

Implementation Of The Friday Sermon Program In Strengthening Students' Creed And Moral Values

Miftah Aulia Putri Sinaga¹, Asnil Aidah Ritonga²

^{1,2} Universitas Islam Negeri Sumatera Utara

*miftah0301222058@uinsu.ac.id

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the implementation of the Friday sermon program in strengthening students' aqidah and moral values at MTs UIN North Sumatra, covering the planning and implementation processes as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving the head of the madrasah, vice principal for student affairs, program supervisors, and students. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data validity was ensured through triangulation. The findings reveal that the program is planned systematically through stakeholder coordination and implemented continuously as part of religious development activities. The program functions not only as a ritual practice but also as an educational process that promotes habituation, role modeling, and active student participation. Supporting factors include institutional support, supervisor competence, student involvement, and a religious school environment. Inhibiting factors consist of limited facilities, less varied instructional methods, and external influences. The novelty of this study lies in the utilization of the Friday sermon as a student participation-based character-building model. The program contributes to enhancing religious awareness, discipline, responsibility, self-confidence, and strengthening students' aqidah and moral values.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic education fundamentally emphasizes not only the imparting of knowledge but also the instilling of values aimed at developing individuals who are faithful, pious, and possess good morals (Wifaqi Shiddiqi et al., 2025). The affirmation of religious and moral values is an important foundation in the character development of students, especially at the junior high school level, as at this stage, students are undergoing psychological development in the process of searching for their identity. The development of globalization, advances in digital technology, and increasingly diverse social changes demand an educational approach that focuses not only on intellectual aspects but also provides character-building guidance that can be applied in everyday life (Anggraini et al., 2025). An approach that can provide effective value in strengthening faith and moral values is through religious activities that are routine, collective, and based on direct practice (Jannah, 2023). The Friday sermon program in madrasah environments is one concrete form of implementing character education based on Islamic values (Sofiyah, 2022). This activity not only has a ritual dimension as an obligatory act of worship, but also contains a strategic educational dimension in shaping students' spiritual, moral, and social awareness. By conveying contextual and relevant religious messages, the Friday sermon has the potential to be an effective medium for internalizing values, particularly in building faith awareness and developing noble morals (Saiful Amin & Dentra Wijaya, 2025). In pedagogy, the implementation of the Friday sermon program can be understood as part of non-formal learning integrated with the formal

education system (Atmaja, 2026). This program provides opportunities for students to not only act as recipients of material but also to actively engage in learning activities through direct participation, both as congregants and as participants in activities. Through this involvement, a learning process is formed that touches various aspects as a whole, encompassing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains simultaneously. This approach aligns with the concept of modern education, which places direct experience as a crucial part of the process of character formation for students (Jumiyati et al., 2025). MTs UIN Sumatera Utara is an Islamic-based educational institution that has implemented a Friday sermon program as part of its student religious development strategy. This program is implemented routinely, involving various school elements, including teachers, mentors, and students as active participants. In practice, this program is not only intended as part of the student religious development strategy, but also directed as a means of developing faith and morals sustainably. Based on this program, the author is interested in examining it more deeply, considering that the program's effectiveness depends heavily on how it is implemented and the factors that influence it.

