

## **FOSTERING RELIGIOUS CHARACTER IN GENERATION ALPHA THROUGH RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES AT PURBASARI KARANG JAMBU PURBALINGGA PUBLIC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL NO. 2**

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### **Abstract**

This research is motivated by the rapid technological developments in the digital era, which pose significant challenges in the formation of the religious character of the Alpha generation, especially at the elementary school level. This research is a field research conducted at SD Negeri 2 Purbasari, Purbalingga, using a qualitative approach through observation, interviews, and documentation studies. The focus of the research is the formation of students' religious character through religious activities, driving factors, and obstacles encountered. The results show that routine religious activities, such as Religious Friday, tadarus, congregational prayer, dhikr, and the use of interactive media, are effective in fostering religious values in the dimensions of belief, practice, intellect, experience, and consequences. The process of forming religious character is carried out through teacher role models, habituation, and reinforcement, which is in line with modern character education theory and Al-Ghazali's concept of morality. Factors driving success include student enthusiasm, teacher and principal support, and parental involvement, while obstacles include technological distractions, limited facilities, and inconsistent habits at home. This research confirms that varied, enjoyable, and habit-based religious activities are an effective strategy for instilling religious character in the Alpha generation in the digital era.

**Keywords:** Religious character, Generation Alpha, Religious activities

### **Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh perkembangan teknologi yang pesat di era digital membawa tantangan besar dalam pembentukan karakter religius generasi Alpha, terutama di tingkat sekolah dasar. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian lapangan (field research) yang dilakukan di SD Negeri 2 Purbasari, Purbalingga, dengan pendekatan kualitatif melalui observasi, wawancara, dan studi dokumentasi. Fokus penelitian adalah pembentukan karakter religius siswa melalui kegiatan keagamaan, faktor pendorong, dan hambatan yang ditemui. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kegiatan keagamaan rutin, seperti Jum'at Religius, tadarus, salat berjamaah, dzikir, dan penggunaan media interaktif, efektif menumbuhkan nilai-nilai religius dalam dimensi keyakinan, praktik, intelektual, pengalaman, dan konsekuensi. Proses pembentukan karakter religius dilakukan melalui keteladanan guru, pembiasaan, dan penguatan, yang sejalan dengan teori pendidikan karakter modern dan konsep akhlak Al-Ghazali. Faktor pendorong keberhasilan mencakup antusiasme siswa, dukungan guru dan kepala sekolah, serta keterlibatan orang tua, sedangkan hambatan meliputi distraksi teknologi, keterbatasan*

*fasilitas, dan pembiasaan yang tidak konsisten di rumah. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa kegiatan keagamaan yang variatif, menyenangkan, dan berbasis pembiasaan menjadi strategi efektif untuk menanamkan karakter religius pada generasi Alpha di era digital.*

**Kata kunci:** karakter religius, Generation Alpha, kegiatan keagamaan

## **INTRODUCTION**

The rapid development of technology in the digital era has had a significant impact on life, including in the world of education. One of the most affected is the Alpha Generation, which is the generation born from 2010 to 2025 (Puspitasari et al., 2025). This generation is inseparable from technological devices such as gadgets, the internet, and social media in their daily lives from an early age. They live surrounded by advanced technology, so they can connect with a wide range of information quickly (Wulandari, Az-zahra, & Puspita, 2025). The Alpha generation is a generation that has different traits compared to the previous generation. According to Nurhasanah and Richardus, the generation born between 1946 and 1964 is known as *Baby Boomers*, while the generation born between 1965 and 1979 is called generation X. Generation Y is those born between 1980 and 2000, and after that comes generation Z and generation Alpha born in 2010. Generation Alpha will face various challenges as technological advancements inevitably bring mixed impacts (Nurhasanah, 2021). According to McCrindle, the Alpha generation is a group of children born in 2010 and after. They will play, learn, and interact with various new technologies. As adults, technology will be a part of their lives that shapes their knowledge, experiences, attitudes, behaviors, and views of the world.

