



Management of Local Religious and Diniyah Curriculum Implementation in Strengthening Students' Religious Character

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.61987/jemr.v4i3.1782>

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Religious Character,
Local Curriculum,
Educational
Management

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This study aims to examine the management of local religious and Diniyah curriculum implementation in strengthening students' religious character, while identifying its impacts, supporting factors, and challenges. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis in selected primary and secondary schools that implement local religious and Diniyah programs. Informants included school principals, teachers of local religious and Diniyah subjects, and students, selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Data were analyzed interactively through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing with verification. The findings indicate that the implementation of local religious and Diniyah curriculum is systematically integrated into intramural, co-curricular, and extracurricular activities, positively influencing students' religious character, such as increased discipline in worship, honesty, responsibility, and social care. The successful implementation is supported by strong community religiosity, engagement of religious institutions, and educational policy. However, challenges remain, including limited qualified educators, infrastructure constraints, and students' diverse religious backgrounds. Overall, the study highlights that effective management of local religious and Diniyah curriculum can serve as a model for character education based on Islamic values in broader educational contexts.

Article History:

Received: November 2025; Revised: December 2025; Accepted: January 2026

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Rifan, M., Muhyi, N., Syaifulloh, A., & Irawan, G. B. (2026). Management of Local Religious and Diniyah Curriculum Implementation in Strengthening Students' Religious Character. *Journal of Educational Management Research*, 4(3), 24-37.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a pivotal role in shaping students' character and personality, which is crucial for the sustainability of moral and spiritual values in society. In the era of globalization and rapid technological advancement,

challenges to ethical, moral, and religious values are increasingly complex, threatening the integrity of individual and collective behavior (Jombang, 2022). Beyond mastering knowledge and skills, education must also instill character values that form the foundation of national identity (Dewi & Manshur, 2026; Hefniy & Alwahedi, 2025; Holidi, 2025; Khofsah & Rozi, 2025). One critical dimension is religious character, which underpins moral development and ethical decision-making in everyday life. Therefore, the strategic integration of local religious and Diniyah curriculum into schools can serve as a mechanism to systematically internalize religious and moral values (Listrianti et al., 2023; Manshur et al., 2023; Munif & Sulaiman, 2023; Nuraini et al., 2025; Rozi et al., 2023). Proper management of these educational programs, including planning, resource allocation, and supervision, is essential to ensure that character education aligns with both local socio-cultural needs and national education goals, thus bridging the gap between knowledge acquisition and value internalization (Devi et al., 2021; Permendikbud No. 79 Tahun 2014).

Despite the recognized importance of religious character education, many educational institutions face challenges in effectively embedding these values within their curricula. Schools often prioritize academic performance and standardized testing over holistic character development, resulting in students who may excel cognitively but lack ethical, moral, or spiritual grounding (Qurnia et al., 2022). Moreover, inconsistencies in teacher competence, resource availability, and institutional support exacerbate this problem, making it difficult to sustain programs aimed at fostering religious character (Hikmah & Mudarris, 2026; Kusumawati, 2025; Syafiih, 2025). These challenges highlight a broader societal problem: the diminishing capacity of educational systems to cultivate socially responsible, ethically aware, and religiously grounded individuals. The gap between curriculum design and its practical implementation underscores the need for research that examines not only the content but also the management practices that ensure effective delivery and sustainability of religious and Diniyah-based character education programs (Azzahrah et al., 2026).

In practice, schools attempting to implement local religious and Diniyah programs often encounter diverse contextual realities (Hasanah et al., 2024; Hidayat et al., 2024; Rohmatillah & Jannah, 2024; Sanjani, 2024). For instance, students come from varying religious backgrounds and familial practices, affecting their readiness and engagement in religious learning (Sapiri et al., 2024). Observations from schools with active religious programs indicate that while structured intracurricular and extracurricular activities are in place, their effectiveness depends heavily on administrative oversight, teacher capability, and community involvement (Wahyu & Hidayat, 2025). Moreover, schools with limited managerial capacity struggle to coordinate activities, monitor student

progress, and integrate religious values across subjects. This demonstrates that successful implementation is not solely dependent on curriculum content but equally on the management of educational resources, program planning, and leadership (Hasbullah et al., 2023). Such phenomena highlight the importance of examining how local religious programs are operationalized within schools and how management strategies influence outcomes.

