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The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Developing Students' Religious Character in Grade Six at SD Negeri 3 Genggelang in the Era of Digital Distraction

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Abstract
The development of digital technology presents significant challenges to the development of religious character among elementary school students. Excessive use of digital devices may divert students' attention from learning activities, religious practices, and the cultivation of virtuous behavior. This situation requires Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers to play an active role in instilling religious values amid the growing phenomenon of digital distraction. This study aims to describe the role of IRE teachers in developing the religious character of sixth-grade students at SD Negeri 3 Genggelang and to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors encountered in the process. The study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive case study design. The research participants include the IRE teacher, the school principal, the homeroom teacher, sixth-grade students, and their parents. Data are planned to be collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. The data will be analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, while data trustworthiness will be established through triangulation. The study focuses on four dimensions of the IRE teacher's role: serving as a role model (uswatun hasanah), providing moral and spiritual guidance, motivating students and facilitating religious habituation, and supervising and evaluating students' behavior. The development of religious character will be examined through indicators such as good manners, social concern, punctuality and discipline in religious practices, honesty, and self-control in the use of digital devices. This study is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of Islamic education strategies relevant to the challenges posed by digital technology at the elementary school level. Furthermore, it is expected to inform teachers, schools, and parents in strengthening collaborative efforts to foster students' religious character. Thus, Islamic Religious Education is expected not only to enhance students' religious understanding but also to promote the internalization of Islamic values in their daily behavior and encourage them to use digital technology wisely and responsibly.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has brought significant changes to society, including the field of education. The use of smartphones, the internet, online games, and social media enables students to access information and various learning resources more easily. However, uncontrolled use of digital technology can also create challenges for the educational process, particularly in maintaining learning concentration, developing discipline, and instilling moral and religious values. In this context, digital distraction can

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be understood as a condition in which students' attention is diverted by digital activities or content, thereby interfering with learning activities and the development of positive behaviors. Therefore, technological development needs to be accompanied by character education that helps students use technology wisely and responsibly. (Herak, 2025)

Character education is an essential component of the educational process because it focuses not only on knowledge development but also on shaping students' attitudes, habits, and behaviors. One important dimension that needs to be cultivated from the elementary school level is religious character, which refers to attitudes and behaviors that reflect the internalization of religious values in everyday life. In Islamic Religious Education (IRE), religious character can be demonstrated through honesty, discipline in religious practices, good manners, responsibility, social concern, and self-control. Instilling these values requires a continuous process involving learning, role modeling, habituation, and guidance. Accordingly, the success of religious education should not be measured solely by students' ability to understand religious concepts but should also be assessed in terms of their application of these values in daily life.

Islamic Religious Education teachers play a strategic role in developing students' religious character. Their responsibilities extend beyond teaching Islamic knowledge to include guiding students' moral and spiritual development through role modeling, motivation, religious habituation, and supervision of students' behavior. Komalasari et al. (2025) identify Islamic Religious Education pedagogy as an important approach to strengthening character education among elementary school students in the digital era. Meanwhile, Syamsuriah et al. (2026) discuss the multidimensional role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in developing religious character, including through role modeling, religious habituation, and continuous guidance. These studies highlight the importance of integrating religious values into the learning process and school life. Nevertheless, the implementation of these roles needs to be adapted to students' characteristics and the challenges posed by their digital environments.

These challenges become increasingly important when the use of digital devices potentially affects students' attention to learning activities and religious practices. Digital technology does not necessarily have negative effects, as it can also serve as an interactive and engaging learning resource. For example, Nuwa and Sii (2026) examine the use of digital technology in religious learning to strengthen character development among elementary school students. This perspective suggests that the main issue is not simply the presence of technology but how it is used, guided, and supervised within educational environments. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education teachers need to adopt educational approaches that not only develop students' religious understanding but also foster self-control, discipline, and the ability to choose digital activities that align with their learning needs and responsibilities as students.