The Friday sermon program faces various internal and external challenges. Variations in student attention spans, lack of variety in sermon delivery methods, and external influences such as digital media can impact the effectiveness of internalizing values. Several aspects of the Friday sermon program still require improvement, particularly from the student perspective. Some students demonstrated low self-confidence when given the opportunity to act as officers. Furthermore, in terms of understanding, not all students were able to optimally grasp and internalize the sermon content, resulting in limited application of the values conveyed in daily life. Student discipline is also less than optimal, as evidenced by a lack of attention and focus during the activity. The development of religious and moral values among students still faces various complex challenges. Phenomena such as declining discipline, a lack of awareness of religious practices, and the negative influence of technological developments and the social environment indicate that the internalization of religious values has not been optimal. Furthermore, the predominantly theoretical learning approach results in students lacking direct experience in actualizing Islamic values in their daily lives. The rapid development of digital technology, unrestricted access to information, and increasingly complex social interactions have intensified moral challenges among adolescents. In this context, madrasahs are expected not only to provide academic instruction but also to function as institutions that cultivate students' spiritual resilience and moral integrity through systematic religious guidance. Within the Islamic educational perspective, this responsibility is grounded in the Qur'anic command that emphasizes the obligation to protect oneself and one's family from moral and spiritual decline. This principle is reflected in QS. At-Tahrim (66:6), which states:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا قُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ وَأَهْلِيكُمْ نَارًا وَقُودُهَا النَّاسُ وَالْحِجَارَةُ عَلَيْهَا مَلَائِكَةٌ غِلَظٌ شِدَادٌ لَا يَعْصُونَ اللَّهَ مَا أَمَرَهُمْ وَيَفْعَلُونَ مَا يُؤْمَرُونَ ٦

The meaning is: "O you who believe! Protect yourselves and your families from the Hellfire whose fuel is men and stones; over whom are angels, stern and severe, who do not disobey Allah in what He commands them, but always do what they are commanded."

The above verse is one of the verses that emphasizes the comprehensive responsibility of a believer in protecting themselves and their families from the torment of the hereafter. The call "O you who believe" indicates that this command is addressed to individuals who have theological awareness, so they are expected to implement Islamic teachings consistently in their personal and social lives. The command to "protect yourselves and your families from the Hellfire" has both educational and preventative implications, namely a conscious effort to build a spiritual fortress

through faith and piety. In the context of Islamic education, this verse places the family as the primary and primary educational institution. According to Ibn Kathir's interpretation, protecting the family from hellfire is not only interpreted as physical protection, but more so as the obligation to educate them with religious teachings, instill good manners, and guide them toward obedience. He emphasized that parents have a responsibility to teach God's commands and keep their families away from sinful behavior (Suryana, 2026). This view demonstrates the strategic role of the family in shaping an individual's religious character from an early age. This verse implies that every individual, including educators and educational institutions, has an obligation to provide serious guidance in aspects of faith and morality. In the context of school education, this verse serves as the basis for ensuring that guidance efforts are not merely theoretical but must also be realized through ongoing practice and supervision. Therefore, fostering students' faith and morality needs to be carried out systematically and continuously to protect them from negative environmental influences and modern developments. Based on this perspective, investigating the implementation of the Friday sermon program at MTs UIN North Sumatra is important for understanding how religious activities contribute to strengthening students' creed and moral values. Previous studies have primarily examined Friday sermons as a medium for Islamic da'wah and religious habituation (Sofiyah, 2022), while Jannah (2023) highlighted their contribution to students' religious character through routine worship activities. Although these studies provide valuable insights, they mainly emphasize the religious function of Friday sermons rather than their implementation as a structured educational program within the madrasah environment. Limited studies have explored how planning, implementation, evaluation, and institutional support collectively influence the effectiveness of Friday sermon programs in strengthening students' creed and moral values. This gap indicates the need for a more comprehensive analysis that integrates educational management with religious character development. Therefore, the novelty of this study lies in examining the Friday sermon program as a participatory model that combines religious practice, experiential learning, and systematic educational management to reinforce students' creed and moral values. The findings are expected to enrich the literature on Islamic education while providing practical recommendations for developing sustainable character education programs in madrasahs.

