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Teachers' Strategies for Implementing The Values of The Kerigan Tradition in Strengthening Students' Character at MTs Plus Al-Jawami Cilacap in 2025

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Abstract:

This study examines teachers' strategies for implementing the values of the Kerigan tradition in strengthening students' character at MTs Plus Al-Jawami Cilacap in 2025. The research aims to identify the strategies employed by teachers, explore the character values embedded in the Kerigan tradition, and analyze their contribution to students' character development. This study employed a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through observations, interviews with teachers, school leaders, and students, as well as documentation. The data were analyzed using the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. The findings reveal that teachers integrate the values of the Kerigan tradition into classroom learning, religious activities, and school culture through modeling, habituation, guidance, and reflective evaluation. The tradition promotes essential character values, including cooperation, responsibility, discipline, respect, social awareness, and religious commitment. The implementation of these values has positively influenced students' attitudes and behaviors, as reflected in their increased participation in collaborative activities, improved discipline, and stronger sense of responsibility toward the school community. The study concludes that integrating local cultural traditions into educational practices provides an effective approach to character education by reinforcing moral values while preserving local cultural heritage.

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Introduction (مقدمة)

Character education has become one of the central issues in contemporary educational discourse, particularly amidst the rapid development of technology, globalization, and shifts

in social values affecting the younger generation. Educational institutions are expected not only to transfer knowledge but also to cultivate moral values, social responsibility, discipline, cooperation, and cultural awareness among students. In the Indonesian educational context, strengthening character education has become a national priority as reflected in various educational policies aimed at producing learners who possess intellectual competence alongside noble character and social sensitivity (Kemendikbud; 2017). Islamic educational institutions, especially madrasahs, hold a strategic role in integrating religious teachings with local wisdom to foster students' holistic character development (Mulyasa; 2022).

One form of local wisdom that contributes significantly to character formation is the preservation of traditional communal activities embedded within society. Local traditions contain educational values that can serve as effective instruments for strengthening students' character because they provide direct experiential learning opportunities. Educational theorists emphasize that character is more effectively developed through habituation, participation, and real social experiences rather than through cognitive instruction alone (Lickona; 2013). Therefore, integrating local cultural practices into educational activities enables students to internalize values in a more meaningful and sustainable manner (Suyadi; 2018).

Among the traditions that continue to be preserved in several communities in Central Java is the Kerigan tradition. Kerigan refers to collective voluntary work carried out by community members to maintain public facilities, clean the environment, and support communal interests without expecting material compensation. This tradition embodies various educational values such as mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*), responsibility, social care, discipline, sincerity, and environmental awareness. In Islamic perspectives, these values are closely aligned with the principles of *ta'awun* (mutual assistance), *ukhuwah Islamiyah* (Islamic brotherhood), and social solidarity encouraged in the Qur'an and Hadith (Nata; 2020). Consequently, the Kerigan tradition can function not merely as a cultural heritage but also as an educational medium for instilling Islamic character values among students.

The integration of local wisdom into Islamic education has increasingly attracted scholarly attention in recent years. Several studies reveal that local traditions positively contribute to the formation of students' social and moral behavior when systematically incorporated into educational programs (Sutarto; 2021). Research on culture-based education also demonstrates that learning rooted in local values strengthens students' identity and sense of belonging to their communities while preventing cultural alienation caused by globalization (Tilaar; 2019). However, most previous studies have focused on curriculum integration or classroom learning strategies, while limited attention has been given to the role of teachers in implementing local traditions as practical character education activities within madrasah environments.

Teachers occupy a central position in the success of character education programs because they act not only as instructors but also as facilitators, motivators, role models, and cultural transmitters. Effective implementation of character education requires teachers to design learning experiences that encourage students to practice values directly in everyday life (Muslich; 2018). In Islamic educational institutions, teachers are expected to exemplify

moral conduct while guiding students in transforming religious teachings into social actions. Therefore, teachers' strategies in utilizing local traditions such as Kerigan become essential aspects worthy of academic investigation.

