

## **Optimizing The Role Of Islamic Teachers In Enhancing Student Religiosity At State Junior High School (SMP Negeri) 3 Tirto Pekalongan**

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### **Abstract**

This research aims to determine the role of Islamic religious teachers in optimizing student religiosity, determine the supporting and inhibiting factors in optimizing the role of Islamic religious teachers in increasing student religiosity, as well as solutions in overcoming obstacles related to optimizing the role of Islamic religious teachers in increasing student religiosity. This study adopted a qualitative approach and used observation, interviews, documentation as data collection techniques. Data analysis uses data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions or verification. The research results show that the role of the Islamic religion teacher at SMP Negeri 3 Tirto is realized by acting as a motivator, role model, director/doctor, mentor, facilitator and educator. In carrying out their role, Islamic religious teachers receive support with adequate facilities and the availability of religious programs for students. However, Islamic religious teachers also experience obstacles that prevent their role from functioning optimally due to lack of family support, lack of student awareness, and increasingly sophisticated technology. So in order to realize his role as an Islamic teacher in increasing students' religiosity, solutions can be optimally provided to overcome this, namely through communication with parents, a caring and advice approach, emphasizing the benefits of technology. However, even though the role of Islamic religious teachers has been carried out as optimally as possible and has provided good changes for students, it is still not optimal to be able to increase students' religiosity.

Keywords : Religiosity, Islamic Religious Teacher, Students

### **Introduction**

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is a process of continuously instilling Islamic values with the aim of shaping good character and a faithful and pious personality (Firmansyah, 2019). In the context of formal educational institutions, PAI is very important because it equips students with moral and spiritual guidelines to face the challenges of modern life. For this reason, the role of Islamic teachers is very strategic, because teachers are central figures in designing, implementing, and evaluating learning as well as guiding students' character development.

At all levels of education, religious teachers hold great responsibility. Before learning, teachers act as instructional designers who design learning materials and methods according to students' needs. During the learning process, teachers act as class organizers, facilitators who explain the material, motivators who inspire enthusiasm, innovators who introduce creative

methods, and mentors who provide personal guidance. After learning, teachers act as evaluators who assess the success of students in understanding the material (Kuswanto, 2014). In addition, religious teachers must be role models in attitude and behavior because role modeling is the most effective educational instrument (Basuni et al., 2021).

The role of teachers in shaping students' religiosity is becoming increasingly important in today's multicultural era. Students live in an environment of religious diversity, so the internalization of religious values is necessary to strengthen their beliefs and prevent them from behaving in ways that contradict religious teachings. Religiousness encompasses aspects of faith, worship, and morality; therefore, teachers need to use teaching approaches that are appropriate to the characteristics of students so that these values can be firmly instilled (Prasetiya et al., 2021). The level of students' obedience in daily worship is an important indicator of their religiousness. Good religiosity also helps students cope with psychological pressure, maintain morality, and behave in accordance with social norms.

Islamic teachers play a major role in shaping these religious attitudes, both at school, at home, and in the community. At school, teachers set an example through worship and positive behavior. At home and in the community, teachers guide students through habits such as praying in congregation, reading the Qur'an, and participating in religious activities. These habits are important for forming a stable and sustainable religious character.

However, the reality at SMP Negeri 3 Tirto shows that the implementation of the role of religious teachers has not been fully optimized. Although the school has implemented programs such as the habit of reading Juz Amma, praying Dzuhur in congregation, and Rohis activities, many students are still not disciplined in carrying them out. There are still students who do not participate in congregational prayers and are not interested in religious activities. This shows a gap between the rules and reality. Therefore, efforts are needed to strengthen the role of religious teachers so that they can guide students to be more obedient and religious.

This research was conducted at SMP Negeri 3 Tirto because this school, although not a religious school, has great potential in developing the religious character of students. Many students have good spiritual potential but it has not been optimally developed. In addition, the school has professional Islamic religious teachers who are active in various religious programs such as worship habits, joint istighosah, and Islamic holidays. With this potential, it is hoped that students can develop a more stable and improved religious attitude over time.

Overall, this introduction emphasizes the importance of the role of Islamic religious teachers in shaping students' religiosity, especially through role modeling, habit formation, personal guidance, and strengthening religious programs. This study aims to examine the extent to which this role is optimized, the supporting and inhibiting factors, and the solutions that can be implemented to increase student religiosity at SMP Negeri 3 Tirto.

