



The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Strengthening Islamic Education in Muslim Communities

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Abstract

This study aims to describe and analyze the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in fostering Islamic education within the Minangkabau Muslim community. Islamic Religious Education teachers serve not only as educators in the formal school setting but also as religious leaders and moral mentors within the community. This study employs a qualitative approach using descriptive methods, through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that Islamic Religious Education teachers play a strategic role in instilling Islamic values in students and the community. This role is evident in teaching activities, moral guidance, involvement in community religious activities, and serving as role models in social life. Supporting factors that strengthen the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers include: high teacher dedication, support from parents and community leaders, a religious social environment, the availability of facilities for worship and religious education, and the existence of programs from the government and religious institutions such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), Muhammadiyah, and Nahdlatul Ulama. Meanwhile, the obstacles faced include limited facilities, a lack of participation by some members of the community, and the challenges of globalization that affect religious values. This study concludes that Islamic Religious Education teachers play a central role in developing a holistic Islamic education system within the Minangkabau community. Therefore, synergy among teachers, the community, and religious institutions must continue to be strengthened to reinforce Islamic education amid the dynamics of modern society.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a process of maturation and comprehensive development of all aspects of human beings including physical, biological, social, and psychological aspects. Education is not limited to the teaching of academic knowledge alone, but also encompasses the process of character formation, moral development, and the strengthening of self-awareness regarding the environment and social responsibility. As stated by (Darmaningtyas, 2015), education is a process of internalizing values and

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shaping the individual that enables humans to become meaningful beings in communal life. Furthermore, according to Idris & Za, (2017); Sahin, (2022), education is a process of humanizing human beings, which shapes a person's character to align with the values upheld by society and religion. Meanwhile, Ki Hajar Dewantara (Anggraini & Wiryanto, 2022; Tilaar, 2009) emphasizes that education aims to guide all the natural strengths inherent in children so that they, as human beings and as members of society, can achieve the highest possible level of well-being and happiness.

However, the situation is different when it comes to psychological and personality aspects of human beings, such as reason, emotions, self-awareness, moral values, and spirituality. These aspects will not develop optimally without systematic guidance, direction, and education. Through the educational process, individuals are guided to recognize their inner potential, learn to manage their emotions, think rationally, act ethically, and build healthy social relationships. Education serves as the primary tool for nurturing the human spirit so that it develops not only intellectually but also morally and spiritually.

Katapiang Village, one of the villages in Batang Anai Subdistrict, Padang Pariaman Regency, is an area with a strong religious character. The majority of its residents are Muslim and uphold the values of *adat basandi syarak, syarak basandi Kitabullah*. However, contemporary challenges such as the tide of globalization, technological advancements, and the influence of foreign cultures have impacted the social and religious lives of the community, including the younger generation. Therefore, the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers has become increasingly strategic and urgent in strengthening Islamic education within the community.

Teachers serve as agents of change who nurture, guide, and instill positive character values such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility as well as Islamic values in the community, not just among students (Mulyasa, 2015; Sahin, 2018). They also serve as informal leaders within the community, participating in religious activities, outreach programs, religious discussions, and even mediating social conflicts (Qoyyumillah et al., 2025). Through these roles, teachers indirectly strengthen social bonds, maintain community harmony, and foster social awareness within the community.

Moreover, Islamic Religious Education teachers play a strategic role in preserving Islamic values within the community, particularly in areas with a strong religious character such as Nagari Katapiang. By integrating with the community, teachers serve as a vital bridge between formal education and the broader social life of the community (Nashihin & Lidinillah, 2022). Therefore, strengthening the role of teachers is not only the responsibility of schools but also a shared responsibility among the government, the community, and families.

METHODS

This study is a qualitative study using a case study approach. Qualitative research is descriptive in nature and tends to employ inductive analysis. The qualitative research approach focuses on meaning, reasoning, situations, and definitions within specific contexts, while examining their connections to everyday life (Anidar et al., 2026; Aryasutha et al., 2025; Efendi et al., 2026; Engkizar et al., 2025; 2026; 2024; Judrah et al., 2024; Kassymova et al., 2025; Razali, 2023; Zulia et al., 2020). Simply put, this research is a direct, descriptive study that describes phenomena such as forms, activities, characteristics, changes, relationships, similarities, and differences between one phenomenon and another (Engkizar et al., 2018; Oktavia et al., 2023; Saminu et al., 2025; Wangi et al., 2022). This study employs a descriptive qualitative research design that examines facts found within the community regarding what is seen, heard, experienced, and felt. By examining the

role of Islamic education teachers in developing Islamic education, the researcher has therefore adopted a case study approach.

