

# Strengthening Islamic religious literacy in building religious character and culture in elementary schools

Lu'lu' Hilyatuz Zakiyah\*, Edi Nurhidin

Universitas Islam Tribakti Lirboyo Kediri, Indonesia

\*luminmiezakia@gmail.com

## Abstract

*The issue of religious literacy is crucial, particularly in the context of Quranic reading ability. This study aims to scrutinize the practice of religious literacy through continuous habituation and experiential learning, and its implications for religious culture in elementary schools. To answer these research objectives, this study focuses on the question "How is religious literacy implemented through various religious practices in elementary schools? What are the implications for the formation of students' character and religious culture?" To answer these questions, this study employs a qualitative single instrumental case study approach, drawing on observation, interviews, and documentation. The results show that strengthening religious literacy is realized through habitual practices, such as reading the Quran, praying in congregation, reciting tahlil, reciting Asma al Husna, providing a reading corner, and commemorating religious holidays. These practices contribute to improving students' religious literacy, fostering attitudes of discipline, responsibility, and tolerance, and encouraging the formation of a school religious culture in students' social lives. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that religious literacy has real implications for the formation of students' character and religious culture, especially when implemented through continuous habituation and experiential learning in a consistent and structured manner.*

**Keywords:** *Islamic Religious Literacy; Religious Culture; Students' Character.*

## Abstrak

Persoalan literasi keagamaan merupakan isu penting, khususnya pada aspek kemampuan membaca Al-Qur'an. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji praktik literasi keagamaan melalui pembiasaan berkelanjutan dan pembelajaran pengalaman, serta implikasinya terhadap budaya keagamaan di sekolah dasar. Untuk menjawab tujuan penelitian ini, studi ini berfokus pada pertanyaan "Bagaimana literasi agama diimplementasikan melalui berbagai praktik keagamaan di sekolah dasar? Apa implikasinya terhadap pembentukan karakter dan budaya keagamaan siswa?" Untuk menjawab pertanyaan-pertanyaan tersebut, penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus instrumental tunggal kualitatif, dengan menggunakan observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penguatan literasi agama diwujudkan melalui praktik-praktik kebiasaan, seperti membaca Al-Qur'an, salat berjemaah, membaca tahlil, membaca Asma al Husna, menyediakan pojok baca,

**Article Information:** Received Jan 24, 2026, Accepted Mar 28, 2026, Published Apr 30, 2026

**Copyright (c)** 2026 Tawazun: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam

This article is licensed under Creative Commons License **CC-BY-SA**

dan memperingati hari raya keagamaan. Praktik ini berkontribusi pada peningkatan literasi agama siswa, menumbuhkan sikap disiplin, tanggung jawab, dan toleransi, serta mendorong pembentukan budaya keagamaan sekolah dalam kehidupan sosial siswa. Berdasarkan temuan tersebut, dapat disimpulkan bahwa literasi agama memiliki implikasi nyata terhadap pembentukan karakter dan budaya keagamaan siswa, terutama bila diimplementasikan melalui pembiasaan berkelanjutan dan pembelajaran pengalaman secara konsisten dan terstruktur.

**Kata kunci:** Budaya Religius; Karakter Siswa; Literasi Keagamaan Islam.

## Introduction

Strengthening Islamic religious literacy in elementary schools is inseparable from the social reality of students' weak basic religious literacy. This condition is related to the reality that diverse practices, both in learning and in religious practices within the social environment, shape students' religious literacy. Differences in practices and social environments mean students' religious literacy does not develop evenly, so schools become a strategic social space for strengthening it. This fact is in line with the results of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Islamic education assessment of approximately 13,600 elementary school students, which showed weak religious literacy abilities both in the cognitive aspect related to understanding the pillars of faith (57.43) and the psychomotor aspect in the ability to read the Qur'an (77.46). Only 3.2% of students were proficient, and 67.5% were still at the basic level (Asrori, 2025; Larasati, 2025). This condition is reinforced by the Director of Islamic Religious Education, M. Munir, who emphasized that the high religiosity of Indonesian society is not yet fully supported by adequate basic literacy (Benke, 2025). Thus, strengthening Islamic religious literacy in elementary schools is a fundamental factual need in building students' character and religious culture.

The reality of weak Islamic religious literacy was also found in the elementary school where this research took place. Although SDN Bulusari II has long implemented religious literacy, many students still cannot read the Qur'an correctly. In response to this situation, the school implemented a policy to strengthen religious literacy, in line with the Ministry of Religious Affairs' policy on strengthening Islamic religious literacy (Wulandari, 2025). The program plays a role in shaping the school's character, religious culture, and identity, leading the school to successfully win the School Religious Culture award at the Kediri Regency level and be nominated at the East Java Province level (Zulaikha, 2025). The practice of religious habituation can be understood through the perspective of character education, which views the formation of students' religious character as often linked to behavioral habituation and the internalization of normative values in the learning process (Zubaedi, 2015). This approach is reinforced by the

theory of value-based character education, which emphasizes integrating moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action in the educational process (Annisa et al., 2024).

