



## THE ROLE OF CONGREGATIONAL DHUHA PRAYER ACTIVITIES IN FORMING STUDENTS' SPIRITUAL CHARACTER

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### Abstrack

*This study aims to analyze the role of congregational Dhuha prayer activities in shaping students' spiritual character. The background of this research is based on the importance of developing religious character through the habituation of worship as an integral part of Islamic education. The research employed a qualitative approach with data collection techniques including observation, interviews, and documentation. The research was conducted at Anshoriyah, Parijata Wetan Village. Data were analyzed using an interactive analysis model, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings revealed that the implementation of congregational Dhuha prayer significantly contributes to the development of students' spiritual character. Regular and structured worship activities foster religious values reflected in positive behavioral changes among students. The observed impacts include increased punctuality, personal responsibility, emotional calmness, politeness and social empathy, as well as enhanced awareness of worship and gratitude to Allah. Supporting factors for this activity include strong commitment from the principal and teachers, adequate mushalla facilities, and continuous guidance. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include limited awareness among some lower-grade students and the need to strengthen worship motivation. The habituation of congregational Dhuha prayer serves as an effective strategy for strengthening students' spiritual character and is worthy of implementation as a religious culture development program in Islamic elementary schools.*

**Keywords:** Dhuha Prayer, Spiritual Character, Islamic Religious Education, Religious Culture.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran kegiatan shalat dhuha berjamaah dalam membentuk karakter spiritual siswa. Latar belakang penelitian dilandasi oleh pentingnya pembentukan karakter religius melalui pembiasaan ibadah sebagai bagian integral dari pendidikan Islam. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Data dianalisis menggunakan model analisis interaktif, meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelaksanaan shalat dhuha berjamaah memberikan



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kontribusi signifikan terhadap pembentukan karakter spiritual siswa. Kegiatan ibadah yang dilakukan secara teratur dan terstruktur mampu menumbuhkan nilai-nilai religius yang tercermin dalam perubahan perilaku peserta didik. Dampak yang terlihat antara lain meningkatnya kedisiplinan waktu, tanggung jawab pribadi, ketenangan emosional, sikap sopan dan empati sosial, serta munculnya kesadaran beribadah dan rasa syukur kepada Allah. Faktor pendukung pelaksanaan kegiatan ini meliputi komitmen kepala madrasah dan guru, fasilitas mushala yang memadai, serta pembimbingan yang berkesinambungan. Adapun faktor penghambat di antaranya kurangnya kesadaran sebagian siswa kelas rendah dan motivasi ibadah yang masih perlu ditumbuhkan. Pembiasaan shalat dhuha berjamaah merupakan strategi efektif dalam penguatan karakter spiritual siswa dan layak diterapkan sebagai program pengembangan budaya religius di sekolah dasar Islam.

**Kata Kunci:** Shalat Dhuha, Karakter Spiritual, Pendidikan Agama Islam, Budaya Religius.

### **Introduction**

Education is the main foundation in forming a nation that is highly competitive at the global level (Azura, Sania & Lestari, 2025). Education is a continuous and never-ending learning process (Azizah, Irawan, & Slamet, 2023). Education plays a crucial role in shaping the character and personality of students as a whole, not only in the cognitive aspect, but also in the affective and spiritual aspects (As'adi, 2023). Education aims to develop various aspects such as self-control, personality, intelligence, morals, and skills needed for personal and societal interests (Slamet, Fitria & Irawan, 2024). Amidst the complexity of modern life, the need for education that focuses not only on the intellectual aspect but also strengthens the moral and emotional dimensions is becoming increasingly important (Aditya, 2025). Therefore, character development from an early age is an important part of the educational process to produce an intelligent, knowledgeable, and moral generation (Ulum & Slamet, 2025).

In the context of Islamic education, the formation of spiritual character is one of the main goals that must be pursued through various activities to cultivate worship that are integrated into school life (Rahmawaty & Supriyadi, 2025). Philosophically, Islamic education is defined as education with a universal paradigm, namely in the context of humanization and liberalization. Humans, the creation of sacred, humanitarian, and natural values in an integrated manner in order to fulfill their devotion to humanity, and humanity is a kind of dedication of the Caliph on earth (Nabila, 2021). Islamic Religious Education emphasizes not only the transfer of religious knowledge but also the internalization of religious values manifested through concrete behavior in daily life (Irodati, 2022). Education not only plays a role in transferring knowledge but also has a very vital role in shaping the character of students (Bariroh & Firdaus, 2025). This is in line with the opinion of Zubaedi (2011), who stated that character education is a conscious effort to shape human personality through the instilling of moral and ethical values manifested in concrete actions.