The data sources in this study consist of two types: primary data and secondary data, each of which plays an important role in addressing the research questions and achieving the research objectives (Moleong, 2021). Primary data is a data source that directly provides data to the data collector (Sugiyono, 2016). Primary data is obtained directly from the field through interviews, observations, and documentation of informants related to the research subject. The primary informants in this study are Islamic Religious Education teachers actively teaching at Islamic educational institutions or in the community; religious or community leaders who play a role in fostering Islamic education; and parents or community members involved in religious activities in the local area. Secondary data is obtained from various written sources relevant to the research focus, such as books, scientific journals, articles, policy documents, and previous research findings related to Islamic education in the community. This data serves to strengthen the theoretical foundation and support the analysis of field findings. By utilizing these two types of data sources, it is hoped that the results of this study will possess strong validity and be able to provide a comprehensive picture of the role and dynamics of Islamic education in the community (Mariyat & Saifulloh, 2020; Moleong, 2021).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Muslim Communities

Based on the author's research, it can be concluded that teachers play a very important and strategic role in community life, particularly in the context of character building and the development of Islamic values. A teacher does not merely act as an instructor in the classroom but also as an educator and moral role model for the surrounding community. This responsibility is inherent to the teaching profession, especially when the teacher possesses a deep understanding of Islam. In this regard, teachers serve as spiritual guides who instill the values of *akhlakul karimah* in both their students and the broader community. This was stated by informants 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

If only parents are responsible for a child's education, the results won't be optimal. But with religious teachers, children are better guided. They know right from wrong and show greater respect for their parents and community leaders (informant 1); My role as a religious teacher isn't just about reading the material and administering tests, but rather about setting a good example for the children. They'll find it easier to learn from our daily attitudes and behavior (informant 2); Islamic Religious Education teachers here don't just teach at school they also guide our children outside of school. They often give sermons at the mosque, lead youth devotional sessions, and even help organize religious study groups. They are very close to the community and serve as role models in matters of religion (informant 3); My child often tells me that his or her Islamic Religious Education teacher doesn't just teach religion in class but also likes to offer advice when a child is having problems. In fact, that teacher even came to our house when my child was feeling reluctant to go to school. We felt very supported (informant 4); He does not limit his role to just the school. He often guides us in religious discussions and also teaches us how to deliver sermons. We feel supported and directly guided by someone who truly understands religion (informant 5)

The interview results reinforce the finding that Islamic Religious Education teachers in the Katapiang sub-district play a very important role in guiding the younger generation. Their role is not limited to imparting religious knowledge but also encompasses the moral, spiritual, and social dimensions of Islam. The presence of Islamic Religious Education teachers within the community is seen as that of a mentor, motivator, and role model in everyday life.

Islamic Education in the Community

The concept of Islamic education, as viewed by the community of Katapiang, is not understood merely as the process of teaching religious knowledge, but more broadly as a process of character building, moral development, and setting a positive example in life all grounded in Islamic teachings and local customs. The Katapiang community interprets Islamic education as an effort to integrate religious values with the values of Minangkabau local wisdom, which are encapsulated in the philosophy “*Adat Basandi Syarak, Syarak Basandi Kitabullah*.” In daily practice, Islamic education is implemented through religious institutions such as *madrasah diniyah*, Alquran education centers, short-term Islamic boarding schools, and village-based religious study groups. This education is not only conducted formally in schools but also through informal channels rooted in the community, the family, and traditional suraus.

According to the people of Katapiang, Islamic education also emphasizes the importance of noble character, good manners in social interactions, respect for parents and teachers, and consistent religious practice from an early age. This is reflected in the custom of parents guiding their children to pray in congregation, read the Quran, and participate in religious activities at the mosque or surau.

For the community in Nagari Katapiang, Islamic education is not solely the responsibility of educational institutions, but rather a social obligation carried out collectively by parents, community elders, religious scholars, and local intellectuals, in accordance with the principles of “*tali tigo sapilin, tungku tigo sajarangan*.” This means that the religious upbringing of the younger generation must involve all elements of society, including Islamic religious education teachers.