In practice, the development of religious character also requires support from both the school and the family. The positive habits cultivated by teachers at school are more likely to become meaningful when reinforced through parental supervision and guidance at home. Novia et al. (2025) examine teacher–parent collaboration in developing students' religious character through Islamic Religious Education in the era of digitalization. This study is relevant to the view that character education is a shared responsibility rather than the sole responsibility of classroom teachers. Support from school principals, school culture, peer environments, and patterns of digital device use within families should also be considered when examining the process of character development. Accordingly, an analysis of the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers needs to address both the strategies employed and the factors that support or hinder their implementation.

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These issues are relevant to the context of SD Negeri 3 Genggelang, particularly among sixth-grade students. According to the preliminary information presented in the research proposal, there are indications that some students' attention is diverted by discussions about online games during religious activities, including congregational Duha prayers. The proposal also records behavioral concerns relating to manners in speech and respect toward teachers and fellow students. This preliminary information indicates the need for a more in-depth investigation of the relationship between digital distraction and the development of religious character within the school environment. Nevertheless, these indications need to be examined through fieldwork to establish an objective understanding of the actual conditions, including how teachers respond to these challenges and how students experience religious character development.

Previous studies have examined the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in developing religious character, strengthening character through religious education pedagogy in the digital era, and fostering collaboration between teachers and parents. However, research conducted in specific school contexts remains necessary to understand how teachers perform their roles in response to actual conditions in the field. This study specifically focuses on the development of religious character among sixth-grade students at SD Negeri 3 Genggelang amid digital distraction, taking into account the role of teachers and the factors that support or hinder their efforts. This focus enables the study to examine how role modeling, moral and spiritual guidance, motivation, religious habituation, and behavioral supervision are implemented in response to the challenges associated with digital device use. Thus, rather than discussing the importance of teachers' roles solely at a conceptual level, this study seeks to understand their implementation within the specific educational context under investigation.

Based on this discussion, this study aims to describe the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers in developing the religious character of sixth-grade students at SD Negeri 3 Genggelang in the era of digital distraction and to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors encountered in this process. The study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive case study design. Data are planned to be collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving the Islamic Religious Education teacher, the school principal, the homeroom teacher, sixth-grade students, and their parents. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of Islamic Religious Education scholarship, particularly regarding contextually relevant strategies for developing religious character in response to digital distraction. Practically, the study is expected to provide insights for teachers, schools, and parents in strengthening religious habituation, discipline, good manners, honesty, and students' self-control in everyday life.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive research method with a case study design. This approach was selected because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding and provide a comprehensive description of the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in developing the religious character of sixth-grade students at SD Negeri 3 Genggelang in the era of digital distraction. Through a qualitative approach, the phenomenon can be examined based on actual conditions, experiences, and perspectives of the individuals involved in the process of fostering students' religious character.

The study was conducted at SD Negeri 3 Genggelang, focusing on sixth-grade students. The research participants consisted of the IRE teacher, the school principal, the homeroom teacher, sixth-grade students, and their parents. These participants were selected based on their involvement in students' education and religious character development, both within the school and family environments. The IRE teacher served as the primary informant

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because of their direct responsibility for implementing religious education and fostering religious values. Meanwhile, the school principal, homeroom teacher, students, and parents provided supporting information regarding the implementation and development of students' religious character.

Data were collected through three techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to examine classroom learning activities, religious practices, the habituation of religious behavior, and students' behavior in using and responding to the influence of digital technology within the school environment. In-depth interviews were conducted with the IRE teacher, school principal, homeroom teacher, sixth-grade students, and parents to obtain information about strategies for developing religious character, the forms of teacher involvement, and the factors that support or hinder the process. Documentation was used to obtain supplementary data, including school documents, records of religious activities, character development programs, and other relevant materials related to the research focus. (Riswan & Zamsiswaya, 2026)

Data analysis was carried out through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting, focusing on, and categorizing information relevant to the research objectives. Subsequently, the data were systematically presented in descriptive form to clarify the relationship between the role of IRE teachers, religious character development, and the phenomenon of digital distraction. The final stage involved drawing conclusions based on patterns and meanings identified throughout the research data.

