

The Formation of a Religious Culture in Enhancing Spiritual Intelligence among Middle School Students in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe how the formation of religious culture in the school environment can enhance the spiritual intelligence of students, with a case study at SMP Negeri 1 Sumberasih, Probolinggo Regency. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, involving observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation as data collection techniques, followed by data analysis through the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The validity of the data was ensured using triangulation of sources and methods to maintain the credibility and reliability of the findings. The results show that religious culture in schools is manifested through activities such as congregational prayers, Quran recitation, sunnah fasting, greetings and salutations, as well as istighasah and communal prayers. This culture tangibly shapes religious attitudes, strengthens spiritual awareness, and improves the quality of students' relationships with God, fellow human beings, and the environment. Factors supporting the successful formation of religious culture include teacher role modeling, school leadership support, parental involvement, and a conducive social environment. This study recommends a broader exploration of the relationship between religious culture and other aspects of student development, such as emotional intelligence, social character, or leadership values.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan bagaimana pembentukan budaya religius di lingkungan sekolah dapat meningkatkan kecerdasan spiritual peserta didik, dengan studi kasus di SMP Negeri 1 Sumberasih Kabupaten Probolinggo. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus, dengan menggunakan observasi, wawancara mendalam, dan dokumentasi sebagai teknik pengumpulan data, yang dilanjutkan dengan analisis data melalui tahapan reduksi data, display data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Keabsahan data dipastikan dengan menggunakan triangulasi sumber dan metode untuk menjaga kredibilitas dan reliabilitas temuan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa budaya religius di sekolah diwujudkan melalui kegiatan-kegiatan seperti salat berjamaah, tadarus Alquran, puasa sunnah, salam dan salim, serta istighasah dan doa bersama. Budaya ini secara nyata membentuk sikap religius, memperkuat kesadaran spiritual, dan meningkatkan kualitas hubungan siswa dengan Tuhan, sesama manusia, dan lingkungan. Faktor-faktor yang mendukung keberhasilan pembentukan budaya religius antara lain keteladanan guru, dukungan pimpinan sekolah, keterlibatan orang tua, dan lingkungan sosial yang kondusif. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan eksplorasi yang lebih luas mengenai hubungan antara budaya religius dengan aspek perkembangan siswa lainnya, seperti kecerdasan emosional, karakter sosial, atau nilai-nilai kepemimpinan.

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A. INTRODUCTION

Education has a strategic function in shaping the whole person, not only intellectually, but also spiritually and morally.¹ From an Islamic perspective, education is a process of shaping individuals who are faithful, knowledgeable, and moral, as stated in Surah Al-Mujādilah verse 11, which emphasizes that Allah elevates the status of those who are faithful and knowledgeable.² This verse confirms that faith and knowledge are the two main pillars of a meaningful education system.³ However, the reality of religious education in schools is often still cognitive and textual in nature, so that it is not yet able to touch the affective and conative dimensions of students.⁴ As a consequence, students tend to experience a disconnect between the religious knowledge they acquire and its appreciation and practice in their daily lives. In this situation, a religious culture-based educational approach becomes a strategic alternative that can bridge the gap between the cognitive and affective aspects. Religious culture provides space for the internalization of spiritual values in daily school practices through role modeling, habit formation, and reinforcement of values in the learning environment.⁵

Religious culture is a manifestation of religious values that are systematically internalized in school life through practices, symbols, and social relationships that are consistent with religious teachings.⁶ This concept not only shapes the behavior of school members, but also functions as a value ecosystem that supports the formation of spiritual intelligence. Spiritual intelligence itself is understood as the ability to understand the meaning of life, establish harmonious relationships with God and others, and act based on transcendental values.⁷ Within the framework of the national education system, Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System emphasizes that education must develop the potential of students to become people who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, capable, creative, and independent.⁸ This constitution serves as the normative basis for schools in internalizing spiritual values in educational practices.

SMP Negeri 1 Sumberasih in Probolinggo Regency is one of the schools that has shown success in implementing a comprehensive religious culture. Religious activities such as congregational prayers, sunnah fasting, tadarrus, communal prayers, and the 5S habit (smile, greet, say hello, be polite, be courteous) are part of the school culture that shapes the religious atmosphere. This phenomenon not only shapes character but also has an impact on increasing

¹ Wildan Mahmud Hanafi, "Implementasi Program Sholat Dhuha Dalam Pengembangan Kecerdasan Spiritual Siswa Di Madrasah Aliyah Alhayatul Islamiyah Malang," 2020, 1–106.