As stated in the National Education System Law Number 20 of 2003, article 3 states that the function of national education is to develop abilities and form the character and civilization of a dignified nation. The goal is for students to become human beings who have faith, piety, noble character, health, knowledge, creativity, and responsibility. The progress of a nation depends on the character of the nation. Character is an important value that distinguishes humans from other creatures. The formation of good character is important so that individuals not only succeed academically, but also have empathy and social responsibility (Furqon, 2024).

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Elementary schools play an important role as educational institutions that are the foundation for the formation of students' character. Character formation is needed so that children do not falter easily in facing the current situation. One of the important positive

characters is the religious character taught by religion (Maulidiyah, 2018). Religious character is very important so that a person can act in accordance with religious rules in the face of changing times. Islamic principles in forming character are based on teaching and habituation. In addition to learning in the classroom, religious character can also be formed through religious activities (Oktari, 2019). Therefore, schools with parents and the community need to design religious activities that are adaptive and attractive to the Alpha generation. Efforts to form the religious character of the Alpha generation through religious activities are one way to overcome moral and moral problems in the increasingly rapid digital era (Höfrová, Balidemaj, & Small, 2024).

However, previous studies have tended to place more emphasis on conventional approaches to the formation of religious character, such as lecture methods and routine habituation, without considering the typical characteristics of Generation Alpha who are more responsive to technology-based learning and problem-solving. In addition, previous studies have not optimally integrated innovative learning models such as Problem-Based Learning (*Problem-Based Learning/PBL*) in the context of strengthening religious character (Harahap & Susandra, 2025).

Another limitation of previous research is the lack of exploration of how religious activities can be combined with contextual active learning models and in accordance with the development of the digital era. Most of the research is still descriptive and has not provided a systematic implementive approach in dealing with the moral challenges of the Alpha Generation in the digital era. Based on this, there is a clear research gap, namely the absence of studies that specifically integrate the Problem-Based Learning (PBL) model with religious activities in an effort to form religious character in the Alpha Generation. Therefore, this research is important to be carried out in order to offer a learning approach that is more adaptive, contextual, and relevant to the development of the times, while contributing to strengthening religious character education in elementary schools.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a case study approach that focuses on a specific case limited by the dimension of time and activity, where the researcher investigates in depth through systematic data collection procedures. This research is a field research (*field research*) with researchers directly involved in describing and interpreting facts, as well as approaching children as informants through observation and interviews (Adhi Kusumastuti, 2019). The method used is a qualitative approach, as explained by Bogdan and Taylor that qualitative research produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from individuals and observed behaviors (Lexy, 2018).

The research was carried out at SD Negeri 2 Purbasari, Jl. Karangjambu-Sirandu, Purbalingga. The sampling technique in this study uses purposive sampling, which is the deliberate selection of informants based on certain criteria. The number of informants in this study was 12 people consisting of one principal, 3 teachers, and 8 students in grades

IV to VI with vulnerable ages 10-12 years. The data sources in this study consist of primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews with principals, teachers, and students, as well as direct observation of the implementation of religious activities in schools. Data collection techniques were carried out through participatory observation to observe religious activities and student behavior, semi-structured interviews to dig into information in depth, and documentation as supporting data. Thus, this research methodology is systematically designed to have an adequate level of repeatability and to be able to provide a deep picture of the formation of the religious character of the Alpha Generation through religious activities in elementary schools

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Form and Implementation of Religious Activities at SD Negeri 2 Purbasari**

The results of observations show that SD Negeri 2 Purbasari has a flagship program called "Religious Friday" which is carried out every week as a systematic effort to instill religious values in students. This program includes reading the Qur'an together, tadarus, tartil practice, practicing ablution and prayer, listening to lectures from village dai, watching the stories of the prophets, and the use of interactive learning media that is in harmony with the visual and digital characters of the Alpha generation.