2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design, aiming to understand in detail the implementation of the Friday sermon program in strengthening students' faith and moral values. A qualitative approach was used because this study emphasizes the study's meaning, processes, and natural social dynamics, allowing researchers to gain a deeper, more comprehensive, and complete understanding of the phenomenon under study (Syaeful Millah et al., 2026). Data were collected through three complementary techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations were conducted during the implementation of the Friday sermon program to examine students' participation, interactions between teachers and students, and the overall dynamics of the activities. In-depth interviews were carried out using purposive sampling, whereby informants were selected based on their direct involvement and experience in planning, supervising, or participating in the Friday sermon program. Documentation, including activity schedules, photographs, attendance records, and school archives, was used to corroborate the findings obtained from observations and interviews. The research instrument used in this study was the researcher herself (human instrument), who served as planner, data collector, data analyst, and interpreter of the research results. To support the data collection process, the researcher utilized several tools, including an observation guide to observe the implementation of the Friday sermon program, a semi-structured interview guide containing a list of questions aligned with the research focus, and documentation sheets to collect data in the

form of photographs, archives, activity schedules, and other supporting documents. Furthermore, the researcher utilized a field notebook and a voice recorder to assist in recording information more accurately. The use of these instruments aimed to obtain complete, systematic data that met the research needs.

Table 1. Informant

Informant	Amount	Selection Criteria
Headmaster	1	Responsible for planning and evaluating the Friday sermon program
Student Affairs Team	1	Responsible for coordinating student religious activities
Supervisor Teacher	2	Directly supervise and evaluate the implementation of the Friday sermon program
Students	8	Selected purposively, consisting of students who had served as Friday sermon officers, student committee members, and active participants in the Friday sermon program

The student participants were purposively selected to represent different levels of involvement in the Friday sermon program. They consisted of students who had experience serving as sermon officers, members of the organizing committee, and regular participants. This variation enabled the researcher to obtain diverse perspectives regarding the planning, implementation, benefits, and challenges of the program. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentation were reviewed, coded, and categorized according to the research focus, including program planning, implementation, supporting factors, challenges, and students' perceived changes in faith and moral values. Subsequently, the reduced data were organized into thematic matrices and narrative descriptions to facilitate data display and comparison across different sources. Conclusions were drawn continuously through interpretation and verification of recurring patterns identified from interviews, observations, and supporting documents.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

Planning the Friday Sermon Program at MTs UIN North Sumatra

The findings revealed that the Friday sermon program at MTs UIN North Sumatra was planned systematically through collaboration between the principal, the vice principal for student affairs, supervising teachers, and the student affairs committee. The planning process included scheduling weekly activities, selecting student officers, determining sermon themes, and preparing the facilities required to support the implementation of the program. These preparations were intended to ensure that the program was conducted consistently and aligned with the objectives of strengthening students' creed and moral values. Interview results indicated that sermon themes were adapted to students' developmental needs and focused on issues closely related to their daily lives, including faith, worship, discipline, responsibility, and Islamic ethics. The planning process also emphasized students' active participation by assigning them different roles during the activities, enabling them to gain direct experience in religious practice while gradually developing confidence and responsibility. One supervising teacher explained: "We prepare the activity schedule every week, appoint the students who will serve as officers, and adjust the sermon topics to students' needs so that the messages delivered are relevant to their daily lives." The interview demonstrates that program planning was not merely administrative but also educational, as every stage was designed to support students' religious and character development. This collaborative planning process enabled the madrasah to implement the Friday sermon program regularly while maintaining its relevance to students' learning needs.



Figure 1. Interview With Informant

Observations further confirmed that coordination among school leaders, supervising teachers, and students contributed to the orderly implementation of the program. The preparation of schedules, sermon materials, and student assignments before each activity reflected the madrasah's commitment to maintaining the continuity and effectiveness of the Friday sermon program as part of its religious development strategy.