## **Methods**

This study uses field research with a qualitative approach. The approach used in qualitative research is to describe the situation comprehensively using language and words in their natural context (Moleong, 2017:6). Through this study, descriptive data will be obtained that can provide a complete and in-depth picture of the research topic. This study uses primary and secondary data sources. The primary data sources that are the subjects of this study are Islamic religion teachers and students at SMP Negeri 3 Tirto, because teachers play an optimal role in increasing student religiosity. Meanwhile, the objects of this study are various information obtained from the research subjects. The secondary data sources here are the principal and other teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Tirto, and other relevant sources, including references containing information about the role of teachers in increasing student religiosity, such as books, magazines, and journals.

The data collection techniques used in the data collection process are: Observation, in this study, the researcher will come directly to conduct observations in the field or school, which in this situation will be carried out at SMP Negeri 3 Tirto, Pekalongan Regency. Here, the researcher will carry out observations or direct observations at SMP Negeri 3 Tirto for a period of one week, starting from the beginning of the school day until the end of classes so that the data obtained will be clearer and more relevant.

Interviews: On this occasion, the researcher will conduct direct interviews with Islamic religion teachers, students, the principal, and other teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Tirto, Pekalongan Regency. Documentation Study: The documentation used will be in the form of photos or images, as well as recordings of interviews using mobile phones. The data analysis techniques cited in Sugiyono's book are divided into three categories (Sugiyono, 2017:338-345): Reduction. Data, summarizing, separating the main parts, focusing on something valuable, selecting themes and patterns, and discarding unnecessary parts. Data Presentation, at this stage, data presentation is made in the form of a description of the interview results with appropriate illustrations. Drawing conclusions or verification.

## **Results and Discussion**

This study found that Islamic teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Tirto have six main roles in optimizing student religiosity, namely as motivators, role models, guides, mentors, facilitators, and educators. All of these roles are integrated in building student religiosity, which is not only evident in worship behavior but also in everyday character. In addition, this study also identified factors that support and hinder the optimization of teachers' roles, as well as solutions taken by the school.

### **1. The Role of Islamic Teachers in Optimizing Student Religiosity**

#### **a. Teachers as Motivators**

As motivators, Islamic teachers play a role in fostering students' religious enthusiasm. Motivation is provided through advice, reminders to worship, and the delivery of motivational content via WhatsApp groups. This is in line with Elly Manizar's view that teachers are the driving force behind students' enthusiasm for learning and religion (Manizar, 2015). Motivation is also provided through interesting learning models, such as chard short media for searching for Qur'anic readings. This media has been proven to increase student interest and participation, in line with the view that teachers must be able to arouse positive motives in learning (Vera, 2012).

However, this learning media needs to be further developed so that it does not stop at the enjoyment of learning, but also deepens students' understanding of the verses of the Qur'an.

#### b. Teachers as Role Models

Role modeling is an important factor in shaping students' religiosity. Islamic teachers display religious behavior such as saying greetings, being friendly, performing the dhuha prayer, and maintaining good manners. According to Juhji, teacher role modeling is evident in the consistency between words, behavior, and actions that are trustworthy and worthy of emulation (Juhji, 2016). This exemplary behavior then shapes religious habits in students, because they tend to imitate figures they respect.

In practice, teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Tirto demonstrate consistent exemplary behavior in worship, manners, and social interactions, thus becoming role models that students follow both at school and in their daily lives.

#### c. Teachers as Guides/Directors

Islamic teachers not only teach material, but also guide students' religious activities. They organize congregational midday prayers, visit classrooms to remind students to go to the prayer room, and give directions through loudspeakers. This role is in line with Nurrahmawati's opinion that teachers as guides are responsible for organizing the learning process and ensuring student participation (Nurrahmawati, 2016).

In addition to guidance at school, teachers also encourage students to participate in religious activities outside of school, such as TPQ and majelis taklim. These guidance efforts expand the students' learning space and ensure that religious education does not stop at school.

#### d. Teachers as Mentors

Teachers mentor students through a personal approach tailored to each student's character. Teachers strive to enter the students' world, acting as friends and parents, and giving students space to express their problems. This guidance is important because students have different levels of independence and often need direction in dealing with personal development issues (Syafuddin et al., 2022).

According to Kirom, teachers as mentors help students understand themselves and guide their behavior so that they can adapt to school, family, and society (Kirom, 2017). In the context

of this study, it is easier for teachers to guide students after learning about their family backgrounds and characters.

e. Teachers as Facilitators

As facilitators, teachers provide learning methods and conditions that support students' religious development. One form of this is the use of group discussion methods, where students are required to ask questions that are not found in textbooks. Teachers act as the final explainers of these questions. This method encourages curiosity and deeper understanding.