MTs Plus Al-Jawami Cilacap represents one of the Islamic educational institutions that actively integrates the values of the Kerigan tradition into its educational practices. The madrasah organizes communal activities involving teachers and students in environmental maintenance, social service, and collective responsibility programs inspired by the Kerigan tradition. Through these activities, students are expected to develop values of discipline, cooperation, social awareness, responsibility, and environmental stewardship. The implementation of such practices demonstrates an educational model that combines Islamic values with local wisdom to strengthen students' character in a contextual and participatory manner.

Despite the recognized importance of local wisdom-based character education, empirical studies examining teachers' strategies in implementing the Kerigan tradition within madrasah settings remain scarce. Existing research tends to discuss character education in general terms without specifically exploring how teachers translate cultural values into practical educational experiences for students (Samani & Hariyanto; 2017). This gap indicates the necessity for more in-depth studies focusing on the pedagogical strategies employed by teachers in integrating local traditions into character-building activities.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze teachers' strategies for implementing the values of the Kerigan tradition in strengthening students' character at MTs Plus Al-Jawami Cilacap in 2025. Specifically, the study seeks to identify the forms of teacher strategies used, examine the character values developed through the Kerigan tradition, and explore supporting as well as inhibiting factors in its implementation. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of Islamic character education based on local wisdom and practically to provide recommendations for educators and Islamic educational institutions seeking to integrate cultural values into educational practices.



Method (منهج)

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design to investigate teachers' strategies for implementing the values of the Kerigan tradition in strengthening students' character at MTs Plus Al-Jawami Cilacap in 2025. The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore educational phenomena in depth and understand participants' experiences within their natural settings (Creswell; 2018). Meanwhile, the case study design was considered appropriate because the research focused on a particular educational context involving the integration of local cultural values into character education practices within an Islamic educational institution (Yin; 2018).

The study emphasized understanding the processes, strategies, and interactions occurring during the implementation of the Kerigan tradition rather than measuring variables quantitatively. Through this approach, the researcher was able to identify how teachers translate local wisdom values into practical educational experiences that contribute to

students' character formation. The research was conducted at MTs Plus Al-Jawami Cilacap during the 2025 academic year.

The subjects of this study consisted of individuals directly involved in the implementation of the Kerigan tradition at MTs Plus Al-Jawami Cilacap. They included the headmaster, Islamic Religious Education teachers, homeroom teachers, and students participating in Kerigan activities. Participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques based on their involvement, experience, and understanding of the implementation of character education programs based on local wisdom (Sugiyono; 2022).

The study utilized both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained directly from observations and interviews with research participants regarding teachers' strategies, implementation processes, and students' responses toward the Kerigan activities. Secondary data were collected from institutional documents such as school regulations, character education programs, activity schedules, reports, photographs, attendance records, and other supporting documents related to the implementation of the Kerigan tradition in the madrasah environment (Moleong; 2019).

In qualitative research, the researcher functions as the primary instrument responsible for collecting, interpreting, and analyzing the data obtained in the field (Lincoln & Guba; 1985). To support the data collection process, several auxiliary instruments were utilized, including observation guidelines, interview protocols, and documentation checklists.

The observation guide was designed to record teachers' activities, students' participation, and the educational values demonstrated during Kerigan activities. Semi-structured interview guidelines were prepared to explore participants' perspectives regarding teachers' strategies, character values developed through the tradition, and challenges encountered during implementation. Documentation sheets were used to organize and classify institutional documents relevant to the study objectives?

Result (نتائج)

Teachers' Strategies in Implementing the Values of the Kerigan Tradition

The findings revealed that teachers at MTs Plus Al-Jawami Cilacap employed several strategies to implement the values of the Kerigan tradition as an instrument for strengthening students' character. The implementation was designed not merely as a routine cleaning activity but as a structured educational program intended to cultivate moral and social values among students. This finding supports the view that character education becomes more effective when integrated into students' daily experiences and social interactions rather than delivered solely through classroom instruction (Lickona; 2013).