Implementation of the Friday Sermon Program in Strengthening the Values of Faith and Morals of Students at MTs UIN North Sumatra

The findings indicate that the implementation of the Friday sermon program was carried out routinely every Friday through a structured sequence of activities, including student preparation, Qur'an recitation, sermon delivery, and congregational Friday prayer. Students were actively involved as muezzins, Qur'an reciters, preachers, masters of ceremony, and organizing committee members under the supervision of teachers. This active participation enabled students to practice religious knowledge while developing communication skills, leadership, discipline, and self-confidence. The implementation process was supported by continuous coaching before students delivered their sermons. Supervising teachers guided students in selecting sermon topics, organizing the sermon structure, improving public speaking skills, and delivering religious messages appropriately. In addition to technical guidance, teachers also provided role models and motivation to encourage students to perform confidently during the activities. One supervising teacher explained: "We do not only ask students to deliver sermons, but we first guide them in preparing the material, practicing the delivery, and improving their confidence so that they are ready to appear before the congregation." The findings also show that the program applied three complementary coaching approaches: habituation, through regular weekly implementation; role modelling, through teachers' direct guidance and exemplary behaviour; and experiential learning, by providing students with authentic opportunities to perform religious duties. These approaches enabled students to internalize Islamic values through direct participation rather than classroom instruction alone.

Classroom observations confirmed that most students participated enthusiastically throughout the activities. Students assigned as sermon officers demonstrated increasing confidence and responsibility, while teachers continuously monitored the implementation to ensure that the program proceeded in an orderly and meaningful manner.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of the Friday Sermon Program in Strengthening Students' Faith and Moral Values

The findings revealed that the effectiveness of the Friday sermon program was influenced by several supporting and inhibiting factors. Institutional commitment emerged as the primary supporting factor, reflected in the active involvement of school leaders, supervising teachers, and

the student affairs division in organizing and monitoring the program. Adequate facilities, a religious school environment, and students' willingness to participate also contributed to the continuity of the activities. One informant stated: "The school fully supports this program by providing guidance, facilities, and opportunities for students to participate directly in every Friday sermon activity." The observations further indicated that students who were directly involved as sermon officers demonstrated greater confidence, responsibility, and enthusiasm during the activities. Regular participation also encouraged students to become more accustomed to practicing religious values within the school environment. Despite these strengths, several obstacles were identified. Some students were still less attentive during the sermon, while others lacked confidence when performing as sermon officers. Technical limitations, particularly audio equipment and the limited activity space, occasionally disrupted the implementation of the program. In addition, the influence of digital media and distractions outside the classroom reduced students' concentration during several sessions. The findings suggest that the success of the Friday sermon program depends not only on institutional support but also on continuous efforts to improve student engagement, teaching strategies, and supporting facilities. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that the program continues to strengthen students' creed and moral values effectively.

Evaluation of the Friday Sermon Program in Strengthening Students' Faith and Moral Values

The findings indicate that the Friday sermon program was evaluated continuously through direct observation, reflective discussions, and monitoring of students' participation during and after the activities. Supervising teachers assessed students' performance as sermon officers, observed changes in discipline and responsibility, and identified aspects requiring improvement. The evaluation results were used as feedback to improve subsequent program implementation. One supervising teacher explained: "We usually evaluate the program by observing students' attitudes and performance after each activity, then discuss together what should be improved for the following Friday sermon." The observations confirmed that students who actively participated as sermon officers demonstrated increased confidence, responsibility, and readiness to perform religious duties. Nevertheless, differences in students' attention and participation were still evident, indicating that the internalization of religious values had not yet been achieved equally among all participants.



Figure 3. Observation of Friday Sermon Activities

Documentation also showed that the program was implemented in a structured religious environment supported by teachers, school facilities, and active student participation. Overall, the evaluation findings suggest that the Friday sermon program has contributed positively to strengthening students' creed and moral values. However, a more systematic evaluation framework is required to monitor students' behavioral development and measure the long-term effectiveness of the program.

