teachers' role modeling participating directly in congregational prayer also contributed substantially to reducing students' undisciplined behavior. Teachers' presence among the rows created positive social control: students felt both observed and guided, which minimizes joking or playing during prayer. Empirically, this aligned with Saputra et al. (2023), who contended that teacher modeling exerted a stronger influence on shaping students' religious behavior than verbal instruction alone. In the context of Generation Z, who often exhibit skepticism toward formal authority, modeling is a more acceptable and effective approach than coercion.

Active supervision is carried out through announcements over the public-address system, direct invitations to the mosque, and persuasive reprimands when needed. As Halimah Sa'diyah reported, she recorded prayer attendance daily and followed up with personal conversations with absent students. This approach worked because it combined structural oversight with a humanistic, reflective dialogue, so students did not feel punished but were invited to reflect on their worship responsibilities. This finding extended Wahyudi & Khoir (2025), who emphasized consistent supervision, by highlighting the added value of reflective dialogue as a supporting strategy.

Routine evaluation conducted in monthly meetings with homeroom teachers and the principal allowed Islamic Religious Education teachers to iteratively refine the program. Such evaluation functions as a quality-control mechanism for the habituation process and as a forum for sharing responsibility among educators. This result is consistent with Arief et al. (2022), who argue that habituation methods are effective when paired with periodic evaluation and cross-stakeholder reinforcement.

Cross-teacher collaboration proved to be a key reinforcing factor in the program's success. When all teachers participated in inviting students,
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maintaining order, and joining the congregational prayer, worship became a collective school culture rather than solely the concern of religious teachers. Ramadhan Saputra's remark "*Guru-guru kompak... jadi kita nggak merasa kalau shalat itu cuma urusan guru agama.*" In English ("*The teachers worked together... so we didn't feel like prayer was only the religion teacher's responsibility.*") illustrated the emergence of a positive student perception of prayer as a shared activity. This finding enriched Prasetya & Cholily (2021) by showing that a whole-school approach is increasingly relevant in the digital age, where peer influence and the social environment strongly shaped students' religious behavior. Thus, teacher synergy appeared well suited to adapt habituation strategies to the characteristics of Generation Z, who benefit from collective role models, a consistent environment, and concrete examples of ethical conduct in everyday school life.

The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Habituation of Dzuhur Congregational Prayer at MTs Negeri 4 Klaten

Islamic Religious Education teachers hold a highly strategic role in habituation students to perform the Dzuhur congregational prayer. Based on the research findings, this role encompasses functions as educators, role models, motivators, supervisors, coordinators, and character builders. As educators, Islamic Religious Education teachers not only deliver theoretical lessons on prayer in the classroom but also reinforce this understanding through advice and direct practice in the school mosque. According to Arifin (2014), effective religious education must address the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains so that students are able to understand, internalize, and practice Islamic teachings. This aligns with an interview with Islamic Religious Education teacher Halimah Sa'diyah, who emphasized that prayer is the foremost act of worship that must be continually reminded to students.

As role models, Islamic Religious Education teachers are directly involved in the daily performance of congregational prayers with students. The presence of teachers among students is not merely symbolic but fosters a culture of

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exemplary conduct. In line with Bandura's (1986) Social Learning Theory, an individual's behavior can be shaped through observation of a model who consistently demonstrates positive examples. In this context, teachers become models of religious behavior that are internalized by students.

Islamic Religious Education teachers also serve as motivators, instilling enthusiasm in students to arrive on time and perform prayer with devotion (*khusyuk*). This is achieved through positive reinforcement, daily reminders via loudspeakers, and recognition given to students who consistently engage in worship. According to Sardiman (2018), motivation is a driving factor that moves individuals to act, and in the context of religious learning, it is closely linked to the development of spiritual character.

Furthermore, Islamic Religious Education teachers act as coordinators, collaborating with other subject teachers to ensure that all students participate in congregational prayer. They also design regular programs such as the adhan schedule, short sermons (*kultum*), and training in prayer procedures. This role demonstrates that the habituation of prayer cannot stand alone but requires integration among all school components (Mulyasa, 2022).