² Al-Qur'an, *Al-Qur'an Dan Terjemahan* (Jakarta: Departemen Agama Republik Indonesia, 2019).

³ Zaedun Na'im et al., "Managemen Pendidikan Islam," *Widina Bhakti Persada Bandung* (2021); M Quraish Shihab, "Wawasan Al-Qur'an: Tafsir Maudhu'i," *Bandung: PT Mizan Pustaka*, no. November (2007).

⁴ Muhammad Nasir and Muhammad Khairul Rijal, "Keeping the Middle Path: Mainstreaming Religious Moderation through Islamic Higher Education Institutions in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Islam and Muslim Societies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 213–41, <https://doi.org/10.18326/ijims.v11i2.213-241>.

⁵ Choirur Rois and Farhan Masrury, "Fiqh Al-Ḥaḍarah Perspektif Geopolitik: Gagasan Diplomasi Perdamaian NU Melalui Rekontekstualisasi Fiqh Siyasah," *An-Nida'* 47, no. 1 (2023): 60, <https://doi.org/10.24014/an-nida.v47i1.25330>.

⁶ Alifa Baiduri Hayatunnufusa et al., "Exploring the Influence of Islamic Religious Education on the Development of Student Religious Identity at the Indonesian University of Education," *Higher Education Spiritual Pedagogies* 1, no. 1 (2023): 1–9, <https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/HESP/article/view/60316>.

⁷ Marshall and Danah Zohar, "SQ - Spiritual Intelligence, the Ultimate Intelligence," in *Book Review*, 2001, <https://www.alisonmorgan.co.uk/Books/Zohar2000.pdf>.

⁸ DPR RI, "Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003 Tentang Sistem Pendidikan Nasional," Zitteliana, 2003.

students' spiritual intelligence, both in terms of awareness of God, self-control, and social empathy.

Research on the integration of religious culture and spiritual intelligence continues to evolve. Several studies show that religious habits in schools have positive implications for the formation of students' religious attitudes,⁹ the strengthening of values of justice and honesty,¹⁰ and emotional balance in facing the dynamics of life.¹¹ However, studies that specifically explore the mechanisms of religious culture formation in junior high schools and its impact on spiritual intelligence are still limited. In fact, the junior high school phase is a crucial stage in the development of students' moral and spiritual identity.

Based on this background, this study aims to describe the forms and practices of religious culture implemented at SMP Negeri 1 Sumberasih, Probolinggo Regency; and analyze the implications of the formation of religious culture on the improvement of students' spiritual intelligence. This study is expected to contribute to enriching the wealth of Islamic education studies, particularly in the aspect of applying religious culture as a strategy for fostering students' spirituality.

B. METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study type to explore in depth the phenomenon of the formation of religious culture in enhancing the spiritual intelligence of students at SMP Negeri 1 Sumberasih, Probolinggo Regency. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is capable of producing descriptive data in the form of written and spoken words and allows researchers to understand the context and subjective meaning of participants' experiences in a natural setting.¹² Case studies were used to comprehensively examine the background, social conditions, interaction patterns, and religious practices that took place at the school, so that the meaning behind the phenomenon could be revealed more deeply.¹³

Primary data was obtained through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving the principal, vice principal of curriculum, teachers, and students as key informants. Observations were conducted on religious practices such as congregational prayers, Quran recitation, *istigāśah*, and communal prayers. Guided free interviews were conducted to explore the informants' understanding, perceptions, and experiences related to religious culture and its impact on spiritual intelligence. Meanwhile, secondary data in the form of school documents, activity archives, and literature references were used to strengthen

⁹ Ulfah Rahmawati, Nurits Tsuroyya, and Mustagfiroh, "Model Penguatan Agama Melalui Budaya Religius," *Jurnal Mudarrisuna* 10, no. 3 (2020): 495–507, <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.22373/jm.v10i3.7014> Model.

¹⁰ Mumu Zainal Mutaqin et al., "Factors in Religious Culture To Increase Tolerant Attitude of Gen-Z Among Urban Muslims," *Akademika: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 29, no. 1 (2024): 73, <https://doi.org/10.32332/akademika.v29i1.9145>.