Meanwhile, in Islamic education, religious character is formed through a gradual process of internalizing values from transformation to actualization in educational practice (Muhaimin, 2012, 2016). In line with this perspective, previous studies have shown that strengthening the religious character of students in elementary schools is carried out through a process of habituating religious practices, integrating Islamic values and local culture that helps students connect religious knowledge with practices in life (Adilla et al., 2025; Fitriah et al., 2025; Tohri et al., 2022). This practice is implemented through several forms of religious literacy, such as congregational *Duha* prayer, reading the Qur'an, memorizing short surahs, teacher role models, and strengthening religious culture in schools (Nasution et al., 2025). Other studies also confirm that the habituation of worship and the integration of religious values in learning play an important role in the formation of students' character and religious culture, even though their implementation remains normative and practical (Fadholi, 2023; Nurhidin, 2022; L. N. Sari & As'ad, 2024).

Existing studies are inadequate because they have not examined Islamic religious literacy as a substantive foundation that systematically connects cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects in the formation of students' character and religious culture in schools. Therefore, this research offers a novel approach by positioning religious literacy as an experience-based learning process integrated with real-life habits and practices in the school environment, aligning cognitive understanding with psychomotor skills. Furthermore, concrete practices and experiences gradually develop students' potential, thus forming a relatively stable religious perspective in the long term. Thus, this research contributes to expanding the study of religious character education by emphasizing the relationships among religious literacy, consistent habits, and the acculturation of school religious culture.

The purpose of this article is to offer a new perspective by making Islamic religious literacy a central foundation for character and religious culture in elementary schools, rather than merely a routine or symbolic habit. The appreciation of the values instilled is also crucial to the effort to foster character and religious culture in elementary schools. At the same time, this article questions how the weakness of Islamic religious literacy, especially in the ability to read the Qur'an, influences the formation of student characteristics that are merely symbolic. Therefore, this article questions how the process of strengthening Islamic religious literacy in elementary schools structures the goals

of Islamic religious practice and the formation of student character, to establish a sustainable school religious culture. The answer to this question is expected to offer a new perspective on the role of Islamic religious literacy in integrating learning with religious practice to help students internalize religious values.

This paper argues that strengthening Islamic religious literacy is a key factor in shaping religious character and culture among elementary school students. Elementary school is not only a place to pursue formal education but also a forum for fostering spiritual awareness, discipline, and social responsibility in students. Therefore, weak Islamic religious literacy, especially in the ability to read the Qur'an, has implications for students' religious practices that they do not fully internalize. Thus, Islamic religious literacy serves not only as a habit and routine but also as a religious culture shaped as an ideological framework, providing a foundation for responding to events guided by Islamic religious values.

## **Research Method**

Strengthening Islamic religious literacy in elementary schools not only functions as an effort to master religious knowledge but also plays an important role in building students' character and religious culture (Fadholi, 2023; Habibah & Wahyuni, 2020). Through various religious practices, schools become strategic spaces for instilling religious values, morals, discipline, and tolerance in daily life. Therefore, strengthening Islamic religious literacy was chosen as the object of study because it represents a school's concrete efforts to build the character and religious culture of elementary school students.

This study employed a qualitative research design with a single instrumental case study. As Creswell and Poth stated, the case study was used to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon of literacy strengthening in building students' character and religious culture at a single school (Creswell & Poth, 2016). After that, a mapping was conducted on the forms of strengthening Islamic religious literacy implemented at Bulusari II Elementary school. The mapping was carried out on Islamic religious literacy practices implemented in the school environment to address a case that occurred. The data obtained were mapped to aspects of Islamic religious literacy aligned with the research objectives and classified into three categories: reading the Qur'an, daily worship habits, and the implications of religious literacy for character formation and religious culture in schools.

The primary data in this study were obtained through observations of religious activities conducted in schools and interviews with Islamic religious education teachers, principals, students, and other relevant parties. Direct observation and interviews were the primary data sources because they facilitated the researcher's contextual mapping of ongoing Islamic religious

literacy. Through observation, the researcher directly recorded the forms of religious literacy practices and social interactions that shape the school's religious character and culture. Interviews were used to explore teachers' and school officials' explanations and perspectives on the meaning, strategies, and objectives of strengthening religious literacy in schools. Furthermore, this study also utilized secondary data in the form of documentation and a review of existing literature, particularly regarding the implementation of religious literacy in elementary schools and character building through school religious culture, obtained through a search of published journal articles.

The data obtained were then analyzed using the qualitative case study analysis proposed by Creswell and Poth. The analysis process included organizing the data, reading the entire dataset, coding it, grouping it into themes, and interpreting the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2016). This stage is used to map out the forms of strengthening religious literacy in schools and how they contribute to the process of forming students' character and religious culture.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **A. Results**

#### ***1. Practices of strengthening Islamic religious literacy in elementary schools***

Strengthening Islamic religious literacy stems from a school policy that embeds religious values in the school culture. The principal explained that this policy was formulated in response to a combination of student needs, particularly in Qur'anic reading skills and the habituation of religious practices, as well as the Ministry of Religious Affairs' program demands for complete Qur'anic reading and writing. From this policy, several program plans were born to support Islamic religious literacy, developed directly by the school's development team. The principal emphasized, "The planning process is carried out through a school meeting, with ideas submitted to the development team and then discussed together with teachers, committee members, and parents, under direct supervision by the supervisor" (Besuki, 2025).

Once the program is approved, a schedule of activities and implementation times is created, along with adjustments to methods and mentors to suit student needs. It is done to manage time, avoid conflicts with other activities, and ensure students remain comfortable in implementing the program. The schedule can change at any time depending on the situation at school. The results of the Qur'an reading activities in class, reading short surahs, *tahlilan* group, congregational prayers, morning prayers, and a reading corner are arranged as a series of

mutually supportive activities, so that Islamic religious literacy can run smoothly and in a focused manner.