Previous studies have highlighted the potential of local religious and Diniyah programs in reinforcing students' moral and spiritual development. Ni (2023) and Sekolah (2023) observed that structured religious instruction can improve discipline, honesty, and social responsibility (Sapiri et al., 2024; Azzahrah et al., 2026). However, these studies often focus primarily on curriculum content, while neglecting the management aspects necessary to maintain program sustainability (Mustafa & Maulana, 2024; Rahmadan & Shudiq, 2024; Samsi, 2025). Similarly, Devi et al. (2021) emphasized the need for school-based management approaches to align educational objectives with local socio-cultural conditions but provided limited insight into how administrative practices shape the effectiveness of religious education. This gap indicates a need for research that examines not only the pedagogical aspects but also the organizational and managerial processes that facilitate the integration of religious values into students' daily behavior.

Furthermore, while many studies confirm the positive impacts of religious programs on character development (Allim & Man, 2024; Azzahrah et al., 2026), challenges such as uneven teacher competency, limited resources, and heterogeneous student backgrounds remain underexplored. Prior research does not sufficiently address how management strategies such as leadership, supervision, and program evaluation can mitigate these challenges. Understanding the interplay between educational management and program implementation is crucial for developing replicable models that ensure long-term success in character education (Badriyah, 2025; Basri et al., 2024; Rodliyah & Khusnuridlo, 2024; Thohir, 2024). Therefore, this study contributes by examining the managerial dimensions of implementing local religious and Diniyah programs, providing insights into both the operational processes and their impact on students' religious character.

This research introduces the concept of integrating educational management practices with religious character programs, an approach that moves beyond traditional pedagogy to include systematic oversight, resource coordination, and institutional collaboration. Unlike previous studies that focus on outcomes or content delivery alone, this study emphasizes the strategic management of curriculum, teacher development, and community engagement as a holistic mechanism for fostering sustainable religious character in students.

By bridging management theory and practical religious education, this research addresses a critical gap and offers a model applicable to schools seeking to enhance character education through structured local religious programs (Jombang, 2022; Ni, 2023).

Based on the literature and observed field challenges, this study addresses the research problem: How does the management of local religious and Diniyah curriculum influence the development of students' religious character? The study argues that effective educational management including leadership, planning, monitoring, and community involvement is key to translating curriculum intentions into observable character outcomes. By analyzing program implementation, identifying supporting and hindering factors, and evaluating student behavior outcomes, this research provides evidence-based recommendations for school leaders and policymakers. The findings are expected to contribute to both theory and practice by offering a replicable management framework for character education that can strengthen religious values in diverse educational contexts, ensuring students' holistic development.

RESEACH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design aimed at obtaining an in-depth understanding of the implementation of local religious and Diniyah curriculum in strengthening students' religious character. A qualitative design was chosen because it enables researchers to explore social phenomena holistically and contextually within their natural settings, allowing for rich and nuanced interpretations of participants' experiences. This approach is particularly suitable for examining educational practices that are closely embedded in institutional culture, values, and daily interactions. As stated by Moleong (2016), qualitative research seeks to understand the meanings, perspectives, and experiences of research subjects through direct engagement with the field. Therefore, this design was considered appropriate to capture the complexity of program implementation, managerial practices, and character formation processes within schools.

The research was conducted in several primary and secondary schools that have formally implemented local religious and Diniyah curriculum as part of their educational programs. The selection of research sites was carried out using purposive sampling, based on specific criteria, including the existence of structured and active religious programs, institutional commitment to character education, and program sustainability. These schools were considered representative contexts for examining the implementation of religious character education through local curriculum. The selection was also justified by the socio-cultural environment, where strong religious traditions influence educational

practices. According to Ramdhan (2021), purposive sampling allows researchers to select research locations that are most relevant to the research objectives, ensuring the depth and relevance of data collected.