¹¹ Nur'aini Nur'aini and Hamzah Hamzah, "Kecerdasan Emosional, Intelektual, Spiritual, Moral Dan Sosial Relevansinya Dengan Pendidikan Agama Islam Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *Jurnal Educatio FKIP UNMA* 9, no. 4 (2023): 1783–90, <https://doi.org/10.31949/educatio.v9i4.5867>.

¹² Robert k. Yin, *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*, A Division of Guilford Publications, Inc., Second Edi, vol. 1 (New York London, 2018), http://scioteca.caf.com/bitstream/handle/123456789/1091/RED2017-Eng-8ene.pdf?sequence=12&isAllowed=y%0Ahttp://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.regsciurbeco.2008.06.005%0Ahttps://www.researchgate.net/publication/305320484_Sistem_Pembetungan_Terpusat_Strategi_Melestari.

¹³ Rokhamah et al., *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif: Teori, Metode, Dan Praktik* (Widina Media Utama, 2024).

the validity of the findings.¹⁴ The presence of researchers in the field served as the main instrument, supported by tools such as interview guidelines, observation guidelines, and documentation.¹⁵

The data analysis process is carried out descriptively and qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification.¹⁶ Data validity was maintained using source triangulation, peer discussion, and dependency audit techniques to ensure the reliability and credibility of the research results.¹⁷ All of these procedures enabled the research to produce a comprehensive picture of the contribution of religious culture to strengthening the spiritual intelligence of students.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Formation of Religious Culture in School Routines

The results of the study indicate that religious culture at SMP Negeri 1 Sumberasih in Probolinggo Regency has been systematically developed through various practices of habit formation and consistent role modeling integrated into school life. Religious culture is not only evident in the ritual dimension but is also reflected in social interactions, communication patterns, and character building among students. Prominent practices include the application of Smile, Greet, Say Hello, Be Polite, and Be Courteous (5S); the habit of praying dhuha and zuhur in congregation; reciting the Qur'an before classes begin; istighasah and communal prayer activities; and the cultivation of fasting on Mondays and Thursdays. These five activities do not stand alone but support each other as a religious ecosystem that characterizes the school's distinctive Islamic character. The application of 5S, for example, serves as an instrument to build a friendly, respectful, and religious social climate. The greetings exchanged by students and teachers are not merely a formality, but contain the meaning of prayer, respect, and a symbol of ukhuwah (brotherhood). Thus, 5S not only has implications for polite behavior, but also strengthens spiritual awareness through daily interactions.

Table 1. Formation of Religious Culture at SMP Negeri 1 Sumberasih

No.	Religious Culture that is implemented	Implementation
1	5 S (Greetings, Smiles, Greetings, Polite, and Well-mannered)	Every morning before 7:00 a.m.
2	Congregational Dhuha Prayer	Every morning from 7:00 a.m. until finished
3	Reciting the Qur'an	Every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday morning from 7:15 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
4	Prayers Before and After Studying	Every time before starting and ending lessons
5	Shalawat nabi, Yasin, and Asmaul Husna	Every morning from 7:15 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.
6	Congregational Zuhur and Asr prayers	6th Period (11:45 AM) and Last Period (3:00 PM)

¹⁴ Patricia Leavy, *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches*, ed. Patricia Leavy, 2015.

¹⁵ Creswell. JW, "Research Design: Pendekatan Kulaitatif, Kuantitatif Dan Mixed," *Pustaka Pelajar*, 2015, 383.

¹⁶ Creswell. JW.

¹⁷ Leavy, *Research Design: Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Methods, Arts-Based, and Community-Based Participatory Research Approaches*.

7	Congregational Friday prayers	From 11:45 AM until completion
8	Istighosah	Once a month on a specific Friday
9	Infaq	Every Friday
10	Commemoration of important Islamic days (Maulid Nabi, Isra' Mi'raj, Pondok Ramadhan)	On every major Islamic holiday

a. Implementation of 5S (Smile, Greet, Say Hello, Be Polite, Be Courteous) as the Foundation for Spiritual Character Building

The 5S culture is implemented from the moment students enter the school gates. Teachers stand at the main entrance to welcome students with a greeting and a handshake. This interaction is not only social in nature, but also has spiritual significance, as the greeting is both a prayer and an acknowledgment of God's presence in every encounter. In an interview, one of the PAI teachers stated:

Every greeting uttered by students is not just a formality, but a reminder that fellow Muslims are brothers and sisters, and we say prayers for safety. With that, children get used to associating their social interactions with the value of worship.