Religious literacy strengthening activities are carried out to improve students' fluency in reading the Qur'an, prepare them for the future, and motivate them to consistently apply religious attitudes in their daily lives. These religious literacy activities foster a religious school environment. These religious activities include literacy and hands-on practice, guided by an Islamic Religious Education teacher and other teachers deemed competent in religious fields.

a. Practice of reading the Qur'an

The implementation of Qur'an reading in the classroom is a flagship program. This program exists to address the challenge posed by the low reading ability of some students who cannot read the Qur'an properly. This program is specifically for students in grades one through three, intending to enable sixth-grade students to read the Qur'an properly.

The Qur'an reading session was held after class, lasting approximately thirty minutes. The media used included the *Iqra'* book, the *An-Nahdiyin* volume, and the Qur'an. Each student was free to use learning media that suited their individual needs and abilities. Before the Qur'an reading session began, students read two to three memorized short surahs, then came forward one by one to learn to read the Qur'an under the teacher's guidance. Students were grouped into two categories: those who could read the Qur'an and those who could not yet.

The purpose of this grouping was to ensure that students who could not yet read the Qur'an received intensive guidance. The implementation of this activity demonstrated a structured learning effort to improve students' ability to read the Qur'an. Qur'an reading is a key form of religious habituation in schools. In addition to after-school activities, Qur'an reading is also offered at other times. The format and implementation are explained in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Forms of Implementation of Al- Qur'an Reading Activities

No.	Form of Activity	Execution time	Activity Objectives
1.	Reading the Qur'an together	Before the lesson	Religious habituation
2.	<i>Tadarus</i>	Before the Duha prayer	Reading fluency
3.	Reading the Qur'an in class	After class hours	Fluency and Tajweed

Based on Table 1, Qur'an reading activities are quite diverse and have different objectives. The implementation of reading the Qur'an together before class is carried out routinely as a form of habituation of religious culture in schools. Meanwhile, *tadarus* is carried out to train readiness, courage, and fluency in reading the Qur'an. Reading the Qur'an in class is a flagship program that helps students understand *tajwid* with direct teacher guidance. All of these

activities are designed to improve students' religious literacy, especially in Qur'an reading, so that they can produce graduates who excel in religious matters.

The evaluation phase of the Qur'an reading program in the classroom is carried out using the TBQBS guidebook as the primary instrument for monitoring student development. The TBQBS guidebook periodically summarizes each student's Qur'an reading skills, including *tajweed* accuracy, *makhraj*, fluency, and memorization of short surahs (Besuki, 2025). Using the TBQBS guidebook, teachers can monitor student progress in a measurable, ongoing manner. This evaluation can provide a basis for more targeted follow-up learning and help determine future learning strategies.

b. Habit of reciting *tahlil*

Joint *tahlil* religious literacy is part of strengthening Islamic religious literacy and is integrated into the religious Friday program. This activity is carried out routinely every Friday and is guided directly by Islamic Religious Education teachers as a form of collective religious habituation. Based on interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers, the *tahlil* activity was chosen as a form of adaptation to the implementation of the *istighatsah* and *Surah Yasin* recitations, which were previously carried out in full but deemed ineffective for elementary school students. The long recitation duration causes students to lose focus and become sleepy; therefore, activities are needed that are still meaningful but more appropriate to students' characteristics and conditions.

The results of these adjustments were then realized in a more structured and controlled *tahlil* activity. Based on observations, the *tahlil* activity was carried out more quickly and read aloud with enthusiasm. The media used was a *tahlil* book, typically found at the seven-day memorial service for the deceased. This book was chosen for its concise content and easy reading, and for ensuring that all students had easy access to it. This implementation pattern demonstrates the school's efforts to follow up on evaluations of prior religious activities to ensure the religious Friday program remains effective and appropriate for students' needs.

c. Praying habits

Based on the results of interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers, "There are several religious activities implemented at Bulusari II Elementary school, one of which is congregational prayer, not only *Duha* prayer, but here there is also a congregational *Dhuhr* prayer consistently carried out every day. The *Duha* prayer is held from 09.00 AM to 09.20 AM. It is conducted before the break in the school-provided prayer room. Before that, students read *Asma al Husna* first. At the same time, the congregational *Duhur* prayer is carried out after

school hours are finished, before going home from school". Based on the observations, *Duha* prayer is performed in four *rakaat* with two times of greeting, as taught directly by the Islamic Religious Education teacher.

In the first two *rakaat* all the recitations of *Duha* prayer are sounded, it is a chesty phenomenon and after being asked to the Islamic Religious Education teacher he explained "The recitations in the first two *rakaat* of *Duha* prayer are sounded so that students are ready to perform *Duha* prayer, besides that it also helps students to be easy memorizing, and for students who have not yet memorized the prayer readings, it helps them to memorize and recite them easily, because at least they hear the prayer readings from their friends" (Zulaikha, 2025). This way, students' understanding of the *Duha* prayer can be shared and motivate those who haven't yet memorized the prayer recitations to work harder.