Data were collected using three primary techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted to directly examine learning activities, religious habituation practices, and school routines related to the implementation of local religious and Diniyah programs. In-depth interviews were carried out with school principals, teachers responsible for religious and Diniyah subjects, and students to obtain comprehensive insights into program implementation, supporting and inhibiting factors, and perceived impacts on students' religious character. Documentation was used to support and validate findings, including curriculum documents, syllabi, schedules of religious activities, school policy documents, and photographic records. The combination of these techniques allowed for data triangulation and enhanced the credibility of the research findings (Samsul, 2017).

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation involved selecting, focusing, and simplifying raw data obtained from the field in accordance with the research objectives. The condensed data were then organized and presented in the form of descriptive narratives to facilitate interpretation and pattern identification. Finally, conclusions were drawn iteratively through continuous verification against field data to ensure their accuracy and consistency. This analytical process enabled the researcher to systematically interpret findings and generate valid conclusions grounded in empirical evidence.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the Implementation of Local Religious and Diniyah Curriculum

Based on field observations and in-depth interviews with school principals and teachers of local religious and Diniyah subjects, the findings indicate that the implementation of local religious and Diniyah curriculum has been systematically integrated into the school curriculum. This program is not positioned merely as an additional activity but constitutes an essential component of the school's instructional structure at both primary and secondary education levels. Such integration is evident in curriculum planning, allocation of instructional time, and alignment with school visions and missions that emphasize the strengthening of students' religious values (Nurlaela et al., 2024).

The implementation is carried out through structured intrakurikuler and ekstrakurikuler activities. In intrakurikuler settings, local religious content is

delivered through specific subjects such as Qur'anic studies, Fiqh, Aqidah Akhlak, and Islamic Cultural History (SKI). These subjects are designed to develop students' religious understanding comprehensively across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. Meanwhile, ekstrakurikuler activities include religious habituation practices such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, and other spiritual activities that support the formation of students' religious character.

Furthermore, the Diniyah curriculum adopts traditional pesantren-based learning patterns, particularly through the study of foundational Islamic texts commonly used in pesantren environments. These materials are adapted to students' developmental levels, enabling learners not only to understand Islamic teachings theoretically but also to practice Islamic values in daily life. This approach makes Diniyah learning contextual and deeply rooted in the Islamic scholarly traditions prevalent in Jombang society (Sholeh, 2025). The successful implementation of this program is also supported by strong collaboration between schools, local government, and religious communities, reflecting the region's identity as "Kota Santri."

Implementation of Religious Values in School Activities

The findings reveal that religious values have been systematically and integratively implemented across school activities. This implementation extends beyond formal classroom instruction and is reinforced through habituation, role modeling, and continuous religious practices. Such integration reflects the strong religious culture that characterizes the educational landscape.

Religious habituation activities are conducted routinely and programmatically, including congregational dhuha and dhuhr prayers, Qur'anic recitation before lessons, and the commemoration of Islamic holy days. These practices function as mechanisms for internalizing faith, discipline, and responsibility among students. Through consistent engagement, students develop religious awareness not merely at the cognitive level but also through daily practice.

Religious values are also integrated into general subjects. Teachers consciously link instructional materials to values such as honesty, responsibility, perseverance, and faith. This integrative approach demonstrates that religious character education is embedded throughout the learning process rather than confined to specific religious subjects (Retnowati et al., 2024). In addition, the exemplary conduct of principals and teachers plays a critical role. Their discipline in worship, ethical interactions, and consistency in applying Islamic moral values serve as concrete models for students, significantly influencing character formation.