One form of habitual worship that is believed to play a role in shaping students' spiritual character is the congregational Dhuha prayer. Character development is crucial, especially among Indonesian youth today (Anam & Fahyuni, 2025). In facing various external challenges and threats, having a strong character is crucial (Slamet & Syahid, 2024). Character development is crucial,

especially among Indonesian youth today. In facing various external challenges and threats, having a strong character is crucial. Dhuha prayer is a recommended sunnah worship because it has enormous spiritual virtues, one of which is as an expression of gratitude for God's blessings and a means of drawing closer to Him. According to Al-Ghazali (2008), habitual worship is an effective means of shaping human character through consistent spiritual practice. This shows that worship performed regularly and in congregation can be an important instrument in fostering spiritual awareness, sincerity, and discipline in students.

In the world of modern education, the phenomenon of declining morality, discipline, and negative behavioral tendencies among students is a major challenge that must be addressed seriously. The currents of globalization and the development of information technology often lead to shifts in values, especially among elementary school-aged children (Prasetya *et al.*, 2024). Lickona (2013) emphasized that character education is needed to prevent the emergence of destructive behavior among the younger generation and as a foundation for developing strong moral and spiritual values. Therefore, schools, as formal educational institutions, must be able to create a religious environment through activities that foster worship, including congregational Dhuha prayer, which can provide students with direct spiritual experiences.

Based on the research results of Septantiningtyaset *al.* (2024), instilling a religious culture through congregational Dhuha prayer not only serves as a spiritual routine but also contributes significantly to the formation of positive student character. This activity can improve the quality of social relationships between students and strengthen emotional bonds between students and the school environment. These findings indicate that habituating worship plays a strategic role in developing character education based on religious values. In line with this, Kamila, Al-Afthoni & Nada (2025) explain that habituating worship, including performing Dhuha prayer in congregation, is an effective method in building a holistic religious character in faith-based educational institutions. Habituation carried out consistently can form a strong spiritual personality and is reflected in students' daily behavior. Meanwhile, research by Ridhwan, Luthfiyah & Irwan (2025) shows that the implementation of Dhuha prayer at MA Darul Hikmah has become a part of the school culture that takes place regularly. This activity is carried out individually by students during breaks and is a form of internalization of religious values in school life.

Al Anshoriyah, as an Islamic elementary school, strives to integrate religious values into the school culture through a program of daily worship habits, one of which is the implementation of congregational Dhuha prayers every morning before learning activities begin. This program is expected to form positive habits that have an impact on the formation of students' spiritual character, such as gratitude, time discipline, peace of mind, and social awareness because it is carried out together. According to Muttaqin (2019), the habit of worship carried out in a congregational atmosphere can improve religious motivation of students due to the existence of exemplary elements and social support in practice.

Thus, congregational Dhuha prayer has great potential as a strategy for developing students' spiritual character in elementary schools. However, the effectiveness of this program requires in-depth research to determine its implementation, supporting and inhibiting factors, and its impact on changes in students' religious behavior. Therefore, the researcher is interested in examining "The Role of Congregational Dhuha Prayer in Developing Students' Spiritual

Character " as an academic endeavor to provide a practical contribution to the development of religious-based character education in schools.

### **Method**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to provide an in-depth description of the congregational Dhuha prayer and its contribution to shaping students' religious character. This approach was chosen to understand the meaning, behavior, and experiences of informants holistically within the real-world context. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative research allows researchers to explore social phenomena in depth through direct interaction with research subjects. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, involving madrasah principals, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and students participating in the Dhuha prayer. Sugiyono (2019) explains that purposive sampling is used to select informants who are considered to be most knowledgeable about the problem, thus ensuring more relevant data. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation. Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, & Saldana (2014), which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was strengthened by triangulation of sources and techniques, as recommended by Moleong (2017) to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the information. Through this method, it is hoped that an objective picture of the congregational Dhuha prayer and its influence on the formation of students' religious character is obtained.

### **Results and Discussion**

As an Islamic educational institution, Anshoriyah is strongly committed to instilling religious values and shaping the spiritual character of its students through various programs that foster the habit of worship. One of the hallmarks of this madrasa's religious culture is the congregational Dhuha prayer, held every morning before the start of classes. This prayer activity is not merely intended as a religious routine, but as a character education strategy integrated into school life.

#### **The Role of Congregational Dhuha Prayer Activities in the Formation of Spiritual Character**

Based on research findings obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation , it was discovered that the congregational Dhuha prayer plays a significant role in shaping and developing students' spiritual character. This voluntary worship activity is carried out regularly every morning before teaching and learning activities begin, thus becoming an integral part of the madrasah's religious culture. The Dhuha prayer is not only interpreted as a spiritual obligation but also as a means of character education oriented towards instilling religious values and developing an Islamic personality in students.

Congregational Dhuha prayer provides a profound religious experience because it is performed in a solemn atmosphere of togetherness and under the direct guidance of a teacher. Through this activity, students not only gain a theoretical understanding of worship but also practice its values.