The congregational *Dhuhr* prayer is held in the school-provided prayer room, led by several students appointed by the Islamic Religious Education teacher. The imam for the congregational *Dhuhr* prayer has been determined and scheduled. Those assigned to lead the *Dhuhr* prayer properly and orderly can build students' character of responsibility and discipline. Non-Muslim students are prohibited from leaving first; they must wait until the congregation has finished before leaving together. This attitude shows strong tolerance and togetherness between Muslim and non-Muslim students.

#### d. Reading corner

Students can learn about religion not only in class but also in the reading corner provided, specifically the library corner dedicated to books on Islamic Religious Education and the Islamic religion. Students themselves provide the books in the reading corner, so students are asked to bring Islam-related books and place them there, allowing them to choose which books to read freely. The implementation of this reading corner remains unstructured, with students given the freedom to read there, though they often do so during breaks.

Evaluation related to the reading corner program has been running but is still not effective, the Islamic Religious Education teacher explained that to maximize the effectiveness of the reading corner there is a plan for the reading corner program in the following year "In the future there will be a schedule for students to read in the reading corner, not only that, later each student will also be asked to present the contents of the book they have read, so that all students also know what the contents of the book are. That will also train students' courage and public speaking". Currently, the Islamic Religious Education teacher is still submitting a proposal for a scheduling plan for the follow-up to the reading corner evaluation. Whether it is realized or not, it will be evident next school year.

e. *Asma al husna* literacy (Lisna)

*Asma al Husna* literacy, also known as *Lisna*, is a habit that is carried out in the classroom before the start of learning and after the completion of the *Duha* prayer. *Lisna* is carried out outside the classroom after morning exercise, the duration is about 15 minutes, led by students in turns in front of the class. During *Lisna*, a unique phenomenon was observed: it is not only recited as *Asma al Husna* but is also interpreted through movements that convey the meaning of Allah's attributes. From interview results with Islamic Religious Education teachers, it was explained that "reading *Asma al Husna* accompanied by meaning and movements can help make it easier for students to understand the meaning of *Asma al Husna*, also strengthen students' memory when students forget at any time".

From there, it can be concluded that Islamic Religious Education teachers have their own strategies to help students understand the meaning of *Asma al Husna*, which also represents an innovation that can be applied in other elementary schools. After the evaluation, *Lisna* was previously conducted outside the classroom after morning exercise. Still, because the duration was long and many students complained about standing too long, a shift in timing was finally implemented to address this problem. *Lisna* was held in the classroom before the lesson began, precisely after singing the national anthem. With the time shift, *Lisna* ran more smoothly, and no students complained about the program.

**2. *Implications of Islamic religious literacy practices on strengthening student character and school culture***

Based on interviews with the principal, the implementation of religious literacy aligns with the school's vision and mission and will have implications for the formation of the school's character and religious culture. The principal emphasized, "Bulusari II Elementary School has a vision of realizing students who are faithful and have noble morals, excel in skilled achievements, are independent, cultured, and care about the environment. To realize this mission, the school also has a mission, one of which is to balance intellectual, emotional, and spiritual development so that superior and quality individuals are formed. Therefore, the school organizes several religious literacy programs to form students who excel both academically and in their religious attitudes. The school also holds extracurricular activities, especially *rebana*, as an effort to support the school's religious culture." The principal's statement shows that religious literacy is not just an additional activity but rather an integral part of integrating the school's vision with the formation of student character.

The implications of implementing religious literacy at Bulusari II Elementary School are evident not only in knowledge but also in the internalization of Islamic values, which can shape the school's character and culture. Each religious program is designed to instill the values of discipline, courtesy, honesty, tolerance, courage, responsibility, and the habit of diligent worship. The internalization of these religious values is evident in changes in student attitudes. After the Qur'an reading program was held in class, students became more fluent in reading the Qur'an. That means that at the place where students study the Qur'an, they no longer have difficulty and even become fluent as they progress.

Congregational prayer also has a significant impact on students, both in the school environment and outside. The existence of congregational prayer led directly by students, and indirectly fosters an attitude of courage and responsibility in carrying out the tasks given, as well as a diligent attitude of worship in students. In addition, the Islamic Religious Education teacher explained, "There was one parent who said that his child was more independent in worship, enthusiastic about reciting the Koran, and some even participated in learning MTQ with Ustaz Sabar". That is an achievement in itself for the school and its students, with several students participating in MTQ learning with Ustaz Sabar. When there are PHBI teachers, they do not have trouble finding a *qari* because the teacher can appoint students directly (Zulaikha, 2025).

The habit of reading *Asma al Husna* seems simple, but in reality, it serves as a support for students learning Islamic Religious Education materials. At the elementary school level, these materials cannot be separated from the exemplary names of Allah. So that during the lesson, students easily understand the meanings and exemplary names of Allah, because *Asma al Husna* is made a habit every day. The Islamic Religious Education teacher emphasized "The existence of religious literacy really helps students understand the Islamic Religious Education material that is delivered, in the chapter on prayer students are already proficient and even memorize the prayer readings because they pray in congregation every day, besides that in grade 5 there is material about the *duha* letter, many students have also memorized it because every *duha* prayer is always read". From there, it can be concluded that habituation in elementary school children is very important because it can form a basic character that will determine attitudes after adulthood.