The first strategy identified was habituation (ta'wid) through regular and continuous participation in Kerigan activities. Students were scheduled to engage in environmental cleaning, maintenance of school facilities, and communal service activities both inside and outside the school environment. Through repetitive involvement, students gradually developed habits of responsibility and discipline. Habituation has long been recognized as one of the most effective approaches in Islamic character education because repeated positive actions eventually become part of individual behavior patterns (An-Nahlawi; 1995).

The second strategy involved teachers serving as role models (*uswah hasanah*) during the implementation of Kerigan activities. Teachers actively participated alongside students in cleaning and maintenance activities, demonstrating cooperation, sincerity, and responsibility. The direct involvement of teachers encouraged students to imitate positive attitudes and behaviors displayed by their educators. Role modeling occupies a central position in Islamic educational philosophy because students tend to learn moral values more effectively through observation than through verbal instruction alone (Al-Abrasyi; 1993).

The third strategy consisted of value internalization through reflection and mentoring sessions following Kerigan activities. Teachers guided students to reflect on the importance of cooperation, solidarity, and social responsibility embedded within the tradition. Such reflective practices allowed students to connect practical experiences with religious teachings concerning social obligations and community welfare. Reflection is considered an essential component of experiential learning because it facilitates the transformation of experiences into meaningful understanding and values (Kolb; 1984).

Another strategy identified in the study was the integration of Kerigan values into classroom learning activities. Teachers incorporated examples derived from communal activities into Islamic Religious Education, Civic Education, and Social Studies subjects. This strategy enabled students to recognize the relationship between local wisdom and formal educational content, thereby strengthening the contextual relevance of learning experiences (Tilaar; 2019).

Character Values Developed through the Kerigan Tradition

The findings demonstrated that the implementation of the Kerigan tradition contributed significantly to the development of mutual cooperation (*gotong royong*) among students. Students learned to collaborate, divide tasks, and assist one another in accomplishing common goals. This finding aligns with previous studies indicating that collective community activities effectively foster cooperation and social cohesion among learners (Samani & Hariyanto; 2017).

Responsibility emerged as another dominant character value developed through participation in Kerigan activities. Students became more aware of their obligations toward maintaining classroom cleanliness, preserving school facilities, and completing assigned tasks without constant supervision. Responsibility is considered a fundamental component of character education because it forms the basis for accountability and self-regulation in social life (Lickona; 2013).

The implementation of Kerigan activities also strengthened students' discipline. Participation in scheduled communal activities required punctuality, consistency, and adherence to agreed rules and procedures. Teachers reported noticeable improvements in students' attendance, task completion, and compliance with school regulations following regular participation in the program. Discipline has been identified as one of the key indicators of successful character education in Islamic schools (Muslich; 2018).

Social care and empathy represented additional values developed through the implementation of the Kerigan tradition. Students demonstrated greater willingness to assist

classmates and participate in collective problem-solving activities. Islamic education emphasizes social care as an essential aspect of faith and community life, particularly through the principles of brotherhood and mutual assistance (ta'awun) (Nata; 2020).

Environmental awareness also emerged as a significant outcome of the program. Students became increasingly concerned with maintaining school cleanliness and preserving environmental sustainability. Observations indicated reductions in littering behavior and increased student initiatives related to environmental maintenance. Environmental responsibility has recently become an important dimension of character education within Islamic educational institutions (Suyadi; 2018).

Supporting Factors in the Implementation of the Kerigan Tradition

The study identified several supporting factors contributing to the successful implementation of the Kerigan tradition at MTs Plus Al-Jawami Cilacap. Institutional commitment from school leadership constituted one of the most important factors. School administrators provided policy support, allocated time for activities, and encouraged teacher participation in character education initiatives. Leadership commitment is widely recognized as a critical determinant of successful educational innovation and school culture development (Fullan; 2016).

Teacher collaboration represented another important supporting factor. Teachers from different subject areas consistently reinforced the values embedded in the Kerigan tradition through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Collaborative educational environments tend to facilitate more effective character education because students receive consistent messages across various learning contexts (Berkowitz & Bier; 2014).