Real and consistent spiritual values. The orderly, neat, and organized atmosphere created during worship services is an effective medium for cultivating discipline, order, respect, and a sense of responsibility. With the active involvement of teachers

as guides, students learn through example. (*uswah hasanah*) which is a basic principle in Islamic education, so that moral and spiritual values can be embedded more strongly.

Observations also showed a marked change in student behavior after regularly participating in the Dhuha prayer. This change was evident in improved time discipline, with students attempting to arrive early for worship. Furthermore, students demonstrated improved politeness, both in their speech and behavior toward teachers and peers. They also appeared more organized in carrying out assignments and more responsible in participating in learning activities. Their enthusiasm for participating in the Dhuha prayer also increased, as evidenced by students' eagerness to prepare themselves and maintain reverence during the prayer.

The findings of this study align with Muttaqin's (2019) opinion, which states that consistently practicing religious practices, particularly in a congregational setting, can increase students' religious motivation. This occurs due to social support, role models, and moral encouragement from the students' surroundings. Similarly, the research of Sanjaya, Suardi, and Alawiyah (2025) shows that practicing congregational Dhuha prayer at MAS Plus Al-Ulum, which is implemented as a mandatory morning practice, significantly contributes to improving students' religious character. This practice not only fosters discipline in worship but also fosters sustainable religious awareness.

Similar findings were also revealed by Sari, Pitoewas, and Yanzi (2018), who stated that there is a positive and significant influence between the implementation of congregational prayer on the development of students' religious character. This influence is determined by active student participation, a good level of orderliness, and adequate support from facilities and infrastructure so that worship activities can take place conducive. If congregational worship is carried out continuously and internalized, it will develop into a habit that can foster the religious character of students, especially in eighth grade junior high school students. Thus, congregational Dhuha prayer activities function not only as a religious ritual, but also as a process of internalizing values through social interaction and real role models from educators.

In addition to helping shape morals and discipline, the Dhuha prayer also plays a role in increasing students' emotional calm. Interviews with several teachers revealed that after practicing this form of worship, students appeared calmer, more focused in their learning, and found it easier to control themselves when facing stressful situations or conflicts between friends. This stable emotional state is a concrete example of the formation of spiritual character through worship. This aligns with Al-Ghazali's (2008) view that regular worship is a form of spiritual practice. (*riyadhah al-nafs*) which is able to purify the soul, soften the heart, and form noble character.

Thus, the congregational Dhuha prayer activity has become a strategic instrument in fostering students' spiritual awareness from an early age. Through a process of habituation, teacher role models, and positive religious interactions, students understand worship not only as a religious routine, but also as a spiritual need that guides them towards discipline, peace of mind, awareness of good behavior, and harmonious relationships with their surroundings. From the perspective of Islamic character education, this activity can be seen as a concrete form of integration between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor learning that can produce a generation with noble morals and religious character.

### Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in Performing Dhuha Prayer in Congregation

The implementation of congregational Dhuha prayers is inseparable from factors that support and hinder the process of habituating this worship. Supporting factors play a crucial role in creating a conducive and sustainable religious learning environment, thus optimally achieving the goal of developing students' spiritual character. Based on observations and interviews with the madrasah, several aspects significantly contribute to the success of this habituation.

One of the main supporting factors in implementing the program to develop the habit of worship is a strong commitment from the madrasah principal and teachers. Creating a religious culture embedded in every educational activity. Madrasahs demonstrate commitment through systematic planning of programs to cultivate religious habits, ongoing monitoring of activity implementation, and periodic evaluations to ensure the program's effectiveness. These findings align with Nabila's (2021) assertion that the success of character education programs depends heavily on the commitment and leadership of educational institution leaders in building a religious school culture oriented toward moral values. Furthermore, Mahendra and Sholeh (2025) assert that the principal's participatory and contextual leadership strategies in implementing religious activities, such as congregational prayer and strengthening school culture, contribute significantly to preventing deviant behavior and strengthening students' religious values. Meanwhile, Marcela (2022) found in her research that the planning, implementation, and evaluation of religious programs by principals are crucial factors in shaping students' religious culture.

Furthermore, the availability of adequate prayer facilities, such as a clean, comfortable prayer room that can accommodate all students, facilitates the implementation of activities. A supportive physical environment makes students feel more comfortable and devout in carrying out their prayers. Another supporting factor is the active involvement of students as worship officials, such as acting as imams, bilals, or prayer readers. This involvement provides real-life experiences that foster a sense of responsibility, increase self-confidence, and develop spiritual leadership character from an early age. Teachers also act as guides, overseeing the course of activities, ensuring order, and providing direction to students with a wise and exemplary approach.