The habit of *tahlil* and reading corners also has implications for the formation of religious student character, even strengthening students' spiritual values, so that they are not only competent in academics but also in religious activities. By reading books in the reading corner, students' understanding of the exemplary behavior of the Prophet Muhammad and of scholars such as the *Walisono* and

the *Khulafaurrasyidin* is enhanced. Understanding these examples indirectly motivates students to always behave well in accordance with Islamic teachings. Changes in student attitudes can be seen in how students mingle with friends; mutual respect and tolerance are already deeply embedded in students' personalities.

In addition to shaping individual religious character, religious literacy also contributes to the creation of a religious school culture. Routine activities such as congregational prayer, reading the Qur'an, reciting the *Asma al Husna* (the Beautiful Names of Allah), praying together, and practicing greetings have become part of the school culture and are practiced by all members of the school community. This culture does not simply emerge from routine; rather, it is internalized and consistently practiced by teachers and students. Thanks to all of this, the school successfully won the School Religious Culture award at the Kediri Regency level and was nominated for the East Java Province level (Zulaikha, 2025).

In addition to daily routines, the school also commemorates religious holidays for Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism. The entire school community participates in these celebrations, bringing their own *asahan* (rice boxes) and wearing Hindu attire, including sarongs and white shirts. They then gather by religion for a prayer session. After all the cultural activities are completed, they eat their *asahan* together. This activity is different from usual due to the diversity of students' religious and cultural backgrounds. The students' religious backgrounds, which serve as the basis for implementing these activities, are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2.** Student Religious Background

School year	Islam	Christian	Catholic	Hindu	Amount
2023/2024	77	1	-	7	85
2024/2025	79	1	2	5	87
2025/2026	91	1	2	3	97

Table 2 shows that students come from diverse religious backgrounds. This situation encourages schools to develop religious activities that not only focus on the majority religion but also provide space for the respectful celebration of other religious holidays through participation and tolerance. It demonstrates that religious literacy also fosters tolerance and a culture of mutual respect.

## **B. Discussion**

### **1. Religious literacy as a foundation for strengthening school religious culture**

The findings of this study indicate that strengthening Islamic religious literacy is achieved through various habitual practices, such as reading the

Qur'an, congregational prayer, reciting *tahlil*, memorizing the *Asma al Husna*, providing a religious reading corner, and commemorating religious holidays. All activities are carried out routinely and consistently as part of the school's effort to instill religious values and build students' character and religious culture. This implementation is not only oriented towards improving students' cognitive abilities, but also shapes attitudes of discipline and responsibility, and encourages students to think reflectively rather than hastily when making assessments.

This condition is not only evident in students' daily practices. Still, it is also evident in the school's achievements, including receiving the Religious Culture School award at the Kediri Regency level and being nominated at the East Java Province level (SRC, 2025). This achievement is a manifestation of the formation of school culture, as stated by Deal and Paterson in their theory of shaping school culture: the shared beliefs, values, and norms that shape the way people think, feel, and act in a school. That means that school culture comprises the shared values, beliefs, and norms that shape how school members think, behave, and act in their daily lives at school (Deal & Peterson, 2016; Nurhidin, 2017). At Bulusari II Elementary School, the school plays an important role in shaping students' character and religious culture, not only through religious programs and formal rules, but also through customs, traditions, and school programs that are continually evaluated to maintain the school's religious culture.

In line with these findings, several previous studies have shown that several religious practices are carried out flexibly, even as extracurricular activities (Farleni et al., 2023; Wahyuniati & Sutarman, 2024). Although religious culture already exists, its implementation is not yet comprehensive, so some activities cannot serve as learning experiences for students (Hardiansyah & Mas'odi, 2020). Not all elementary schools have a strong religious culture, due to minimal religious habits (Arimbi & Minsih, 2022). Unlike these conditions, this research views religious culture as embedded and internalized through diverse, consistent, and even continuous religious practices, enabling it to form a complete religious character and attitude.

## ***2. Implications of strengthening religious literacy in the formation of students' character and religious attitudes***

The findings of this study confirm that religious literacy practices are not limited to the ability to read religious texts but also play a significant role in the process of learning values, essentially through continuous habituation and direct experience. This aligns with Thomas Lickona's character education theory, which emphasizes the role of habituation in shaping students' values and morals (Lickona, 2012). Habituation is the process of internalizing character through

habitual actions, so that moral values become part of the student's self (Muhlisin & Nurhidin, 2020; Oktaviani & Kaltsum, 2023). In line with Lickona's view on habituation, Imam Ghazali's paradigm also holds that human personality can be formed through habituation, namely, the continuous practice of certain activities until they become ingrained behaviors. Thus, the practice of literacy through consistent religious habituation can be understood as a form of habituation that plays an important role in shaping students' religious character in elementary schools (Baharuddin & Resky, 2025; Nurhikmah, 2024).

While habituation is understood as a process of habituating values through repeated practice, it must still be viewed as a learning experience directly experienced by students. In this context, experiential learning is highly relevant in explaining how religious literacy practices occur at Bulusari II Elementary School. Experiential learning is learning that is formed through active involvement and understanding of real experiences (Aribowo et al., 2025). The experience plays an important role in the educational process because it requires students to relate actions to meaning (Anshari et al., 2025; Sikandar, 2016). In the practice of security literacy, reading the Qur'an, praying in congregation, reciting *tahlil*, the *Asma al Husna*, and commemorating religious holidays become direct experiences that students repeatedly experience. Through these experiences, students not only engage in routine activities but also gradually understand the meaning, value, and purpose of their religious practices, thereby gradually developing their potential.