The compatibility between Kerigan values and Islamic teachings also facilitated implementation. Students easily understood the relevance of cooperation, sincerity, and social responsibility because these values had already been introduced through religious instruction and school culture. The integration of local wisdom with Islamic teachings creates contextualized educational experiences that enhance students' value internalization processes (Azra; 2019).

Parental and community support further strengthened the implementation process. Many students encountered similar communal traditions within their neighborhoods, enabling reinforcement of school-based values within family and community settings. Educational research consistently demonstrates that character education programs become more effective when supported by families and local communities (Epstein; 2018).

Challenges in Implementing the Kerigan Tradition

Despite its positive contributions, several challenges emerged during implementation. Variations in students' motivation levels occasionally affected participation in communal activities. Some students perceived Kerigan merely as an obligatory school task rather than an opportunity for character development. Student motivation remains one of the most influential factors affecting the effectiveness of character education programs (Ryan & Deci; 2020).

Academic schedules and curriculum demands also posed challenges for teachers attempting to balance cognitive learning objectives with character education activities. Time limitations frequently reduced opportunities for reflection and follow-up discussions after Kerigan activities had been completed (Zubaedi; 2015).

The influence of modernization and digital culture represented another obstacle identified during the research. Some students were less familiar with communal traditions because of increasing individualistic tendencies associated with technological developments and social media usage. Similar trends have been reported in contemporary studies concerning the decline of communal values among younger generations in urbanizing societies (Putnam; 2000).

Overall Findings

Overall, the findings demonstrate that teachers at MTs Plus Al-Jawami Cilacap successfully utilized habituation, role modeling, reflection, and curricular integration strategies to implement the values of the Kerigan tradition in strengthening students' character. The study further confirms that local wisdom traditions remain highly relevant for contemporary Islamic education and provide effective approaches for cultivating discipline, responsibility, cooperation, social care, and environmental awareness among students (Tilaar; 2019; Azra; 2019).



Discussion (مناقشة)

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of the Kerigan tradition at MTs Plus Al-Jawami Cilacap represents an effective model of local wisdom-based character education in Islamic educational institutions. The strategies employed by teachers, namely habituation, role modeling, reflection, and curricular integration, correspond with major theories of character education that emphasize the importance of experiential learning and moral practice rather than mere cognitive transmission of values (Lickona; 2013). This finding confirms that character development is more sustainable when students actively participate in meaningful social activities that require cooperation, responsibility, and service to others.

The habituation strategy identified in this study reflects the Islamic educational principle of *ta'wid* or the formation of good habits through repetition and consistency. Islamic scholars argue that repeated positive behavior eventually becomes an integral part of one's personality and moral identity (An-Nahlawi; 1995). Through regular participation in Kerigan activities, students gradually internalized values such as discipline, responsibility, and environmental care until these behaviors became routine practices rather than externally imposed obligations. This finding supports previous research indicating that habitual participation in collective activities contributes significantly to students' moral and social development (Muslich; 2018).

The role-modeling strategy practiced by teachers also aligns with the Islamic educational concept of *uswah hasanah*, which emphasizes the educator's role as an example for learners. The Qur'an itself presents the Prophet Muhammad as the best model for human conduct, highlighting the importance of exemplary behavior in educational processes. Teachers who actively participated alongside students in Kerigan activities provided

authentic demonstrations of cooperation, sincerity, and responsibility, thereby increasing the credibility of the values being taught (Al-Abrasyi; 1993). Educational psychology similarly emphasizes that observational learning significantly influences students' behavioral development because learners tend to imitate respected authority figures within their environment (Bandura; 1986).

Another important finding concerns the use of reflection sessions following Kerigan activities. Reflection enabled students to connect practical experiences with ethical and religious principles, facilitating deeper understanding and internalization of values. Kolb's experiential learning theory argues that learning becomes meaningful when individuals engage in reflection on their experiences and transform them into conceptual understanding (Kolb; 1984). In the context of Islamic education, reflective practices encourage students to recognize the spiritual dimensions of social actions and understand communal service as part of religious devotion and moral responsibility (Nata; 2020).