The 5S activity shapes the interpersonal spiritual dimension, namely the ability to realize God's presence in human relationships (*ḥablun minannās*). By greeting and saying hello, students practice the awareness that every social interaction is worship if it is intended for God. This is in line with the dimension of religious experience according to Nur Chanifah, et al. (2021), where the expression of religious values occurs in social relationships that are full of spiritual awareness.¹⁸

b. Congregational Dhuha Prayer as a Medium for Internalizing the Values of Trust in God and Gratitude

Dhuha prayer is performed every morning before classes begin. The teacher acts as the imam, while the students line up in orderly rows. This activity consistently builds discipline in worship as well as awareness of human dependence on Allah. An eighth-grade student said, *"After regularly performing the Dhuha prayer, I feel calmer and believe that the sustenance and knowledge we receive depend on our good intentions to draw closer to Allah. I have become more enthusiastic about learning."*

This analysis shows that the dhuha prayer plays a role in shaping the existential dimension of students' spiritual intelligence, making them aware that the meaning of life and sustenance come from Allah, thus forming an attitude of gratitude, tawakkal, and optimism. This aligns with the concept of Spiritual Quotient Muhammad Wahyuddin Abdullah, et al. (2023), which explains that sunnah worship such as the dhuha prayer helps individuals bring transcendental meaning and purpose to their daily activities.¹⁹

¹⁸ Nur Chanifah et al., "Designing a Spirituality-Based Islamic Education Framework for Young Muslim Generations: A Case Study from Two Indonesian Universities," *Higher Education Pedagogies* 6, no. 1 (2021): 195–211, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23752696.2021.1960879>.

¹⁹ Muhammad Wahyuddin Abdullah, Hadriana Hanafie, and Andi Yustika Manrimawagau Bayan, "Internal Governance and Fraud Prevention System: The Potentiality of the Spiritual Quotient," *Journal of Governance and Regulation* 12, no. 4 (2023): 50–59, <https://doi.org/10.22495/jgrv12i4art5>.

c. Quran Recitation: Strengthening Spirituality through the Word of God

Quran recitation is held three times a week before classes begin. Each student takes turns reading under the guidance of a teacher. This activity aims to foster spiritual closeness to the word of God. The PAI teacher and Al-Qur'an coach said, *"Children who regularly read the Al-Qur'an show changes in behavior; they are more patient, calm, and easy to manage. The Al-Qur'an calms their hearts."*

From a religious psychology perspective, reciting the Qur'an creates inner peace as the main parameter of spiritual intelligence. The verses of the Qur'an are not only read but also instilled as guidelines for life, thereby fostering divine consciousness and internalizing Qur'anic moral values.²⁰

d. Prayers Before and After Learning as a Representation of the Spiritualization of Knowledge

Each lesson begins and ends with a group prayer. This prayer emphasizes that the process of seeking knowledge is a form of worship and cannot be separated from the help of Allah. One student said, *"When I say a prayer before studying, it feels like knowledge comes more easily. The teacher said that knowledge is light from Allah, so prayer is like opening the door to light."*

This activity strengthens spiritual intelligence in the dimension of religious belief by accustoming students to bring Allah into every academic activity. In line with Surah. Al-Mujādilah verse 11, this activity is a manifestation of the internalization that knowledge and human status are determined by Allah.

e. Recitation of Shalawat, Asmaul Husna, and Surah Yasin as a Form of Transcendental Awareness

The habit of reciting *shalawat* and *asmaul husna* every morning is done as a form of strengthening love for the Prophet Muhammad and introducing the attributes of Allah. Psychologically, this activity forms spirituality based on *ma'rifatullah* (deep knowledge of Allah). The student affairs teacher stated, *"After reciting Asmaul Husna, the children are easier to guide, perhaps because their hearts are clean and connected to Allah."* This activity strengthens the affective dimension of spirituality, where students experience emotional closeness to Allah and the Prophet Muhammad, increasing their empathy and religious morality.

f. Congregational Zuhri and 'Asr Prayers: Spiritual and Social Discipline Training

Congregational obligatory prayers instill time discipline, obedience to the imam, and togetherness in worship. This activity is an internalization of the value of Islamic brotherhood. A Teacher said, *"Through congregational prayer, students learn to submit to the imam. This symbolizes that in life there must be leadership and rules that must be obeyed."* Its main function is to develop social spiritual intelligence through collective worship practices, where students learn to lower their egos, submit to rules, and experience spiritual togetherness.