Reviewed using Glock & Stark's five-dimensional theory of religiosity through the book Ancok & Suroso. The activities in this program include all aspects of religiosity that need to be formed in elementary school students. First, the *ideological dimension* is seen through the delivery of prophetic stories, religious lectures, and the cultivation of Islamic moral values. Second, the ritualistic dimension can be seen in tadarus, tartil, ablution practices, and prayers that are carried out consistently. Third, the *experiential dimension* emerges through worship activities such as dhuha prayer or dhikr that foster students' spiritual closeness. Fourth, the *intellectual dimension* of knowledge develops through the use of interactive media, tajweed teaching, and Islamic educational video playback. Fifth, the dimension of practice (*consequential*) is reflected in the habituation of religious values which are expected to be reflected in daily attitudes such as discipline, manners, and the habit of helping each other.

This "Religious Friday" program is also a habituation strategy that consistently and repeatedly instills religious values until they develop into character. This finding is in line with the research of Ramianti, Bisri & Sesrita who explained that the habituation of religious activities has been proven to play a role in shaping students' religious character (Ramianti, D., Bisri, H., & Sesrita, 2019). The findings are reinforced by Mubin & Furqon's research which shows that religious habituation has a significant impact on the dimensions of students' beliefs, worship practices, and religious behaviors (Habituation, 2023). Thus, the implementation of the Religious Friday program at SD Negeri 2 Purbasari has been in accordance with the comprehensive approach to the formation of modern religiosity.

## **The Process of Forming Alpha Generation's Religious Character**

The process of forming religious character in the Alpha generation at SDN 2 Purbasari is carried out through an exemplary, habitual, and strengthening approach. These three approaches are not only in accordance with modern character education theory, but are also in harmony with the concept of morality according to Al-Ghazali. First, example (*Uswatun Hasanah*) It can be seen from the behavior of teachers and principals in showing manners, discipline in worship, and polite communication. This is in line with Al-Ghazali's thought that children's morals are formed through al-qudwah (example), because children tend to imitate the behavior of adults around them (Al-Ghazali, 2014). Second, habituation (*habituation*) It is carried out through routine activities such as "Religious Friday", tadarus, joint prayer, dhuha prayer, and listening to short lectures. This repetitive activity implements the concept of *Al-'Adah* (habit) in moral education according to Al-Ghazali, who affirms that character is formed through the repetition of good behavior. These findings are in line with Rahayu & Yunus' research which proves that the habituation of religious activities in a structured manner is able to improve the religious character of elementary school students (Rahayu, F., & Yunus, 2020).

Third, reinforcement *is* given through praise, simple awards, or recognition for students who show good behavior such as helping friends, maintaining cleanliness, or discipline during prayer. This step strengthens the intrinsic motivation of students as explained by Al-Ghazali through the concept of mujāhadah *al-nafs* (soul training), which is a constant effort to habituate oneself to goodness so as to become a sedentary character. The approach of example, habituation, and reinforcement is also in line with Thomas Lickona's theory, especially the three components that form character, namely *moral knowing*, *moral feeling*, and *moral action*. Teacher example strengthens students' moral knowledge and feelings, religious habits enforce moral actions, and teacher reinforcement forms behavioral consistency.

The strengthening of the results of this research is also supported by the study of Lestari, Permata, & Mashuri which found that the habituation of Qur'an tadarus activities is able to improve the discipline of worship, respectful attitudes, and daily morals of elementary school students (Annisa Nur Aini, Dwi Anggraeni Siwi, 2023). This shows that the approach used by SDN 2 Purbasari is in line with the classical Islamic character education model according to Al-Ghazali and the principles of modern character education.