The integration of Kerigan values into classroom instruction further demonstrates the importance of contextual learning in character education. Teachers connected students' experiences during communal activities with concepts taught in Islamic Religious Education, Civic Education, and Social Studies. Such contextualization enhances students' understanding because abstract moral concepts become directly linked to concrete experiences (Tilaar; 2019). This finding supports contemporary educational perspectives advocating for the integration of local wisdom into formal curricula as a means of preserving cultural identity while promoting meaningful learning experiences (Suyadi; 2018).

The character values developed through the Kerigan tradition also reflect important principles within Islamic educational philosophy. The emergence of cooperation and mutual assistance among students corresponds closely with the concept of *ta'awun*, which encourages believers to help one another in goodness and social welfare. The Qur'an explicitly promotes cooperation in righteousness and piety, making communal traditions such as Kerigan highly compatible with Islamic educational objectives (Nata; 2020). Consequently, the implementation of local traditions within madrasahs not only preserves cultural heritage but also strengthens the practical application of Islamic teachings in everyday life.

The development of responsibility and discipline among students further illustrates the effectiveness of experiential character education. Responsibility is considered one of the foundational values in both Islamic and modern educational paradigms because it encourages accountability, self-control, and commitment to communal obligations (Lickona; 2013). Likewise, discipline cultivated through scheduled communal activities contributes to students' academic and social adjustment within the school environment (Samani & Hariyanto; 2017).

Environmental awareness emerging from the Kerigan tradition deserves particular attention within contemporary educational discussions. Global environmental challenges require educational institutions to cultivate ecological responsibility among younger generations. Islamic teachings contain numerous principles regarding environmental stewardship (*khalifah fil ardh*) and the obligation to preserve natural resources responsibly

(Azra; 2019). Therefore, Kerigan activities serve not only as character education programs but also as practical manifestations of Islamic environmental ethics.

The supporting factors identified in this study, including institutional commitment, teacher collaboration, and community support, are consistent with ecological approaches to character education that emphasize the role of multiple stakeholders in students' moral development (Berkowitz & Bier; 2014). Character formation cannot be delegated exclusively to teachers or schools but requires cooperation among educational institutions, families, and communities to create consistent moral environments for students (Epstein; 2018).

Nevertheless, the challenges identified in this research, particularly declining familiarity with communal traditions and increasing individualism among students, reflect broader social transformations occurring in contemporary societies. Digitalization and modernization have contributed to changes in social interaction patterns, often reducing opportunities for direct communal engagement (Putnam; 2000). Consequently, educational institutions have an increasingly important responsibility to preserve local wisdom traditions as mechanisms for strengthening social solidarity and cultural identity among younger generations.

Overall, this study confirms that the Kerigan tradition remains highly relevant for contemporary Islamic education. The integration of local wisdom with Islamic educational principles provides an effective approach for strengthening students' character while simultaneously preserving cultural heritage. The findings suggest that similar local traditions in other regions may also be utilized as educational resources for developing holistic character education models within Islamic schools and madrasahs (Tilaar; 2019; Azra; 2019).



Conclusion (خاتمة)

This study concludes that teachers at MTs Plus Al-Jawami Cilacap implemented the values of the Kerigan tradition through various strategies, including habituation, role modeling, reflection, and the integration of local wisdom values into classroom learning activities. These strategies transformed the Kerigan tradition from a mere communal activity into a meaningful educational process that strengthened students' character through direct experience and active participation. The implementation of the tradition contributed to the development of important character values such as cooperation, responsibility, discipline, social care, and environmental awareness among students.

The study also found that the success of implementing the Kerigan tradition was supported by strong institutional commitment, collaboration among teachers, and support from parents and the surrounding community. Nevertheless, several challenges remained, including differences in students' motivation, limited time allocation, and the influence of increasingly individualistic lifestyles among younger generations. Overall, the findings demonstrate that local wisdom traditions such as Kerigan remain highly relevant for contemporary Islamic education and can serve as effective instruments for strengthening students' character while simultaneously preserving cultural heritage and social values within the educational environment.

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