²⁰ Salbiah and M. Ikhwanul Hakim, "An Islamic Counseling Model Based On The Qur'an and Hadith For Developing Students' Self-Regulation," *IJIERA: International Journal of Islamic Education and Research Application* 1, no. 1 (2025): 24–31, <https://doi.org/10.51806>.

g. Friday Prayer as Transformative Learning of Life Values

During Friday prayer, students not only worship but also receive moral messages through sermons. Sermon themes are often related to social phenomena that are relevant to the lives of teenagers. One student said, *"Every Friday sermon always has a message that makes me think about myself... like when discussing the dangers of being lazy in praying, I felt slapped in the face."*

This shapes reflective spirituality, which is the core of spiritual intelligence according to Emmons (1999). Yasin (2020) states that reflective spirituality is part of spiritual intelligence related to an individual's capacity to reflect on the deepest meaning of life experiences, evaluate themselves honestly, and understand the connection between themselves, God, and transcendental reality.²¹

h. Istigāṣah and Joint Prayer as Collective Spiritual Strengthening

Istigāṣah is held once a month to ask for Allah's help as a congregation. This activity builds awareness that all matters of life must be returned to Allah. PAI teacher said, *"Through Istigāṣah, children understand that effort alone is not enough. That is where spiritual intelligence grows they learn to rely on Allah in every difficulty."* This activity strengthens the transcendental dimension of coping, which is the ability to deal with problems through a spiritual approach.

i. Friday Donations as a Means of Developing Spiritual Empathy

The habit of donating trains students to care and understand the teachings of social monotheism in Islam. The money collected is used to help underprivileged students and for social activities. A student said, *"When the teacher explained that infaq is not just giving money, but also purifying the heart from worldly desires, I felt lighter about sharing."* This activity shapes the altruistic dimension of students' spiritual intelligence, making them realize that worship is not only ritualistic but also social.

j. Commemoration of Islamic Holidays as a Means of Strengthening Spiritual and Historical Identity

The commemoration of the Prophet's Birthday, Isra' Mi'raj, and Ramadan involves students in dramas, lectures, and religious competitions. This serves as a reconstruction of religious historical values in a contemporary context. Student said, *"Through the celebration of Maulid, we are invited to emulate the Prophet's character. Teachers always relate it to modern life, so we understand that religion is relevant throughout the ages."* Scientifically, these activities serve to shape historical-spiritual consciousness, deepen faith, and strengthen the religious identity of students.

2. The Habit of Praying in Congregation as a Strengtheners of Discipline and Solidarity

There are also practices of dhuhā and dzuhur prayers in congregation that have a significant impact on discipline, solidarity, and the formation of students' spirituality. Dhuhā prayers accustom students to performing sunnah worship that has high spiritual value, while

²¹ Linda Rykkje et al., "Educational Interventions and Strategies for Spiritual Care in Nursing and Healthcare Students and Staff: A Scoping Review," *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 31, no. 11–12 (June 6, 2021): 1440–64, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.16067>.

dzuhur prayers in congregation foster time discipline, togetherness, and social solidarity. Through congregational practices, students learn the meaning of obedience to rules, orderliness in life, and respect for time. This is in line with Skinner's (1953) theory of habit formation, in which the repetition of activities in a social context can form habits that are deeply rooted in students.²² In addition, congregational activities also demonstrate aspects of religious socialization, where individuals practice obeying the prayer leader, maintaining order, and paying attention to unity. This practice not only trains the spiritual dimension, but also the social and moral dimensions.

3. Strengthening Spiritual Literacy through *Tadarus Al-Qur'an*

The activity of reciting the Qur'an before lessons is another effective means of building students' religious habitus. Every morning, students read verses from the Qur'an together before lessons begin. This practice shows how the school strategically allocates time to strengthen Qur'an literacy skills while instilling spiritual awareness. The interview results show that this activity makes students calmer, more focused, and ready to follow the learning process. From an educational psychology perspective, recitation has the function of calming the mind and building mental readiness for learning. In addition, this practice also serves as a means of internalizing values, where students understand the importance of starting activities with reading the holy book. This is in line with the findings of Hayatunnufusa et al. (2023) that the habit of reading the Qur'an collectively improves the quality of spirituality and strengthens social bonds between students.²³

