# Teacher Strategies in Character Formation to Enhance Students' Social Attitudes at Madrasah

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ABSTRACT. This study investigates the strategies teachers employ to shape students' character and enhance social attitudes at Tsanawiyah Alkhairaat Madrasahs in Ampibabo District. The background of this research lies in the urgency of character education in developing students who are not only intellectually capable but also socially responsible and morally grounded. The study aims to describe in depth how teachers plan, implement, and evaluate learning processes that integrate moral and social values through Social Studies (IPS) instruction. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation at MTs Alkhairaat Ampibabo and MTs Alkhairaat Sidole. The findings reveal that teachers' strategies effectively foster students' social attitudes when they combine interactive methods, moral modeling, and school culture. At MTs Alkhairaat Ampibabo, teachers apply group discussions, collaborative projects, and social activities to strengthen empathy, cooperation, and responsibility. Meanwhile, teachers at MTs Alkhairaat Sidole emphasize exemplary behavior and positive routines rooted in religious and disciplinary values. The results indicate a significant improvement in students' social behaviors, such as mutual respect, cooperation, and social responsibility. The study concludes that successful character formation requires consistency among classroom learning, school environment, and family involvement. The implication of this research highlights the importance of integrating character education strategies into every aspect of teaching practice to cultivate socially aware and morally upright students.

**Keywords**: Teacher strategies, Character education, Social attitude, Madrasah.



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### INTRODUCTION

Character education is a systematic process that aims to shape the values, attitudes and behavior of students so they are able to live meaningfully in social life (Ar et al., 2025; Habibah et al., 2025; Setiawan et al., 2025). Lickona emphasized that character education includes three main components, namely moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action, which must be developed in an integrated manner through learning and example (Lickona, 2022). This view emphasizes that character is not enough to be taught theoretically, but must be practiced consistently in an educational environment. In the school context, teachers play a key role as the main agents of character formation because teacher interactions with students occur directly and continuously (Kenedi, 2023).

Character education in islamic secondary schools plays a strategic role in responding to contemporary social challenges faced by adolescents (Raikhan, 2024; Salamah et al., 2025; Yanto et al., 2025). Madrasah tsanawiyah, as institutions that integrate general education and religious values, are expected to produce students who are not only academically competent but also socially responsible and morally grounded (Leu, 2025; Permadi et al., 2025). In rural areas such as ampibabo district, the role of the teacher becomes increasingly crucial due to limited access to technological resources and diverse social backgrounds of students. These conditions demand adaptive and contextual teaching strategies, particularly in social studies (IPS), which inherently emphasizes social interaction, citizenship, and moral values (Badrudin et al., 2025; Mustikamah et al., 2025; Rohmah et al., 2023).

The development of globalization and information technology has had a significant impact on students' social attitudes. According to tilaar, rapid social change is often accompanied by a weakening of social values such as caring, togetherness and responsibility (Lapasere et al., 2025; Syukur et al., 2024). This condition is reflected in student behavior which tends to be individualistic and less sensitive to their social environment. Therefore, formal education is required to respond to these challenges by providing learning that is oriented towards strengthening character and social attitudes, not just cognitive aspects (Sari & Widodo, 2021)

Social Sciences (IPS) has strong relevance in forming students' character and social attitudes. Sapriya stated that IPS was designed to equip students with social understanding while instilling the values of citizenship, tolerance and social responsibility (Hakim & Muhid, 2025; Rohmah et al., 2023; Wulandari et al., 2025). Through social studies learning, students are expected to be able to understand social reality and behave in accordance with the norms that apply in society. Thus, social studies becomes a strategic vehicle for internalizing character values through real-life contexts that are close to students' experiences (Hasanah & Fauzan, 2023)

The effectiveness of social studies learning in forming character is largely determined by the teacher's strategy. According to mulyasa, character-based learning strategies require teachers to integrate moral values into the planning, implementation and evaluation of learning. Teachers not only act as teachers, but also as role models and moral guides for students. The teacher's example, cultivating a positive attitude, and using interactive learning methods are important factors in forming students' social attitudes on an ongoing basis (Mustika Mustika et al., 2025).

The strengthening of students' social attitudes—such as cooperation, empathy, discipline, and responsibility—cannot be separated from the learning environment created by teachers. In Islamic educational settings, character education is not merely an additional component of the curriculum but is deeply embedded in daily school practices, religious routines, and teacher—student interactions. Therefore, the success of character education depends on the teacher's ability to integrate instructional strategies with moral modeling and habituation processes that align with Islamic values.