Religious holiday celebrations also continued, albeit with diverse participation, including the use of traditional attire and prayers in accordance with each student's traditions and religion. It demonstrates that tolerance is fostered through inclusive school cultural practices. These activities also demonstrate respect for differences within the same social space, fostering in students the understanding that cultural and religious differences are part of shared life (Hanafi et al., 2023). This practice aligns with the empowering dimension of school culture and social structure proposed by Banks, in which schools become just and inclusive social spaces for all school members, free of cultural and religious discrimination (Banks, 2015; Ginting & Efendi Limbong, 2025). Indirectly, this condition aligns with the *Pancasila* students' profile across the dimensions of faith, piety, noble character, and global diversity (Habibah & Nurhidin, 2023; Ramli et al., 2025). Thus, this condition encourages the formation of a student character that avoids negative generalizations and appreciates social diversity.

The success of various religious literacy activities is inseparable from teachers' example and motivation in building a school culture that respects differences.

Teachers are not only driving forces but also moral figures who instill positive attitudes in students. Teachers' role models in the world of education are the best way to shape students' characteristics; students observe all their behavior, actions, manners, dress, discipline, and speech (Baharuddin & Resky, 2025; Habibah, 2019). This exemplary behavior can be seen in how teachers solve problems at school, guide students, and provide explanations so that students are not prejudiced against cultural and religious diversity, and foster mutual tolerance among all members of the school community.

In line with these findings, several previous studies show that religious literacy in elementary schools is generally understood as a normative program and ordinary habituation (W. D. Sari, 2023). Various religious practices can form attitudes of discipline, responsibility, independence and obedience to regulations (Zahidi & Praheto, 2024). Besides, the evaluation is still conducted using simple test methods, so teachers are less than optimal in assessing students' abilities (Kadir et al., 2025; Lubis et al., 2024). Unlike those studies, this research positions religious literacy not merely as routine, but as an experiential learning process that can shape the school's understanding, character, and religious culture as a whole. The formation of attitudes of discipline, responsibility, independence, obedience, and tolerance amidst cultural and religious diversity marks that. Theoretically, this finding strengthens the concept of experiential learning and character habituation, namely habituation accompanied by reflection on experience, not only internalizes religious values, but also forms social attitudes and school culture (Aribowo et al., 2025; Oktaviani & Kaltsum, 2023). Furthermore, at this elementary school, evaluation is comprehensive, enabling teachers to understand students' needs and conditions and to provide instruction accordingly.

Overall, the findings of this study indicate that strengthening religious literacy at Bulusari II Elementary School is not merely a ritual activity, but a moral and social learning space that shapes students' non-*a priori* ways of thinking. The practice of reading the Qur'an, congregational prayer, *tahlil*, memorization of the *Asma al Husna*, and commemoration of major holidays can be carried out well and in a structured manner, indicating that religious values can go hand in hand with attitudes of tolerance and mutual respect. This condition confirms that religious literacy, when supported by an inclusive school culture and teacher role models, can shape the character of religious students and help them navigate social interactions without easily judging others. The success of this religious literacy can serve as an example for other schools in strengthening religious literacy to produce a generation of the nation that is moral and sensitive to diversity.

## Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, it can be concluded that the implementation of Islamic religious literacy at Bulusari II Elementary School through the habit of reading the Qur'an, congregational prayer, reading *tahlil*, literacy of *Asma al Husna*, reading corners and commemorating major holidays is not only a normal habit, but also a means of internalizing character values and tolerance. Various religious practices implemented demonstrate that religious literacy shapes religious attitudes, discipline, responsibility, courage, and students' ability to face differences in all contexts, especially in everyday life. Thus, religious literacy does not focus solely on mastering texts but also develops into a holistic process of value learning. These findings emphasize the importance of teachers and schools in managing a religious culture inclusively and contextually to support the sustainable development of students' religious character. Consistent, daily congregational prayer is a significant advantage for the school. A strong, tolerant religious culture enhances the school's reputation, earning the School Religious Culture Award at the Kediri Regency level and being nominated for the East Java Provincial level. However, this study faces limitations in scope and subject matter, necessitating research with a more diverse school context and a broader methodological approach. Future research is expected to delve deeper into the relationship between Islamic religious literacy and school culture.

## References

- Adilla, U., Mubaidillah, M., Badriah, A. N., & Fauziyah, A. (2025). Literasi Dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam: Strategi Penguatan Karakter Membaca Al-Qur'an Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *NUR EL-ISLAM : Jurnal Pendidikan dan Sosial Keagamaan*, 12(1), 112–127. <https://doi.org/10.51311/nuris.v12i1.1011>
- Annisa, A. N., Ismail, M. S., & Mabruri. (2024). Pendidikan Karakter Persepektif Thomas Lickona (Analisis Nilai Islami Dalam Buku Educating for Character). *El-Madib: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar Islam*, 4(1), 102–115. <https://doi.org/10.51311/el-madib.v4i1.611>
- Anshari, I., Mujiburrahman, M., Rijal, F., Alfadhil, M., & Tihalimah, T. (2025). Learning Innovation in Dayah: The Effectiveness of Experiential Learning Methods in Developing Students' Skills. *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, 13(3), 2363–2338. <https://doi.org/10.26811/peuradeun.v13i3.2202>
- Ariboowo, S., Nadiroh, N., & Faesal, M. (2025). Implementation of Experiential Learning Methods in Environmental Education. *International Journal of Business, Law, and Education*, 6(1), 468–476. <https://doi.org/10.56442/ijble.v6i1.1037>
- Arimbi, N. A. W., & Minsih, M. (2022). Budaya Sekolah pada Pembentukan Karakter Religiusitas pada Siswa Sekolah Dasar. *Jurnal Obsesi : Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia*