Supporting and Hindering Factors in Developing Islamic Education

The continuity and success of religious activities within the Katapiang community do not occur by chance but are supported by various strong factors from social, cultural, and institutional aspects. These factors play a crucial role in preserving Islamic values amid the increasingly complex tide of modernization.

The factors supporting the development of Islamic education in the Katapiang village are diverse and interrelated. One of the key factors is the presence of active and dedicated Islamic religious education teachers. Religious education teachers in this village are known for their strong commitment to nurturing the younger generation, not only through teaching and learning activities at school but also through community religious activities such as *majelis taklim*, youth wirid, and moral guidance through social activities. Their dedication serves as a cornerstone in shaping the Islamic character of the community. In addition, support from parents and community leaders such as *ninik mamak* and *alim ulama* further strengthens this educational process. Although religious activities demonstrate positive momentum and are supported by many parties, their implementation still faces various obstacles that can affect the effectiveness and continuity of these activities. These inhibiting factors are both internal and external in nature and can stem from social, economic, or institutional aspects.

Based on field findings, the author observes that there are a number of inhibiting factors affecting the sustainability of religious activities in the Katapiang Nagari community. These factors do not exist in isolation but are intertwined, reflecting the social dynamics and contextual challenges faced by the local community. First, the decline in youth participation in religious activities is a serious warning sign for the future sustainability of religious education. With teenagers' interests increasingly leaning toward digital entertainment and social media, activities such as Quran recitation, religious study sessions, or mosque-based youth programs have become less popular. This situation indicates a shift in the interests of the younger generation, requiring new and innovative approaches to organizing religious

activities. Without special attention to this age group, there will be stagnation in the recruitment of new religious leaders at the local level.

Second, the lack of facilities and infrastructure also poses a serious obstacle. Several neighborhoods in Nagari Katapiang still face limitations in physical facilities, such as cramped classrooms in religious educational institutions and a shortage of worship equipment. Furthermore, the absence of visual aids or interactive media makes the religious learning process monotonous and unengaging, especially for the digital generation accustomed to visual and technological approaches.

Third, limited operational funds have a direct impact on the sustainability of religious activities such as short-term Islamic boarding schools, celebrations of major Islamic holidays, and training for teachers at Islamic educational institutions. Reliance on community self-help, while reflecting a spirit of mutual cooperation, remains insufficient to ensure the continuity of regular religious programs. This highlights the importance of policy intervention by local governments in the form of a community-based religious development budget.

Fourth, the busyness of the community due to modern work patterns and increasing economic burdens also presents a unique challenge. People are now more focused on individual economic activities, leading to a decline in their participation in social and religious activities. Traditional values such as deliberation and mutual cooperation, although still present, are gradually eroding. These changes signal a shift in social values that must be addressed by reinforcing the community's collective awareness of the importance of participating in religious activities.

CONCLUSION

Islamic Religious Education teachers play a strategic role in nurturing and shaping students' Islamic character, both within the school environment and in the community. Their role extends beyond teaching religious subjects to include serving as spiritual mentors, moral role models, and agents of social change. Islamic Religious Education teachers are actively involved in community religious activities such as religious study groups, Islamic study circles, and youth programs at mosques. Through their exemplary conduct and effective communication, Islamic Religious Education teachers serve as central figures in instilling Islamic values in the younger generation. Islamic education in the community takes various forms, both formal and non-formal. In addition to classroom instruction at school, the community is also active in religious activities such as youth devotional gatherings, Quranic education institutions, and *majelis taklim*. Islamic values are passed down from generation to generation through local Islamic traditions, such as the culture of mutual cooperation, mutual respect, and religious activities based on consensus. The community demonstrates a collective spirit in preserving its Islamic identity as part of daily life.

There are a number of factors that support and hinder the development of Islamic education in society. Supporting factors include the community's religious fervor, the presence of influential religious leaders, support from Islamic educational institutions, and synergy among families, schools, and the community. However, there are also several obstacles, such as a lack of non-formal religious education facilities, parents' limited time to guide their children, the negative influence of social media, and low motivation among some young people to participate in religious activities. Therefore, synergy among all elements of society is needed to fully optimize the role of Islamic education.

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