4. Collective Spiritual Experience through Istighasah and Joint Prayer Activities

Istighasah and communal prayer activities demonstrate a strong collective spiritual dimension. These activities are carried out in order to seek Allah's protection and help, while strengthening the bonds of ukhuwah among school members. Communal prayer fosters a sense of togetherness in facing challenges, both academic and non-academic, and instills the awareness that everything must be surrendered to God. From the interviews, it was revealed that students felt calmer and more confident after participating in communal prayers because they felt they had a strong spiritual foundation. This reinforces Glock & Stark's (1965) concept of the dimension of religious experience, in which collective spiritual experiences can deepen individual religiosity while strengthening social bonds.²⁴

5. Instilling the Values of Patience and Self-Control through Sunnah Fasting

In addition, the practice of fasting on Mondays and Thursdays serves as a spiritual education tool that trains students' patience, empathy, and moral resilience. Through this activity, students learn to refrain from their desires, develop concern for the suffering of the poor, and develop stronger self-control. From interviews with students, it is known that sunnah fasting makes them more sensitive to the needs of others and more capable of controlling their emotions. From a psychological perspective, this practice can be seen as a

²² B. F. Skinner, *Science and Human Behavior* (New York: Macmillan, 1953), <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781483327372.n6>.

²³ Hayatunnufusa et al., "Exploring the Influence of Islamic Religious Education on the Development of Student Religious Identity at the Indonesian University of Education."

²⁴ Charles Y. Glock and Rodney Stark, *Religion and Society in Tension* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965).

self-regulation strategy that helps students build self-control in the face of environmental temptations. Nasution (2016) states that fasting can shape spiritual discipline while increasing social sensitivity, thus becoming an effective means of building spiritual intelligence.²⁵

Table 2. The Implications of Religious Culture Formation on Improving Students' Spiritual Intelligence

No.	Spiritual Intelligence	Indicator	Form On The Field
1	Adhering to the principle of honesty in attitude and speech	A life shaped by one's outlook on life and moral principles	• Admitting mistakes when arguments occur in class. • Being honest when filling out attendance for the mid-morning prayer.
2	Having a broad understanding and perspective of Islam	High level of self-awareness	• Demonstrating enthusiasm in learning religious teachings. • Having independent awareness in performing religious obligations without needing reminders from others.
3	Having deeper faith and piety	High level of self-awareness	• Students show high enthusiasm in learning religious teachings. • Have spiritual awareness reflected in their ability to perform religious duties independently without needing to be reminded.
4	Manners towards teachers and elders	High morals, firm opinions, and respectful attitudes	• Kissing the teacher's hand when meeting them. • Greeting the teacher. • Bowing when passing the teacher.
5	Having a high level of tolerance	Reluctance to cause unnecessary harm	• Students hugging when they meet. • Respecting opinions during discussions. • Respecting friends from different ethnic groups.
9	Having a spirit of mutual assistance	Ability to be flexible	• Helping each other in group work. • Helping each other during community service activities.
10	Having high self-confidence	Individuals' ability to respond to challenges and optimize difficult situations as opportunities for growth and development	• Participating in competitions with confidence. • Daring to speak in front of the class.

6. Analysis of the Formation of a Religious Culture in Enhancing Spiritual Intelligence Among Middle School Students

a. The Process of Religious Socio-Cultural Construction in Schools

The formation of students' spiritual intelligence at SMP Negeri 1 Sumberasih occurs through a systematic process of social construction. The school's religious culture does not arise naturally, but through a process of externalization, objectification, and internalization as

²⁵ Harun Nasution, *Teologi Islam: Aliran-Aliran Sejarah Analisa Perbandingan*, 2016.

described by Berger and Luckmann (1966).²⁶ In the externalization stage, the school creates and expresses religious values through activities such as congregational dhuha prayers, Quran recitation, the 5S movement (smile, greet, say hello, be polite, be courteous), the habit of istighasah, and infaq almsgiving. These activities are social realities that are deliberately created as a form of expression of spiritual values that are to be instilled in the entire school community. These habits slowly form collective behavior patterns that are accepted as common practices.