To ensure data trustworthiness, this study employed triangulation. Triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different participants and cross-checking interview findings against observation and documentation data. This process aimed to establish consistency and ensure that the data could be scientifically justified. Through these procedures, the study is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the role of IRE teachers and the supporting and inhibiting factors involved in developing the religious character of sixth-grade students at SD Negeri 3 Genggelang in the era of digital distraction.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Research Findings

This study focuses on the role of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers in developing the religious character of sixth-grade students at SD Negeri 3 Genggelang in the era of digital distraction. The research findings are organized around two main areas: the role of IRE teachers in developing students' religious character and the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence this process. Data collection was conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Information was obtained from the IRE teacher as the primary informant, as well as the principal, sixth-grade homeroom teacher, students, and parents as supporting informants. The collected data were subsequently analyzed through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Based on the research focus, the role of IRE teachers in developing students' religious character can be examined through the following aspects.

a. IRE Teachers as Role Models (*Uswatun Hasanah*)

IRE teachers play an important role as role models for students in implementing Islamic values within the school environment. Such role modeling can be demonstrated through daily behavior, including greeting others, communicating politely, demonstrating honesty and discipline, respecting others, and performing religious practices consistently. In the context of religious character development,

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students do not merely acquire religious knowledge through teachers' explanations; they also learn by observing and imitating their teachers' behavior. Therefore, role modeling constitutes an important approach to instilling Islamic values in students.

b. IRE Teachers as Moral and Spiritual Guides

In addition to serving as role models, IRE teachers act as moral and spiritual guides who help students understand and apply religious values in their daily lives. Such guidance can be provided through IRE lessons, religious advice, moral development activities, and individual guidance when students demonstrate behavior that does not reflect Islamic values. Moral guidance is also related to students' ability to exercise self-control when facing various forms of digital influence. Teachers need to provide an understanding of the importance of maintaining good manners, respecting teachers and peers, managing time, and prioritizing learning and religious obligations over less beneficial digital activities.

c. IRE Teachers as Motivators and Facilitators of Religious Habituation

IRE teachers also serve as motivators who encourage students to develop awareness of the importance of participating in regular religious activities. Motivation can be provided through religious advice, positive reinforcement, appreciation of good behavior, and the establishment of religious habits within the school environment. Such habituation may include reciting prayers before and after lessons, reading the Qur'an, performing Duha prayers in congregation, and developing a culture of mutual respect. These activities are intended to help students gradually move beyond performing religious practices merely because of teachers' instructions and develop an internal awareness and personal responsibility to practice them.

d. IRE Teachers as Supervisors and Evaluators of Student Behavior

In developing students' religious character, IRE teachers also perform supervisory and evaluative functions to ensure that the religious values taught in the classroom are applied in students' daily lives. This supervision includes monitoring students' discipline in participating in religious activities, their politeness in social interactions, honesty, and ability to exercise self-control when using digital devices. Evaluation can be conducted through observations of students' behavior, providing advice, communicating with homeroom teachers, and collaborating with parents.

3.2. Discussion

1. The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Developing Students' Religious Character in the Era of Digital Distraction

a. Teachers as Role Models (*Uswatun Hasanah*)

Islamic Religious Education teachers play an important role as role models in developing students' religious character. At the elementary school level, students tend to learn not only through verbal explanations but also by observing and imitating the behavior of adults around them. Therefore, teachers are expected to demonstrate religious values through their daily attitudes and actions, such as honesty, discipline, politeness, responsibility, and respect for others.

The role of teachers as role models becomes increasingly important in the era of digital distraction, when students are exposed to various forms of digital content that may influence their attitudes and behavior. Teachers should therefore demonstrate responsible technology use, maintain good communication, and show appropriate conduct both inside and outside the classroom. Through consistent examples, students are expected to understand that religious values should be reflected in everyday behavior.

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This role is consistent with the concept of *uswatun hasanah*, which emphasizes education through exemplary conduct. Islamic Religious Education is not merely concerned with the delivery of religious knowledge; rather, it also emphasizes the importance of shaping students' attitudes and behavior through educational guidance and exemplary conduct. (Komariah, 2023)

b. Teachers as Moral and Spiritual Guides

In addition to serving as role models, Islamic Religious Education teachers act as moral and spiritual guides who help students understand and internalize religious values. This guidance can be provided through classroom instruction, religious discussions, advice, and reflection on everyday experiences.