Previous studies have explored the relationship between Social Studies (IPS) learning and character formation (Febriyani Harahap et al., 2023) (Hartini & Nurdin, 2024) These studies affirm that IPS learning can nurture social responsibility, tolerance, and cooperation among students. However, most of these works focus on general educational settings and do no examine how teachers in Islamic institutions implement context-specific strategies that combine religious, moral, and national values (Juwaini et al., 2025; Permadi et al., 2025; Raikhan, 2024). Moreover, few studies have investigated how differences in school culture and community support influence the effectiveness of teachers' character-building approaches. Thus, there remains a research gap concerning how teacher strategies operate in rural Islamic schools to improve students' social attitudes through character education.

This study aims to fill that gap by analyzing teacher strategies in forming student character to enhance social attitudes at Tsanawiyah Alkhairaat Madrasahs in Ampibabo District. Specifically, it examines how teachers design lesson plans, select teaching methods, utilize learning media, and implement evaluations that support moral and social value integration within Social Studies learning. The study also identifies how these strategies differ between two schools with distinct institutional and cultural environments. By focusing on teachers' pedagogical and moral roles, this

research seeks to demonstrate that effective character formation is not merely the result of instructional design but also of consistent moral modeling and supportive school culture. The study argues that social attitude improvement among students can only be achieved through the synergy of classroom instruction, habitual practices, and collaboration between school and family. Hence, this paper contributes both theoretically and practically to the discourse on character education and teacher professionalism in Islamic secondary schools.

### **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach, as described by creswell (2014), which aims to explore and understand the meaning of individuals' or groups' experiences in their natural settings. The qualitative design was chosen because the research focused on exploring teachers' strategies in forming students' character and how these strategies contribute to improving their social attitudes. The fieldwork was conducted over four months, from february to may 2025, at two islamic junior high schools: madrasah tsanawiyah (mts) alkhairaat ampibabo and mts alkhairaat sidole, located in ampibabo district, parigi moutong regency, central sulawesi, indonesia. These two institutions were purposively selected due to their differing school cultures and approaches to character education, providing a rich and comparative context for data collection.

The participants of this study included social studies (ips) teachers, school principals, and students who were actively involved in character-building activities. Informants were selected through purposive sampling, with criteria that the teachers must have at least three years of teaching experience and be directly involved in implementing character education within their instruction. The primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants, while secondary data were collected through classroom observations and document analysis, including lesson plans, syllabi, school activity records, and photographic documentation of students' social activities.

Data were analyzed using the interactive analysis model proposed by miles and huberman, consisting of three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. In the reduction stage, relevant information was selected, categorized, and coded according to the research focus. The data display phase involved organizing findings into descriptive narratives and thematic tables to highlight emerging patterns and meanings. The final stage involved inductive conclusion drawing, identifying relationships between teacher strategies, classroom practices, and students' social attitude development. To ensure data validity, the study employed triangulation of sources and methods by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation.

# RESULT AND DISCUSSION Result

This section presents the findings of the qualitative field research conducted at MTs Alkhairaat Ampibabo and MTs Alkhairaat Sidole. All findings are empirically substantiated through triangulation of data sources, namely in-depth interviews, direct classroom and school observations, and analysis of written and visual documentation, to ensure that each conclusion is grounded in verifiable field evidence. The results are derived from in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and documentation analysis. The presentation of findings emphasizes empirical evidence in the form of informant statements and documented activities to demonstrate the authenticity of the field data.

Based on interviews with Social Studies (IPS) teachers, it was found that character formation is intentionally integrated into the planning stage of learning. This interview data is reinforced by observation results showing teachers explicitly referring to character values during lesson delivery, as well as documentation evidence in the form of lesson plans that clearly list targeted character values alongside learning objectives. One IPS teacher at MTs Alkhairaat Ampibabo stated that character values are always embedded in lesson objectives, particularly values related to discipline, cooperation, and responsibility. The teacher explained that IPS learning is not

only aimed at delivering material but also at shaping students' social attitudes through structured activities. This statement is supported by documentation in the form of lesson plans, which explicitly include character values aligned with learning competencies.

Field observations further indicate that teacher role modeling plays a central role in character formation. Observational notes document teachers arriving punctually, communicating respectfully, and consistently enforcing classroom rules, while interview data from teachers and students confirms that such behaviors are consciously intended and perceived as examples to be followed. During classroom observations, teachers consistently demonstrated disciplined behavior, respectful communication, and fairness in interacting with students. An IPS teacher at MTs Alkhairaat Sidole emphasized that students tend to imitate what they see from teachers rather than what they are told verbally. This finding is reinforced by interview data from students who acknowledged that teachers' daily behavior influences how they interact with peers, particularly in terms of politeness and mutual respect.

Habituation through school culture also emerged as a significant finding. This finding is supported by observational data on daily school routines, interview statements from teachers regarding the purpose of these activities, and documentation such as school regulations, schedules of religious and social activities, and photographic records of routine practices. Daily routines such as greeting teachers, collective prayers, maintaining classroom cleanliness, and orderly conduct were consistently practiced in both madrasahs. Documentation in the form of school rules, activity schedules, and photographic evidence confirms that these routines are systematically implemented. Teachers reported that such habituation gradually shapes students' discipline and social awareness, as students become accustomed to practicing positive behavior in their daily school life.