The objectification stage occurs when these religious practices are institutionalized through school policies, official schedules, and the provision of facilities. Religious culture is not merely an optional activity, but has become an institutional norm accompanied by teacher supervision and principal legitimacy. This is in line with Berger and Luckmann's view that social reality becomes objective when it is institutionalized and accepted as "the right way to act." Thus, religious practices in schools have changed from individual activities to institutional realities that have social coercive power.

b. The Simultaneous Process of Externalization, Objectification, and Internalization in the Formation of Spiritual Intelligence

Internalization occurs when students undergo a process of absorbing religious values until these values become part of their consciousness and personality. The process of internalizing spiritual intelligence in schools takes place through three mechanisms: habituation, symbolic meaning, and emotional involvement. Through habituation, students practice religion routinely, so that religious activities become part of their daily lives. Activities such as the dhuha prayer and tadarus are no longer understood merely as obligatory activities, but as spiritual needs that bring peace, closeness to God, and self-reflection.

The formation of students' spiritual intelligence in the context of school religious culture does not occur linearly or partially, but through a simultaneous process that is intertwined between externalization, objectification, and internalization. At the stage of externalization, spiritual values are expressed tangibly in the form of school activities such as the dhuha prayer, Quran recitation, the 5S movement, and the habit of giving alms. This externalization becomes the main entry point, where abstract spiritual values are manifested into social practices that can be observed and followed by students. This process is directly related to objectification because these practices do not stand alone but are institutionalized through school rules, facility support, and teacher role models, so that religious activities are not only ritualistic activities but are accepted as legitimate social norms that bind the entire school community.

This externalization and objectification then proceed together toward a process of internalization, in which students not only perform practices out of structural obligation but also begin to understand the meaning behind them. For example, the dhuha prayer, which was initially considered only a school routine, is gradually understood as a means to get closer to God, control emotions, and increase gratitude. At this point, internalization becomes evidence that spiritual values have entered the structure of students' consciousness. They

²⁶ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, "The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge" (New York: Anchor Books, 1966).

begin to feel spiritual peace, develop social empathy through charity, and have a reflective awareness of the meaning of worship. Thus, the process of externalization creates concrete actions, objectification institutionalizes these actions into a collective culture, and internalization transforms them into spiritual intelligence in the form of transcendental awareness, meaning of life, and moral behavior. These three processes are not separate, but work simultaneously, creating a cycle of continuous spiritual cultivation in school life.

Symbolic meaning emerges when students begin to understand the transcendental dimension of these activities. Greetings are not just social greetings, but symbols of *ukhuwah* (brotherhood); almsgiving is not just a material gift, but a form of social empathy and awareness of spiritual responsibility. At this stage, spiritual intelligence develops through the ability to understand the deepest meaning of every religious act. This is in line with the concept of spiritual intelligence proposed by Olivia Andrei (2023), which states that spiritual intelligence is reflected in an individual's ability to find existential meaning in every life experience.²⁷

c. The Role of Socialization Agents in the Formation of Spiritual Intelligence

The process of internalizing spiritual intelligence cannot be separated from the role of socialization agents such as teachers, principals, and peer groups. Teachers act as role models who provide moral and spiritual examples through their attitudes, words, and daily behavior. Principals act as providers of religious cultural legitimacy and ensure that religious activities are part of the education system.²⁸ Peer groups contribute as social reinforcing agents, where students admonish, remind, and motivate each other to do good.

Field findings show that teachers' exemplary behavior has a significant influence on the formation of students' spiritual intelligence. Teachers not only teach religious material cognitively, but also provide concrete examples through worship practices and interpersonal interactions. This reinforces the view of Mamatkulova Mukhlisa Mamirjonovna (2014), who assert that teachers are the main agents in the process of religious socialization and spiritual development of students.²⁹ Thus, the formation of spiritual intelligence is not merely the result of the learning process, but of social relations that occur in the school culture.

The findings of this study are consistent with international research that emphasizes the importance of a religious environment in the formation of spiritual intelligence. Mohsen Hosseinbor, et al. (2023) found that spiritual intelligence contributes positively to students' psychological well-being and learning motivation.³⁰ The study shows that when students engage in structured religious practices, they develop transcendental awareness that enhances reflective abilities and social empathy. This is in line with the findings at SMP Negeri

²⁷ Olivia Andrei, "Enhancing Religious Education through Emotional and Spiritual Intelligence," *HTS Theologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 79, no. 1 (2023): 1–7, <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v79i1.7887>.

²⁸ Sri Badriyati, Suliswiyadi, and Nurodin Usman, "The Principal's Policy in Developing Religious Culture," in *Proceedings of the 1st Borobudur International Symposium on Humanities, Economics and Social Sciences (BIS-HESS 2019)*, vol. 436 (Paris, France: Atlantis Press, 2020), 299–302, <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200529.061>.