- Dini*, 6(6), 6409–6416. <https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v6i6.3042>
- Asrori, M. (2025, November 12). *Catat, Asesmen Nasional Literasi Dasar Beragama bagi Siswa Digelar 18 November*. Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. <https://kemenag.go.id/nasional/catat-asesmen-nasional-literasi-dasar-beragama-bagi-siswa-digelar-18-november-oN1bG>
- Baharuddin, B., & Resky, M. (2025). Fostering Students' Religious Character Based on the Religious Literacy Program. *Belajea: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10(1), 203–224. <https://doi.org/10.29240/belajea.v10i1.10867>
- Banks, J. A. (2015). *Cultural Diversity and Education*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315622255>
- Benke, B. (2025). *Kemenag Umumkan Indeks PAI 2025: Literasi Baca Al-Quran Siswa dan Guru SD Masih Jadi Tantangan*. Suara Merdeka Jakarta. <https://jakarta.suaramerdeka.com/nasional/13416493231/kemenag-umumkan-indeks-pai-2025-literasi-baca-al-quran-siswa-dan-guru-sd-masih-jadi-tantangan>
- Besuki, E. (2025, November 25). *Wawancara dengan Kepala Sekolah SDN Bulusari II*.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. SAGE Publications.
- Deal, T. E., & Peterson, K. D. (2016). *Shaping School Culture*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Fadholi, A. (2023). Peran Agama Islam dalam Membentuk Karakter Religius Siswa melalui Kegiatan Keagamaan di Sekolah Dasar. *Auladuna: Jurnal Prodi Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah*, 5(2), 13–24. <https://doi.org/10.62097/au.v5i2.1576>
- Farleni, F., Hidayat, S., Jamaludin, U., & Leksono, S. M. (2023). Internalisasi Pendidikan Karakter Religius Melalui Budaya Sekolah Di SD. *Jurnal Elementaria Edukasia*, 6(2), 931–939. <https://doi.org/10.31949/jee.v6i2.5324>
- Fitriah, U. L., Setyosari, P., Mas'ula, S., Anggraini, A. E., Faizah, S., Mardhatillah, M., & Kusumaningrum, S. R. (2025). Developments of Religious Character Education in Primary Schools in The Last Five Years. *Journal of Innovation and Research in Primary Education*, 4(3), 585–593. <https://doi.org/10.56916/jirpe.v4i3.1426>
- Ginting, N., & Efendi Limbong, I. (2025). *Actualization of Religious Moderation Values in Multi-Ethnic Schools, Scaffolding Jurnal Pendidikan Islam dan Multikultural*. 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.37680/scaffolding.v7i1.7229>
- Habibah, M. (2019). Pengembangan Budaya Literasi Agama di SMA Negeri 2 Kediri. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies (IJIES)*, 2(2), Article 2. <https://doi.org/10.33367/ijies.v2i2.1110>
- Habibah, M., & Nurhidin, E. (2023). Profil Pelajar dalam Kurikulum Merdeka Madrasah di Era VUCA. *Intelektual: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Keislaman*, 13(2), 211–230. <https://doi.org/10.33367/ji.v13i2.4061>
- Habibah, M., & Wahyuni, S. (2020). Literasi Agama Islam Sebagai Strategi Pembinaan Karakter Religius Siswa Ra Km Al Hikmah Kediri. *JCE (Journal of Childhood Education)*, 4(1), 120. <https://doi.org/10.30736/jce.v3i2.114>
- Hanafi, Y., Saefi, M., Diyana, T. N., Ikhsan, M. A., Yani, M. T., Suciptaningsih, O. A., Anggraini, A. E., & Rufiana, I. S. (2023). What content offers and how teachers teach: Religious Moderation-integrated teaching in Indonesia. *HTS Teologiese*