**Figure 1**. Classroom habituation activities showing students collaboratively arranging classroom furniture as part of discipline and responsibility character formation.

The use of interactive learning methods was observed to strengthen students' social attitudes. Observation data captured active student interaction during group discussions, interview data revealed teachers' intentional grouping strategies to foster cooperation, and documentation in the form of learning activity records further corroborated these practices. Classroom observations revealed that group discussions and collaborative tasks encouraged students to communicate, share responsibilities, and respect differing opinions. One teacher explained that heterogeneous grouping is intentionally used to train students to cooperate with peers of varying abilities. This practice was documented through observation notes and learning activity records, which show active student participation and positive peer interaction.

Evaluation of students' social attitudes is conducted continuously through observation and attitude journals. Interview data indicates that teachers deliberately record students' social behaviors,

observation confirms the use of attitude monitoring during learning activities, and documentation in the form of attitude journals provides concrete written evidence of this evaluative practice. Teachers document students' behavior related to cooperation, responsibility, honesty, and empathy. An IPS teacher noted that this form of evaluation allows teachers to monitor character development over time rather than relying on one-time assessments. Documentation of attitude journals supports this finding and illustrates how qualitative assessment is embedded in daily teaching practice.



**Figure 2.** Observation of teacher–student interaction during IPS learning activities that reflect character formation through discipline, cooperation, and respectful communication.

Second, student empathy and concern have increased. The teacher said that students were becoming more sensitive to their friends' conditions and were used to providing help without being asked. This is reinforced by documentation of class social activities such as social service carried out in the madrasah environment.

Third, student discipline and responsibility also increase. Students become more punctual, neater in doing their assignments, and more obedient to madrasa rules. This change is especially visible at MTs Alkhairaat Sidole which has a strong religious routine. Teacher interviews show that improvements in discipline cannot be separated from the consistency of the teacher's example in terms of time and behavior.

Further analysis of the findings indicates that the effectiveness of teacher strategies is closely related to the consistency between instructional planning and daily practice. At MTs Alkhairaat Ampibabo, Social Studies teachers emphasize participatory learning activities that allow students to directly experience social interaction within structured classroom settings. Group discussions, collaborative assignments, and project-based activities serve as practical spaces for students to practice cooperation, mutual respect, and shared responsibility. Observational data show that students gradually become more confident in expressing opinions and more willing to listen to peers, indicating improved social communication skills.

In contrast, MTs Alkhairaat Sidole demonstrates a stronger reliance on habituation and exemplary behavior rooted in religious discipline. Teachers consistently model punctuality, respectful communication, and adherence to school rules. These behaviors are reinforced through daily religious activities such as collective prayers and moral reminders. Interview data reveal that students perceive teachers as moral figures whose behavior serves as a reference for their own actions. As a result, improvements in discipline and responsibility are more visible in this madrasah compared to Ampibabo.

Despite differences in emphasis, both madrasahs show that character formation is most effective when teachers integrate instructional strategies with school culture. Documentation analysis confirms that lesson plans in both schools explicitly include character values, demonstrating

intentional planning rather than incidental character teaching. This integration ensures that character education is not treated as a separate subject but as an integral part of Social Studies learning.

## Discussion

The findings of the study on teacher strategies in shaping students' character at MTs Alkhairaat Ampibabo and MTs Alkhairaat Sidole indicate that character formation does not occur solely through the delivery of Social Studies (IPS) content, but also through modeling, habituation, method selection, media utilization, and structured evaluation. These findings reinforce the paradigm that effective character education requires coherence between planning, implementation, and the learning environment created by the teacher. In this context, Social Studies teachers at the two madrasahs demonstrated consistency in integrating character values—such as responsibility, discipline, empathy, cooperation, and tolerance—into every stage of the learning process.

First, the discussion related to lesson planning shows that teachers do not only design cognitive learning objectives but also include affective goals directed toward character development. Teachers consciously incorporate character value components into the syllabus and lesson plans. This is clearly reflected in the lesson plans, which state non-cognitive objectives and target character traits such as "students are able to work collaboratively," "students show respect for their peers' opinions," and "students demonstrate environmental awareness." The Social Studies teacher at Ampibabo even stated that character values are determined prior to selecting learning methods and strategies, making values the core of the learning process rather than an addition. The integration of values at the planning stage aligns with (Huda Et Al., 2024; Mayasafira, 2025) view that Social Studies instruction must connect basic competencies with social values relevant to students' daily lives.