Challenges Faced by Islamic Religious Education Teachers in the Habituation of Dzuhur Congregational Prayer

Although the Dzuhur congregational prayer habituation program has been implemented, Islamic Religious Education teachers face several challenges. First, there is a lack of student discipline, with some still arriving late, joking during worship, or prioritizing other activities such as buying snacks. This indicates that worship habituation requires the development of strong internal discipline. According to Thorndike's (1932) theory of habit formation, new behaviors will only become habits if they are practiced consistently and reinforced positively. Second, some students perceive prayer merely as a formal routine without understanding its spiritual meaning. This aligns with findings of Suryana (2021) that religious habituation in schools often falls into mechanical

routines without deeper meaning, compelling teachers to work harder to foster genuine religious awareness.

Another obstacle is the limitation of facilities and time. Although facilities have been improved, at the start of the program the prayer space and ablution area were inadequate. In addition, a tight class schedule sometimes overlaps with prayer time, requiring adjustments in school time management.

Beyond internal school factors, psychological conditions and environmental influences also pose barriers. Laziness, drowsiness after breaks, or academic pressure make some students less enthusiastic about joining congregational prayer. Peer influence also plays a role, as reflected in Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which states that student behavior is influenced by interactions between the school environment, family, and social community.

Strategies of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Overcoming Barriers to the Habituation of Dzuhur Congregational Prayer

To address these challenges, Islamic Religious Education teachers implement several strategies. First, a motivational and educational approach that links lesson material with the virtues of congregational prayer. This approach aligns with Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist theory, which emphasizes the importance of connecting new knowledge to learners' real-life experiences. Second, direct role modeling and involvement, where teachers not only instruct but also join students in prayer. This reinforces Dewey's (1986) learning by doing principle, which stresses that effective learning occurs when learners are directly involved in the experience. Third, active supervision and reminders, such as using loudspeakers, inviting students personally, and giving wise admonitions to those absent. This approach is consistent with Hirschi (1969) social control theory, which posits that close social bonds can reduce deviant behavior. Fourth, regular evaluation and mentoring, where teachers record attendance, discuss challenges in monthly meetings, and follow up with less active students. Such evaluations are essential to assess program effectiveness. Fifth, inter-teacher

collaboration, in which Islamic Religious Education teachers work together with other subject teachers to condition students, lead prayers, and accompany them to the mosque. This cross-disciplinary teamwork reflects Lickona (1992) whole school approach to character education, which emphasizes the involvement of the entire school community in fostering values.

Conclusion

This study confirms that the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers is highly significant in the habituation of Dzuhur congregational prayer at MTs Negeri 4 Klaten, manifested through their functions as educators, role models, motivators, supervisors, coordinators, and character builders. The findings address the research objectives and reaffirm that the direct involvement of Islamic Religious Education teachers both in guidance and in providing exemplary conduct—has a substantial impact on the success of worship habituation programs in schools. The main challenges encountered include a lack of student discipline, low spiritual understanding, limited facilities, and environmental influences. Strategies implemented by teachers to overcome these obstacles include motivational-educational approaches, role modeling, active supervision, periodic evaluation, and inter-teacher collaboration. These findings are consistent with the concepts of learning by doing and the whole school approach, both of which emphasize the importance of engaging all school components.

The practical implications of this study for Islamic education teachers are the need to integrate congregational prayer activities into the daily learning process as part of religious character education. Teachers are expected not only to emphasize the ritual aspects, but also to provide an understanding of the spiritual meaning of prayer through brief reflections, continuous guidance, and empowering students' roles, such as taking turns to be the imam or prayer leader. Meanwhile, for madrasahs, the results of this study emphasize the importance of institutional support through scheduling that is in line with prayer times, the provision of adequate worship facilities, and the formation of a religious culture

that involves the entire school community. Thus, the habit of congregational prayer can be carried out consistently and sustainably as part of the madrasah's identity.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of Islamic education studies, particularly in strengthening the concept of worship habituation as an effective strategy for shaping the religious character of students. The findings of this study support social learning and habituation theories, which affirm that teacher role models and a conducive educational environment have a significant influence on the internalization of religious values. In addition, this study enriches the scientific knowledge of Islamic education by placing worship habituation as an integrative process that involves cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in shaping student character.

The recommendation for further research is the need for a more in-depth study using an action research approach so that teachers can directly design, implement, and evaluate the program of habitualizing congregational prayer in several cycles of improvement. In addition, research with a longitudinal design is also recommended to examine the long-term impact of habitualizing worship on the development of students' religious character and discipline. Further research using a multisite approach or mixed methods can also be conducted to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of worship habits in different madrasah contexts.

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