- Studies / Theological Studies*, 79(2), 8. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i2.9070>
- Hardiansyah, F., & Mas'odi, M. (2020). Implementasi Nilai Religius Melalui Budaya Sekolah: Studi Fenomenologi. *Autentik : Jurnal Pengembangan Pendidikan Dasar*, 4(1), 15–24. <https://doi.org/10.36379/autentik.v4i1.49>
- Kadir, A., Endaryono, B. T., & Rostandi, U. D. (2025). School Management Based on Islamic Law Sd Tahfizh Tes Method (Tilawah Evaluasi Sederhana) in Baleendah, Bandung. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 14(03), 627–640. <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v14i03.8424>
- Larasati, C. (2025, November 18). *Kemenag Gelar Serentak ANLBD 2025 untuk 13.600 Siswa SD, Ini Tujuannya*. medcom.id. <https://www.medcom.id/pendidikan/news-pendidikan/9K5ydm3K-kemenag-gelar-serentak-anlbd-2025-untuk-13-600-siswa-sd-ini-tujuannya>
- Lickona, T. (2012). *Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility* (U. Wahyudin, Ed.; J. A. Wamaungo, Trans.). Bumi Aksara.
- Lubis, R. R., Siagian, R. A., Nurjannah, S., & Lubis, M. (2024). Qur'an Literacy in Children (Phenomenological Study at Um Hafidzah Integrated Islamic Elementary School). *Arfannur: Journal of Islamic Education*, 5(2), 133–142. <https://doi.org/10.24260/arfannur.v5i2.3081>
- Muhaimin. (2012). *Paradigma Pendidikan Islam: Upaya Mengefektifkan Pendidikan Agama Islam di Sekolah*. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Muhaimin. (2016). *Model Pengembangan Kurikulum dan Pembelajaran dalam Pendidikan Islam Kontemporer di Sekolah/Madrasah dan Perguruan Tinggi* (Muhammad In'am Esha). UIN-Maliki Press.
- Muhlisin, M., & Nurhidin, E. (2020). Konstruksi Kedisiplinan melalui Habitiasi Kegiatan Keagamaan: Studi Kasus di SMP Al-Ikhlas Tarokan Kediri. *Indonesian Journal of Islamic Education Studies (IJIES)*, 3(2), 236–251. <https://doi.org/10.33367/ijies.v3i2.1395>
- Nasution, A. R., Syarfuni, S., Husein, M., & Jumiatun, J. (2025). Strengthening Elementary School Students' Religious Character Through a Contextual-Based Islamic Religious Education Model. *STAI Ma'had Aly Al-Hikam Malang Al-Mudarris*, 8(2). <https://doi.org/10.32478>
- Nurhidin, E. (2017). Inovasi Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) Melalui Pemanfaatan Media Pembelajaran Kontekstual Dan Pengembangan Budaya Religius Di Sekolah. *KUTTAB*, 1(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.30736/kuttav.v1i1.95>
- Nurhidin, E. (2022). Peran Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam Meningkatkan Kualitas Literasi Membaca Qur'an Siswa Sekolah Menengah Atas. *Edudeena: Journal of Islamic Religious Education*, 6(1), Article 1. <https://doi.org/10.30762/ed.v6i1.136>
- Nurhikmah, N. (2024). Character Education Islam from the Views of Imam Al-Ghazali. *Jurnal Al Burhan*, 4(1), 53–66. <https://doi.org/10.58988/jab.v4i1.300>
- Oktaviani, E., & Kaltsum, H. U. (2023). Habituation of the Character of Enjoying Reading Through the School Literacy Movement Program in the Lower Grades of Elementary Schools. *Jurnal Paedagogy*, 10(2), 564–575. <https://doi.org/10.33394/jp.v10i2.7337>

- Ramli, R., Maswati, & As, S. (2025). The Integration of Religious Literacy in Enhancing the Pancasila Student Profile. *Tafkir: Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Education*, 6(4), 1042–1058. <https://doi.org/10.31538/tijie.v6i4.2259>
- Sari, L. N., & As'ad, A. (2024). Memperkuat Pembentukan Sikap Religius Peserta Didik Melalui Pengenalan Asma'ul Husna Di SD Negeri 03 Balong. *Jurnal Inovasi Pembelajaran Dan Pendidikan Islam [JIPPI]*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.30596/jippi.v2i1.36>
- Sari, W. D. (2023). Religious Literacy in the PAI Curriculum in Madrasah. *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 12(04). <https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v12i04.5240>
- Sikandar, A. (2016). John Dewey and His Philosophy of Education. *Journal of Education and Educational Development*, 2(2), 191. <https://doi.org/10.22555/joeeed.v2i2.446>
- SRC, P. P. (2025). *Pedoman Teknis Penghargaan School Religious Culture (SRC) Tingkat Provinsi Jawa Timur 2025 Nomor 697 Tahun 2025*. Bidang Pendidikan Agama Islam Kantor Wilayah Kementerian Agama Provinsi Jawa Timur.
- Tohri, A., Rasyad, A., Sururuddin, M., & Istiqlal, L. M. (2022). The urgency of Sasak local wisdom-based character education for elementary school in East Lombok, Indonesia. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education (IJERE)*, 11(1), 333–344. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v11i1.21869>
- Wahyuniati, W., & Sutarman. (2024). Model Implementasi Budaya Religius terhadap Siswa di Sekolah Dasar Negeri Giwangan Yogyakarta. *EduInovasi: Journal of Basic Educational Studies*, 4(3), 1862–1872. <https://doi.org/10.47467/edu.v4i3.5161>
- Wulandari, Y. (2025, November 3). *Kemenag Gelar Asesmen Nasional Literasi Dasar Beragama bagi Guru PAI dan Siswa Sekolah Dasar*. Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia. <https://kemenag.go.id/nasional/kemenag-gelar-asesmen-nasional-literasi-dasar-beragama-bagi-guru-pai-dan-siswa-sekolah-dasar-2Xyew>
- Zahidi, S., & Praheto, B. E. (2024). Cultivating Discipline and Independent Character Through the Implementation of the School Literacy Movement. *EduStream: Jurnal Pendidikan Dasar*, 8(2), 80–88. <https://doi.org/10.26740/eds.v8n2.p80-88>
- Zubaedi. (2015). *Desain Pendidikan Karakter: Konsepsi dan Aplikasinya dalam Lembaga Pendidikan*. Prenada Media.
- Zulaikha, S. (2025, October 13). *Wawancara Seputar Literasi Keagamaan Islam di SDN Bulusari II*.