### **Religious Values Formed**

Based on the results of the study, religious activities carried out regularly at SDN 2 Purbasari show a significant influence on the formation of religious values of Alpha generation students. The students revealed that they participated in morning tadarus, dhuha prayers, joint prayers, and Religious Friday activities which included lectures, watching the prophet's stories, ablution exercises, prayers, and reading the Qur'an together. They said that these activities made them more diligent in prayer, more polite

to teachers and friends, more patient, and not easily angry. The same thing was also emphasized by the teacher that religious activities, especially Religious Friday, have formed religious habits such as good manners, the ability to read prayers, and the courage to appear to lead prayers in class. Teachers see that children become more diligent in prayer, polite, and not shy about reading prayers in front of the class after participating in these activities regularly. The principal reinforced this finding by stating that the change in students' religious attitudes can be seen from their habits that are now more disciplined in prayer, used to say greetings, and show respect for teachers and peers.

If analyzed based on Glock & Stark's theory of religiosity, the religious values that emerge include its five dimensions, the practical dimension (prayer, ablution, tadarus), the faith dimension (understanding the teachings through the prophet's lectures and stories), the intellectual dimension (understanding the recitation of prayers and tartil), the experiential dimension (feeling calm during worship), and the consequence dimension (behaving politely, not being easily angry, helping friends). Value *ilahiyyah* and *insaniyyah* from Zayadi also looks strong, students internalize divine values (such as faith, piety, gratitude, patience) and human values (such as *Ukhuwah*, trust, manners) through habituation (Tran & Nguyen, 2021).

This field finding is in line with Priatmoko's research, which explains that religious character in elementary school students is formed through the habit of daily worship and social interaction based on Islamic values. The study confirms that routine habits such as tadarus, congregational prayers, and weekly religious activities are effective in fostering value *Shidq* (Honestly), *Istiqamah* (consistent), *Mahabbah lil-ibadah* (love of worship), and *ta'awun* (Sorry) (Priatmoko, 2025). Thus, the religious values formed in the students of SDN 2 Purbasari are holistic, not only in the form of religious knowledge, but have become habits, attitudes, and behaviors that are reflected in daily life. Varied, fun, and habituation-based religious activities make them effective for the Alpha generation who tend to get bored easily and need an interactive approach.

### **Factors Driving and Inhibiting the Formation of Religious Character**

Religious activities at SDN 2 Purbasari have successfully run well because of a number of strong driving factors. The teacher stated that the students' enthusiasm for religious activities was very high, especially on Religious Fridays, where they often asked "Mom, whose lecture will it be from?" as a form of interest and motivation to participate in the activity. The teacher also emphasized that the support of the principal, the cohesiveness of the teachers, and the involvement of the community such as the village dai have a great contribution to the success of this religious character formation program. The principal added that parental cooperation is very helpful, because parents continue the habit of worship at home so that the transformation of values does not only stop at school but continues to the family environment. From the student side, they stated that activities become fun when teachers use media such as videos of prophetic stories, experience stories, and direct practices of ablution and prayer. They feel not bored when the activities are varied and interactive. This shows that the Alpha generation needs a visual learning

method, and not monotonous, which is in accordance with the literature on the characteristics of the digital generation.

However, this study also found several inhibiting factors. The teacher revealed that the biggest challenge is keeping the students' focus because they are "easily bored", so activities must be creatively packed every week. In addition, the limited facilities such as loudspeakers and projectors make some multimedia activities not run optimally. The principal also said that another challenge is the habits of students who are very close to digital technology, which can reduce interest in religious activities if not directed properly. From the perspective of character education theory, according to Gagne, driving factors such as teacher examples, habituation, school-parent collaboration, and the use of interesting media are the main components in the character formation model. Meanwhile, obstacles such as technological distractions, lack of facilities, and inconsistent habituation at home are common challenges in character building in the digital era.