However, behind this success, several obstacles were encountered in implementing the congregational Dhuha prayer program. The main obstacle was a lack of awareness among some students, especially in lower grades, who still needed intensive guidance and ongoing motivation to participate in the activities in an orderly manner. Some students also demonstrated that their motivation for worship was still external, or driven by teacher encouragement, and not yet fully realized. It grows from self-awareness and personal spiritual needs. This aligns with Lickona's (2013) view that character formation cannot occur instantly but requires a consistent process of habituation and role modeling so that moral values can be ingrained and become permanent characteristics.

However, these obstacles can be overcome through continuous habituation, a persuasive approach, strengthening internal motivation, and the example of teachers as religious role models. Exemplary behavior is key because students more easily imitate religious behavior they witness firsthand. With planned and sustained efforts, the challenges of performing the Dhuha prayer in congregation can be minimized, thus optimally achieving the goal of developing students' spiritual character.

### The Impact of Congregational Dhuha Prayer Activities on Student Character Development

Based on research findings obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation, congregational Dhuha prayers have a significant positive impact on student character development, particularly in spiritual and social aspects. Regular and structured worship is not only a form of religious practice but also a means of internalizing moral values and developing a superior personality through real and ongoing religious experiences.

The first tangible impact is increased time discipline and personal responsibility. Students are accustomed to arriving early, preparing themselves for worship, and following the activity procedures conscientiously. These habits train students to manage their time effectively and assume responsibility for their spiritual obligations. This discipline and responsibility are not only evident during worship but are also reflected in daily behavior such as class attendance, completing assignments on time, and complying with school rules.

Furthermore, congregational Dhuha prayer activities also have a positive influence on students' peace of mind and ability to control their emotions.

A solemn atmosphere of worship creates inner peace, helping students become more emotionally stable and better able to control themselves when facing conflict or stress. Several teachers reported that students appeared calmer during the learning process, more focused, and less prone to petty arguments. Well-managed emotional well-being is crucial for developing a mature spiritual character.

Another impact is increased politeness, respect, and social empathy. Interactions in congregational activities teach students to respect each other, maintain harmony, and work together in a shared atmosphere. Children learn the values of solidarity, mutual assistance, and respect for imams, teachers, and peers. These values of empathy and social ethics are formed through the habit of mutual support and respect for differences. Furthermore, these activities significantly increase awareness of worship and gratitude to God. Students demonstrate greater enthusiasm for religious practices and experience spiritual benefits that strengthen their commitment to worship, not out of coercion, but out of personal awareness. This religious awareness indicates that the habit of congregational Dhuha prayer can form a solid foundation of spiritual values from an early age.

The findings of this study are in line with the results of Septantiningtyas' research. *et al.* (2024) emphasized that the practice of Dhuha prayer plays a strategic role in strengthening religious character while enhancing social relationships among students. This practice not only impacts the individual's spiritual aspects but also strengthens positive social interactions within the school environment. Furthermore, Saifudin (2024) explained that the formation of religious character through the practice of Dhuha prayer in congregation occurs through three stages: the practice of worship, the internalization of moral values, and the strengthening of students' social attitudes in daily life. This demonstrates that Dhuha prayer in congregation serves as a medium for integrated value education between the spiritual and social dimensions.

Similar findings were also expressed by Fitriyah, Kamal, and Mustangin (2025) who stated that the habit of praying Dhuha in congregation has an effect positive impact on student character development, such as discipline, consistency, patience, and an increased love of worship. Furthermore, this activity also fosters harmonious social relationships among students. Therefore, congregational Dhuha

prayer is not merely understood as a religious ritual, but rather as a character-building process that has a real and lasting impact on shaping students' spiritual character, which includes discipline, courtesy, noble character, and a strong sense of worship.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the results of research on the role of congregational Dhuha prayer in shaping the spiritual character of students, it can be concluded that the implementation of this worship activity has a significant contribution in developing the religious character of students. The habit of performing Dhuha prayer regularly, scheduled, and with teacher guidance can be a means of internalizing religious values through direct spiritual experience. This activity not only functions as a worship ritual, but also as an effective medium in instilling discipline, responsibility, reverence, togetherness, and awareness of worship in students. The positive impact of this activity is seen through real behavioral changes, namely increased discipline in time, emotional calm, politeness and social empathy, as well as the growth of spiritual commitment and gratitude to God. Supporting factors for the successful implementation of this program include the commitment of leaders and teachers, the availability of adequate worship facilities, and continuous guidance. Meanwhile, obstacles such as unstable motivation for worship for some students can be overcome through role models and consistent habits. Thus, congregational Dhuha prayer has proven to be an effective strategy in strengthening the school's religious culture and forming students' spiritual character from an early age. The implementation of this activity is worth maintaining and developing as a model for worship-based character development in other Islamic educational institutions.

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