Second, in the aspect of teachers' understanding of the material, the findings show that teachers master social studies material and are able to relate it to students' social context. Social studies teachers at both madrasahs use local issues such as community service, harmony between residents, and village social dynamics as concrete examples in learning. Good mastery of the material makes teachers able to integrate character values through contextual explanations. This finding is in line with the position of social studies as a subject that contains many concepts of social values and national insight so that learning can take place more meaningfully when teachers link the material to students' social experiences.

Furthermore, in the strategy and method aspect, teachers at both madrasas apply discussion methods, group work, project-based learning and demonstrations. The use of this method not only increases student interaction, but also encourages students to demonstrate character values directly. For example, in learning about social diversity, teachers form heterogeneous groups based on interests and abilities (Naufal & Maksum, 2024; Nuranifah et al., 2022). The formation of heterogeneous groups encourages students to help each other, accept friends' weaknesses, and appreciate diversity. Researcher observations show that Ampibabo students who were originally passive have become more active in giving opinions and working together. This is in line with (Rofiah et al., 2022) theory which states that effective learning strategies are strategies that are able to create student interaction and provide opportunities to build concepts through experience.

The aspect of teacher role-modeling (modelling) also emerges as an important strategy. The Social Studies teacher at Sidole, for example, makes it a habit to greet students, arrive early, and demonstrate patience when dealing with them. Role-modeling becomes a dominant factor in shaping students' character, as Lickona emphasizes that character education cannot be separated from the role of exemplary figures. Students at both madrasahs even admitted that they feel embarrassed to arrive late when they see their teacher consistently present on time. This finding is in line with (Miftahuddin et al., 2024; Qasserras, 2024) who states that teacher role-modeling plays a central role in schools grounded in religious values.

In the aspect of instructional media, the findings show that teachers face limitations, particularly at MTs Sidole, where technological access is minimal. However, teachers make efforts to use concrete media such as pictures, maps, and case sheets. At Ampibabo, teachers have begun

using simple slides to display character values in each Social Studies lesson. The media used provide visual reinforcement of the social values conveyed in the learning process. Despite existing limitations, teachers are still able to utilize simple media to optimize the delivery of character values.

In the aspect of evaluation, teachers do not only assess academic outcomes but also use attitude journals, direct observation, and peer assessment. Evaluation is carried out continuously, both during the learning process and outside the classroom (Asy'Ari et al., 2025; Wang & Huang, 2025). Teachers record behaviors such as helping peers, attendance, classroom cleanliness, and honesty during group work. This character evaluation aligns with the attitude assessment format in the 2013 Curriculum, and it has been shown to encourage consistent behavioral changes in students. The evaluations conducted by teachers also indicate that character formation is not limited to a single subject but occurs in an integrated manner throughout the entire school day (Ilmi et al., 2023)

Regarding the impact of teacher strategies, this study found that character formation is reflected in the improvement of students' social attitudes. At Ampibabo, students became more active in group cooperation and showed increased concern for classmates who were experiencing difficulties (Azizah & Mardiana, 2024; Sholihah et al., 2025). At Sidole, religious routines and a culture of discipline strengthened students' character in terms of responsibility and adherence to rules. These impacts are clearly reflected in students' daily behaviors such as classroom duties, communal work, village social service activities, and peer interactions. These findings support (Utami & Rahman, 2022) who found that Social Studies learning can enhance students' critical thinking, tolerance, cooperation, and social responsibility.

Overall, this discussion emphasizes that the success of teacher strategies in shaping students' character is influenced by three main factors: teacher role-modeling, school culture, and interactive learning strategies (Minarti et al., 2023; Sabariah et al., 2025). These three aspects work in a complementary manner. Teacher role-modeling provides concrete examples, school culture reinforces habitual behavior, and learning strategies offer opportunities for students to practice social values within an academic context. Therefore, the development of students' social attitudes cannot be separated from the synergy of these three factors. The implementation of Social Studies learning in the two madrasahs demonstrates that well-planned, integrated, and consistent character education can lead to real behavioral changes in students.

# **CONCLUSION**

This study confirms that teacher strategies—including lesson planning, role modeling, habituation, the use of methods and media, and attitude-based evaluation—have a significant impact on improving students' social attitudes at MTs Alkhairaat Ampibabo and MTs Alkhairaat Sidole. The integration of character values such as responsibility, cooperation, empathy, and discipline in Social Studies instruction has been proven to produce positive changes in students' social behavior.

Scientifically, this study strengthens previous findings regarding the role of social studies in character development and contributes new insights into the integration of character values within madrasah settings that face technological limitations. These findings broaden the academic discourse on the effectiveness of teacher strategies in character education rooted in religious values. This study is limited by its narrow scope of location and small sample size, which restrict the generalizability of its results. Therefore, further research with larger samples and more diverse educational contexts is needed to obtain a more comprehensive understanding.

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