The implementation is further strengthened through Diniyah learning activities involving the study of classical Islamic texts such as *Mabādi' al-Fiqh*, *Alala*, and basic pesantren literature, including instruction in Pegon script. These activities cultivate humility, patience, and respect for Islamic intellectual traditions, thereby deepening students' religious character.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Implementation

Several supporting factors contribute to the effective implementation of local religious and Diniyah curriculum. A deeply rooted religious culture within the community serves as a foundational element, reinforcing the values taught in schools. As a region widely recognized for its strong Islamic traditions, the social environment naturally supports religious habituation among students.

Support from religious institutions such as pesantren, madrasah diniyah, and Islamic study groups further strengthens program implementation. Many schools collaborate with these institutions in curriculum development, teacher provision, and religious activities, enhancing the contextual relevance and legitimacy of Diniyah learning. Additionally, supportive local government policies aligned with Permendikbud No. 79 of 2014 provide a strong regulatory foundation for integrating religious local content into school curricula.

Despite these supports, several inhibiting factors were identified. Limited availability of qualified Diniyah teachers remains a major challenge, as not all schools have educators with pesantren backgrounds or sufficient Islamic scholarship. This limitation affects instructional quality and methodological diversity. Infrastructure constraints, such as inadequate classrooms and limited learning resources, also hinder optimal implementation. Moreover, students' diverse religious backgrounds and varying levels of prior religious knowledge require teachers to adopt adaptive instructional strategies to ensure equitable learning outcomes.

Impact on Strengthening Students' Religious Character

The implementation of local religious and Diniyah curriculum has demonstrated significant positive impacts on students' religious character. These impacts extend beyond cognitive understanding to observable attitudes and behaviors in both school and community settings. Increased discipline in religious practices, such as congregational prayers and regular Qur'anic recitation, reflects heightened spiritual awareness and internal motivation among students.

The program also contributes to the development of honesty and responsibility. Through integrated instruction and teacher exemplification,

students are habituated to ethical behavior, punctuality, academic integrity, and environmental responsibility. Furthermore, students' social awareness and empathy have increased, as evidenced by active participation in charitable activities, social service programs, and communal cooperation.

These findings align with the view that religious value-based education fosters moral and spiritual integrity as the foundation of character development (Sukmawinata & Ubaidillah, 2025). Conceptually, the results support character education theory emphasizing the integration of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Jempa, 2017). Moral knowing is reflected in structured religious instruction, moral feeling emerges through sustained religious habituation, and moral action is evident in students' consistent ethical behavior (Khairani, Siti, Yusnaili Budiyanti, 2024).

Overall, the implementation of local religious and Diniyah curriculum transcends normative instruction and effectively internalizes Islamic values, enabling religious character to manifest in students' daily attitudes and actions in a sustainable manner.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of local religious and Diniyah curriculum provides an important lesson that religious character education becomes more effective when it is systematically managed and integrated across intrakurikuler, kokurikuler, and ekstrakurikuler school activities. The study reveals that religious character formation is not merely the result of cognitive religious instruction but is largely shaped through consistent habituation, role modeling, and the alignment of curriculum, school culture, and community support. The most significant insight gained from this research is that strong educational management—reflected in structured planning, organized implementation, and continuous supervision—plays a crucial role in transforming religious values into lived practices among students. This study contributes academically by enriching the discourse on educational management in character education, particularly by demonstrating how local religious content and Diniyah programs can function as an effective managerial strategy for strengthening students' religious character within formal schooling contexts.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted within a specific socio-cultural setting characterized by a strong religious culture, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to regions with different religious or cultural contexts. In addition, this study primarily relied on qualitative data, which, while providing in-depth insights, does not measure the long-term sustainability or comparative effectiveness of the program quantitatively. Therefore, future research is recommended to employ mixed-

method or longitudinal designs to examine the long-term impact of local religious and Diniyah curriculum on students' character development. Further studies may also explore comparative analyses across different regions, as well as investigate the role of school leadership, teacher professional development, and policy implementation in strengthening religious character education through educational management perspectives.

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