²⁹ Mamatkulova Mukhlisa Mamirjonovna, "Mechanism of Development of Students' Spiritual Development Following Professional Training," *ASEAN Journal of Religion, Education, and Society Journal* 3, no. 1 (2024): 1–10, <https://ejournal.bumipublikasinusantara.id/index.php/ajores>.

³⁰ Mohsen Hosseinbor, Mohammad Saeed Jadgal, and Fatemeh Kordsalarzahi, "Relationship between Spiritual Well-Being and Spiritual Intelligence with Mental Health in Students," *International Journal of Adolescent Medicine and Health* 35, no. 2 (2023): 197–201, <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijamh-2022-0078>.

1 Sumberasih, where the practices of dhuha prayer and Quran recitation can improve students' discipline, inner peace, and social awareness.

Research by Skrzypińska (2020) states that spiritual intelligence is not only a religious concept but also a psychological construct that influences how individuals give meaning to life.³¹ This finding supports the fact that students at this school do not merely follow rituals but also experience a transformation of spiritual awareness. In addition, a study by Muslimah Hikmah Wening and Enung Hasanah (2020) confirms that a religious school culture plays an important role in shaping students' spiritual identity, especially when that culture is consistently institutionalized.³² This reinforces the argument that the religious culture of the school is a significant variable in the formation of students' spiritual intelligence.

This discussion shows that the formation of spiritual intelligence at SMP Negeri 1 Sumberasih is the result of a complex and systematic social construction process. Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory is proven to be relevant in explaining the dynamics of spiritual intelligence internalization through school culture. This study provides a conceptual contribution that religious culture is not only a means of habit formation, but also a structure of social reality that shapes the construction of students' spiritual awareness.

The novelty of this study lies in the finding that in the context of public schools, where religious plurality and secular education are challenges, religious culture can function as an effective mechanism in shaping students' spiritual intelligence without creating exclusivity. The practical implication of this research is the need for schools to build a sustainable, systematic, and contextual religious culture in order to be able to face the challenges of moral degradation and spiritual crisis among students in the modern era.

Overall, the results of this study show that religious culture at SMP Negeri 1 Sumberasih does not only function as a routine activity but has become an integral part of the school's identity. This culture is able to increase students' spiritual intelligence, strengthen character, and build a religious social ethos. This success is proof that Islamic education based on religious culture is highly relevant in responding to the challenges of globalization and the moral crisis affecting the younger generation. From this, religious culture can be used as an important strategy in the development of Islamic education that is oriented towards values, character, and spirituality in the modern era.

D. CONCLUSION

This study highlights that the formation of a religious culture at SMP Negeri 1 Sumberasih in Probolinggo Regency extends beyond ceremonial programs and is integrated into students' daily lives through consistent practices. Activities such as the 5S program, congregational Dhuha and Dhuhr prayers, Qur'an recitation before lessons, communal prayers, and fasting on Mondays and Thursdays effectively foster spiritual awareness, discipline, and positive social attitudes. The results show significant increases in students' spiritual intelligence dimensions, including transcendental awareness, social empathy, and the ability to face challenges with

³¹ Katarzyna Skrzypińska, "Does Spiritual Intelligence (SI) Exist? A Theoretical Investigation of a Tool Useful for Finding the Meaning of Life," *Journal of Religion and Health* 60, no. 1 (February 27, 2020): 500–516, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-020-01005-8>.

³² Muslimah Hikmah Wening and Enung Hasanah, "Strategies for Developing Religious Culture To Shape the Character of Students," *International Journal of Educational Management and Innovation* 1, no. 3 (2020): 262–70, <https://doi.org/10.12928/ijemi.v1i3.2592>.

patience and trust in God. This improvement is linked to the exemplary behavior of teachers, supportive school leadership, parental involvement, and a conducive environment. However, challenges like global cultural influences and limited curriculum time remain obstacles. According to Berger and Luckmann's social construction theory, the establishment of religious values involves externalization, objectification, and internalization, which shape students' spiritual dispositions. These findings suggest that spiritual intelligence is better developed through religious culture than through cognitive approaches.

While the study enriches the literature on Islamic education and recommends that other schools adopt similar models, it is limited to one school and did not quantify spiritual intelligence. Further research in diverse school contexts, using mixed methods and validated measurement tools, is necessary to understand the role of family and the digital environment in forming students' spiritual intelligence.

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