DISCUSSION

Planning the Friday Sermon Program as a Religious Character Development Strategy

The findings indicate that systematic planning became the foundation for the successful implementation of the Friday sermon program. The involvement of school leaders, student affairs coordinators, and supervising teachers ensured that sermon themes, student assignments, and activity schedules were prepared according to students' developmental needs. This collaborative process explains why the program could be implemented consistently while maintaining its educational objectives rather than functioning merely as a routine religious activity (Wifaqi Shiddiqi et al., 2025; Sofiyah, 2022). These findings support previous studies that emphasize the importance of educational planning in strengthening students' character through structured religious activities. However, this study extends previous findings by demonstrating that planning also serves as a mechanism for integrating religious values into student development programs through active student participation. Consequently, planning is not limited to administrative preparation but becomes the first stage in strengthening students' creed and moral values within the madrasah environment (Jannah, 2023; Saiful Amin & Dentra Wijaya, 2025).

Student Participation as Experiential Religious Learning

The implementation findings demonstrate that students strengthened their understanding of Islamic values through direct participation as preachers, Qur'an reciters, masters of ceremony, and organizing committee members. This explains why the Friday sermon program contributed not only to religious knowledge but also to the development of responsibility, communication skills, confidence, and leadership. Learning occurred through direct experience, allowing students to practice religious values in authentic educational settings rather than merely learning them theoretically (Atmaja, 2026; Jumiyyati et al., 2025). This finding reinforces the concept of experiential learning, which views meaningful learning as a process of transforming experience into knowledge and behaviour. Within the context of Islamic education, direct participation enables students to internalize religious teachings through repeated practice and continuous guidance from teachers. Therefore, the Friday sermon program represents a form of experiential religious education that simultaneously develops cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies (Jannah, 2023; Wifaqi Shiddiqi et al., 2025).

Institutional Support and Challenges in Strengthening Students' Creed and Moral Values

The findings reveal that institutional commitment, teacher supervision, adequate facilities, and a supportive religious environment were essential factors contributing to the successful implementation of the Friday sermon program. These conditions created opportunities for students to participate actively while fostering a school culture that encouraged the consistent practice of Islamic values. Such institutional support explains why the program could be implemented sustainably despite various operational challenges (Saiful Amin & Dentra Wijaya, 2025; Sofiyah, 2022). The findings also indicate that limited student attention, differences in self-confidence, technical constraints, and the influence of digital media remained significant obstacles. These challenges demonstrate that strengthening students' creed and moral values requires continuous adaptation of educational strategies rather than relying solely on routine religious activities. The findings therefore suggest that successful character education depends on the interaction between institutional support, active student engagement, and teachers' capacity to respond to changing social conditions (Anggraini et al., 2025; Jannah, 2023).

Continuous Evaluation for Sustainable Character Development

The findings further demonstrate that continuous evaluation played an important role in improving the implementation of the Friday sermon program. Observation, reflection, and discussions between supervising teachers and students enabled weaknesses identified during each

activity to be addressed in subsequent implementations. This explains why evaluation functioned not only as a monitoring mechanism but also as a continuous learning process for both teachers and students (Supriatna & Rohaeni, 2023). From the perspective of Islamic education, continuous evaluation reflects the values contained in QS. Az-Zumar verse 18, which encourages believers to listen carefully, select beneficial guidance, and apply it in everyday life. Ibn Kathir explains that this verse emphasizes the ability to internalize and practice the best teachings as evidence of divine guidance. Therefore, evaluation within the Friday sermon program should be understood as a reflective process that continuously strengthens students' creed, moral values, and commitment to implementing Islamic teachings in their daily lives (Suryana, 2026).

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the Friday sermon program at MTs UIN North Sumatra is an effective strategy for strengthening students' creed and moral values through systematic planning, active participation, and continuous implementation. The program functions not only as a religious activity but also as a participatory learning model that integrates religious understanding with practical experience. These findings demonstrate that structured religious programs can contribute significantly to students' character formation within the madrasah environment. The findings suggest that madrasahs should strengthen teacher mentoring, diversify sermon delivery methods, improve supporting facilities, and establish a more systematic evaluation system to sustain program quality. This study was limited to a single madrasah; therefore, future research should involve broader institutional settings and examine the long-term impact of religious development programs using comparative qualitative or mixed-method approaches.

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