In the context of digital distraction, moral and spiritual guidance is necessary to help students distinguish between positive and negative influences in digital environments. Students need to develop awareness of appropriate behavior, maintain politeness when communicating, and avoid activities that may interfere with their learning and religious obligations.

Teachers can strengthen students' religious awareness through persuasive approaches, meaningful communication, and habituation. Such approaches encourage students to practice religious values based on understanding and awareness rather than merely following instructions. This is particularly important in developing *hablum minannas*, namely maintaining good relationships with fellow human beings. (Arifin, 2024)

c. Teachers as Motivators and Facilitators of Religious Habituation

Islamic Religious Education teachers also serve as motivators and facilitators in developing students' religious character through continuous religious habituation. Activities such as reciting the Qur'an, performing Duha and congregational Zuhur prayers, memorizing daily prayers, and maintaining polite behavior can provide opportunities for students to practice religious values in their daily lives.

Religious habituation is important because character development requires consistency and repetition. Through regular activities, students are expected to develop discipline, responsibility, and awareness of their religious obligations. These activities can also help students manage their time and reduce the tendency to become excessively involved in digital entertainment.

Emphasizes that motivation plays an important role in encouraging individuals to engage in learning activities and achieve educational goals. In this regard, teachers need to provide encouragement, appreciation, and appropriate guidance so that students remain motivated to participate in religious activities.(Chailani et al, 2025)

d. Teachers as Supervisors and Evaluators

Another important role of Islamic Religious Education teachers is supervising and evaluating students' religious behavior. Supervision is necessary to ensure that religious values introduced through learning and habituation are reflected in students' daily attitudes and actions.

In the era of digital distraction, supervision should also address students' use of digital devices. Teachers need to provide guidance regarding appropriate screen time, responsible access to digital content, and the importance of prioritizing learning and religious activities. This responsibility should be carried out through cooperation with parents because students' digital activities also take place outside school.

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Evaluation can be conducted by observing students' behavior, communicating with parents, and providing constructive feedback. Through continuous supervision and evaluation, teachers can identify changes in students' religious behavior and determine appropriate educational responses.

2. Implications for Islamic Religious Education and Character Development

The discussion indicates that developing students' religious character in the era of digital distraction requires an integrated educational approach. Islamic Religious Education should not focus solely on delivering religious knowledge but should also emphasize exemplary conduct, moral guidance, religious habituation, supervision, and cooperation with parents.

The development of religious character should include several important dimensions, namely maintaining good relationships with others (*hablum minannas*), discipline in worship and time management, honesty, and the ability to control oneself. These values are essential for helping students respond wisely to the challenges of digital technology.

Furthermore, Islamic Religious Education needs to be accompanied by digital literacy education. Students should be guided to use technology responsibly, select appropriate digital content, and avoid excessive digital activities. Thus, digital technology can be positioned not only as a potential source of distraction but also as a learning resource that can be used positively and responsibly.

Overall, the role of Islamic Religious Education teachers is essential in developing students' religious character amid digital distractions. However, this responsibility cannot be carried out by teachers alone. It requires support from schools, parents, and the surrounding environment to ensure that religious values are consistently introduced, practiced, and maintained in students' everyday lives.

4. CONCLUSION

Islamic Religious Education teachers play an essential role in developing students' religious character in the era of digital distraction. This role is reflected in four main aspects: serving as role models (*uswatun hasanah*), providing moral and spiritual guidance, motivating and facilitating religious habituation, and supervising and evaluating students' behavior. Through these roles, teachers are expected to foster students' religious awareness, discipline, honesty, politeness, responsibility, and self-control.

The development of students' religious character is supported by the availability of religious facilities, school policies, and cooperation between teachers and parents. However, several challenges remain, including uncontrolled use of digital devices, excessive engagement with online games and social media, inconsistent parental supervision, exposure to inappropriate digital content, and students' developing ability to control themselves.

Therefore, strengthening students' religious character requires continuous collaboration among teachers, schools, parents, and the surrounding environment. Islamic Religious Education should be integrated with digital literacy so that students can use technology wisely, responsibly, and in accordance with Islamic values. Ultimately, religious character education should not only develop students' understanding of religious teachings but also encourage them to consistently practice these values in their daily lives.

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