The role of a facilitator is not only to provide physical facilities, but also to create an active, creative, and enjoyable learning atmosphere (Hartono, 2013). This makes students more involved and feel that they have the opportunity to develop themselves.

f. Teachers as Educators

Islamic teachers at SMP Negeri 3 Tirto carry out their educational function by teaching moral and spiritual values as well as life skills. Teachers teach religious material such as table manners, prayer, and daily morals. In addition, teachers foster social awareness through infaq and zakat activities.

As stated by Ramli, educators are tasked with shaping individuals according to Islamic values so that they have good character (Ramli, 2015). Teachers must also have authority and discipline so that they can be role models for students (Yestiani, 2020). In this study, teachers have demonstrated the character of educators who are able to be role models and shape the religious character of students.

## 2. Factors Supporting the Optimization of the Teacher's Role

### a. School Facilities

The religious facilities at SMP Negeri 3 Tirto are adequate, such as a comfortable prayer room, prayer robes, Al-Qur'an, and teaching aids. According to Novita, complete facilities have a significant effect on the smooth running of the educational process, including religious education (Novita, 2017). The prayer room is even used for Friday Religious activities and Quran recitation, so that the function of these facilities is optimal.

### b. Religious Programs

Religious programs are an important support in increasing students' religiosity. Existing programs include long-term and short-term activities. Long-term programs such as congregational midday prayers, extracurricular activities such as religious clubs, calligraphy, and hadrah provide space for students' self-development. Meanwhile, short-term programs such as PHBI (Islamic Holidays) celebrations and MAPSI (Islamic Knowledge Competition) strengthen students' religious experiences.

Structured religious programs can have an effect on the formation of religious habits (Wiranti, 2019; Sanusi, 2019). Research findings show that these various activities help students develop a more stable and applicable religious attitude.

### 3. Factors Hindering the Optimization of Teachers' Roles

#### a. Unsupportive Family Environment

Some students come from broken homes or families that do not practice religion. As a result, religious practices at school are not fully supported at home. According to Jalaluddin, religiosity is influenced by internal and external factors, with family being the strongest external factor (Rahmawati, 2016). The lack of family support causes teachers' efforts to be suboptimal because religious guidance requires continuity between school and home.

#### b. Lack of Student Awareness

Students are still unaware of the importance of worship, learning about religion, and participating in religious activities. This reduces the effectiveness of religious programs. Rahmawati states that internal factors such as individual awareness have a major influence on religious attitudes (Rahmawati, 2016).

Examples of this lack of awareness include low interest in extracurricular activities and laziness in participating in worship activities.

#### c. The Impact of Technological Advances

Technological advances can have a negative impact if they are not controlled. Many students prefer instant answers from the internet rather than studying. Students also tend to play with their gadgets to the point of neglecting religious activities. Sofyan explains that uncontrolled use of the internet can lead to addiction and apathy (Sofyan et al., 2022). Without supervision, technology can hinder the development of students' religiousness.

### 4. Solutions to Overcome Obstacles

#### a. Communication with Parents

Teachers strive to communicate with parents directly or through WhatsApp groups to build cooperation in the religious development of students. This cooperation is expected to improve family conditions that are not very supportive.

#### b. Attention and Advice Approach

Teachers approach students with gentle communication, talking heart to heart, and understanding their interests and backgrounds. This approach is in line with Siregar's view that special attention can increase children's self-confidence and thinking skills (Siregar, 2021).

#### c. Emphasis on the Benefits of Technology

Teachers reemphasize the benefits and dangers of technology and remind students to use it wisely. According to Ngafifi, socialization about the impact of technology is important so that students do not misuse it (Ngafifi, 2014). Teachers also try to provide knowledge that makes students more selective in using the internet.

## Conclusion

Overall, optimizing the role of Islamic teachers in increasing student religiosity depends on six main roles: motivator, role model, guide, mentor, facilitator, and educator. The success of these roles is influenced by adequate school facilities and structured religious programs, but on the other hand, there are obstacles such as lack of family support, low student awareness, and the influence of modern technology. Solutions are pursued through communication with parents, a personal approach to students, and an emphasis on the wise use of technology.

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## Conflict of Interests

There are no conflicts of interest disclosed by the author. I confirm that the submission is unique and has not been considered by any other publisher.

## Ethical Considerations

The sources of this research are articles, books, research, and scientific forum processes, all of which are free from copyright infringement.

## Disclaimer

This study shows that even though teachers have performed their roles to the best of their ability, improving religiosity still requires cooperation between teachers, students, families, and the environment.

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