These field findings are also in line with Al-Ghazali's view that moral formation will not succeed if there is no continuity between education at home, school, and the social environment. According to Al-Ghazali, human character is formed through continuous habituation, good example, and a supportive environment. If one of the environments does not play a role, the values taught will easily fade and not become a habit (Muhlasin et al., 2022). This is reinforced by Supriyandi's research, which states that the success of religious character formation is highly dependent on teacher example, consistent habituation, and home environment support, while the main obstacles usually come from time constraints, lack of facilities, and the influence of digital technology on students' learning styles (Supriyandi, Chandra, & Marhayati, 2025). Likewise, the research of Mutia Sari et al., which emphasizes that children in the digital era need a creative and visual religious approach so that the internalization of religious values can run more effectively.

Thus, the formation of the religious character of Alpha generation students at SDN 2 Purbasari is effective because it is supported by school leadership, teacher example, and student enthusiasm, but still faces challenges in the form of technological distractions, limited facilities, and inconsistency of habituation at home. Efforts to strengthen religious character need to continue to be carried out through varied, integrative, and appropriate activities according to the characteristics of the digital generation. Critically, the findings of this study show that PBL is not always effective if applied conventionally without adaptation. In the Alpha generation, the effectiveness of PBL is highly dependent on the use of engaging media, visual approaches, and interactive activities (Septiaseh, Haniah, Pratama, & ..., 2025). Without this, PBL has the potential to not run optimally because it is not in accordance with the characteristics of students. Therefore, the success of PBL in this study is more due to contextual adaptation to the character of the digital generation, not solely because of the theoretical advantages of the model.

This research provides significant practical and theoretical implications. For teachers, the results of the study show that the application of Problem-Based Learning in religious learning needs to be carried out in an integrative manner with habituation and example. Teachers are advised to develop learning strategies such as moral case discussions, storytelling based on Islamic values, and simulations of worship practices that are contextual and relevant to students' lives. In addition, the use of digital media such as prophet story videos or educational animations is important to adapt to the characteristics of the Alpha generation. For schools, this research emphasizes the importance of creating a conducive learning environment, including the provision of adequate learning facilities and strengthening collaboration between schools and parents. Environmental support is a key factor in ensuring the sustainability of religious character formation outside of school.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the research on the process of forming religious character in the Alpha generation at SDN 2 Purbasari, it is not only a process of habituation of values, but also a process of constructing meaning that involves cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions simultaneously. The findings of this study provide new insights that the effectiveness of religious character formation does not depend enough on the identity of religious activities, but on the ability of these activities to facilitate students' reflection and interpretation of religious values in the context of real life. Thus, the religious character that is formed is not just ritual behavior, but has developed into an internal and continuous moral consciousness.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of character education studies by offering an integrative model that combines classical Islamic approaches such as exemplary (*qudwah*), habituation (*al-'adah*), and soul training (*riyadhah al-nafts*) with modern learning approaches, especially *Problem Based Learning* (PBL). This integration strengthens the argument that the formation of an effective religious character in the Alpha generation requires a synergy between the habituation of values and the development of reflective thinking skills. Thus, this study expands the theory of character education by placing PBL as an approach that functions to deepen the internalization of values, not just as a cognitive learning method.

Practically, the results of this study recommend several things. First, teachers need to develop religious learning strategies that are not only routine-based, but also contextual issues, such as moral case discussions, reflective storytelling, and simulations of worship practices that are relevant to students' lives. Second, schools need to strengthen the character education ecosystem through collaboration between teachers, parents, and the community, as well as provide facilities that support interactive and technology-based learning. Third, the development of religious activities needs to be designed in a varied and adaptive manner to the characteristics of the Alpha generation which tends to be visual, dynamic, and requires active involvement.

Thus, this study not only confirms the importance of the formation of religious character from primary education, but also offers a more adaptive conceptual and practical approach in facing educational challenges in the digital age. Going forward, follow-up research is recommended to test this model in a broader context and with diverse methodological approaches to strengthen the validity and generalization of the findings.

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