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# THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FRIDAY MORNING 'TAFAKUR' PROGRAM IN STRENGTHENING RELIGIOUS CHARACTER: DIMENSIONS OF FAITH AND PIETY AT SDN 81 KOTA BENGKULU

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## Abstract

This study aims to describe: 1) the implementation of the Friday Morning Tafakur program at SDN 81 Kota Bengkulu; 2) the implications of this program on strengthening religious character within the dimensions of faith and piety; and 3) the supporting and inhibiting factors in its implementation. This research employs a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through interviews, observation, and documentation. The results indicate that: 1) The Friday Morning Tafakur program at SDN 81 Kota Bengkulu has been implemented consistently once a week, involving all students, teachers, and staff; 2) The implication of this program is the strengthening of students' religious character, specifically in worship discipline through activities such as congregational Dhuha prayer, istigfar, shalawat, and almsgiving (infaq); 3) Supporting factors include adequate facilities and full support from teachers, while the primary obstacles are the lack of enthusiasm and discipline among some students.

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## Introduction

Education plays a vital role in all aspects of life—for society, the nation, and the state. Education produces a high-quality new generation to serve as successors for the sustainability of the nation. According to the National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003, education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere and process so that students actively develop their potential to possess religious spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and skills (Aisyah & Anshori, 2023).

The goal of education in Indonesia is to form the whole human being, meaning the harmonious, balanced, and integrated development of individual potentials. The statement above asserts that the purpose of education is none other than to produce an intelligent, faithful, and pious generation capable of contributing positively to national progress. Intelligence alone is insufficient; it must be balanced with faith (Anisha & Suniarti, 2025). Therefore, quality education for children must balance intellectual and spiritual growth, ensuring safety in this world and the hereafter (Hadi et al., 2025).

Integrating Islamic education into daily life creates a balanced lifestyle between knowledge and morality (akhlaq). A person's behavior is a reflection of their worship; those with good character typically maintain good worship habits (Maarif et al., 2024). Modern advancements impact the younger generation within the Muslim community; while education has produced sophisticated technology, it must be balanced with religious education (Marlina, 2024). As Allah SWT says in the Qur'an (QS. Al-Mujadilah: 11):

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْٓا اِذَا قِيْلَ لَكُمْ تَفَسَّحُوْا فِى الْمَجٰلِسِ فَافْسَحُوْا يَفْسَحِ اللّٰهُ لَكُمْۚ وَاِذَا قِيْلَ انْشُزُوْا فَانْشُزُوْا يَرْفَعِ اللّٰهُ الَّذِيْنَ اٰمَنُوْا مِنْكُمْۙ وَالَّذِيْنَ اُوْتُوا الْعِلْمَ دَرَجٰتٍۗ وَاللّٰهُ بِمَا تَعْمَلُوْنَ خَبِيْرٌ ١١

*"O you who have believed, when you are told, 'Space yourselves' in assemblies, then make space; Allah will make space for you. And when you are told, 'Arise,' then arise; Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degrees. And Allah is Acquainted with what you do."*

Character education supports students' social, emotional, and ethical development. Simply put, it is any effort made to influence student character (Nabila et al., 2025). Consequently, character education has become a primary focus in the Indonesian

Volume 6 Issue 1, June 2026
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Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu



curriculum, aiming to form a generation that is not only academically excellent but also possesses strong moral and ethical integrity (Safitri et al., 2022). Religious character education is a crucial aspect of personality development. The dimensions of faith (iman) and piety (taqwa) are two vital aspects in Islam with significant implications for daily life (Rahmawati, 2024).

Globally, the importance of religious character building is increasingly recognized amid social challenges. Values-based religious education can play a major role in building peace and tolerance (Yanti, 2017). Religious-based character education that promotes universal values—such as compassion and honesty—can reduce tension and create a more inclusive society (Ayazi, 2010). In the Indonesian context, strengthening religious character is essential for maintaining social harmony (Fahmi & Susanto, 2018). One effective way to achieve this is through habituation programs, such as the "Friday Morning Tafakur" (Dewi Kusuma Ningrum et al., 2024).

The Kurikulum Merdeka, implemented in Indonesia since 2022, includes the "Faith and Piety" dimension as a core element. The Friday Morning Tafakur program focuses on developing students' religious character through activities such as congregational prayer and habituation (Al Ghozi & Amrullah, 2025). These activities are designed to instill discipline, honesty, and gratitude (Sholikah et al., 2025).

However, based on field observations, the implementation of this program still faces challenges, including suboptimal religious character in students' daily behavior. Previous studies show that religious character can be formed through exemplary leadership, discipline, and consistent habituation (Fitri, 2023). Nevertheless, there are often supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the success of such programs (Pridayani & Rivauzi, 2022). Therefore, this research aims to determine how the Friday Morning Tafakur program can be effectively implemented at SDN 81 Kota Bengkulu and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors.

## Method

This study employs a qualitative research method with a descriptive approach. As stated by Gunawan (2022), qualitative research is a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behavior, which is suitable for exploring the implementation of the "Friday Morning Tafakur" program. The research was conducted at SDN 81 Kota Bengkulu, where subjects were selected using purposive sampling—including the school principal, religious education teachers, and students—to ensure the most relevant information regarding the phenomenon was captured (Arikunto, 2010).

Volume 6 Issue 1, June 2026
E-ISSN: 2776-6047
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Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu



Data collection was carried out through three primary techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation. In line with Sugiyono (2013) and Jailani (2023), direct observations were performed during the Tafakur activities, while semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand the habituation process and challenges. These were supplemented by documentation, such as program schedules and activity records, to strengthen the field data (Moleong & Surjaman, 2014).

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Syafei, 2025). To ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the findings, the researcher applied triangulation by cross-checking information from different informants and comparing interview results with field observations (Moleong & Surjaman, 2014).

## Result

### *Implementation of the Friday Morning Tafakur Program at SDN 81 Kota Bengkulu*

The implementation involves a series of activities aimed at strengthening students' religious character, held every Friday morning and attended by all students. The core activities include congregational Dhuha prayer, istigfar, collective shalawat, and infaq (almsgiving). During an interview, the Principal of SDN 81 Kota Bengkulu, Mrs. Nilailah, S.Pd., explained:

"The Friday Morning Tafakur program at SDN 81 Kota Bengkulu is carried out routinely as an effort to build students' religious character. Every Friday morning, all students and teachers gather in the field to perform the Dhuha prayer together, followed by reciting istigfar and shalawat to increase piety and inner peace. Furthermore, we encourage students to give infaq to foster social awareness and the habit of sharing from an early age."

Observations indicate that the program is well-structured and has become a school tradition that aligns with character-building goals. This sentiment was echoed by the PAI teacher, Mrs. Teti Suryani, S.Pd., and the Grade IV teacher, Mrs. Puspa Paryanti, S.Pd., who noted that male students from higher grades (4-6) take turns acting as the Imam for the prayer to develop leadership skills.

### *Implications of the Friday Morning Tafakur Program on Strengthening Students' Religious Character (Faith and Piety)*

The program aims to solidify students' faith and devotion through consistent religious practice. The PAI teacher further explained the positive implications:

Volume 6 Issue 1, June 2026
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P-ISSN: 2964-3465
Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu



"The program has a very positive impact. By alternating the Imam role among male students in grades 4 to 6, they learn not only worship but also responsibility and courage. The collective istigfar instills the importance of seeking Allah's forgiveness, while the shalawat fosters a love for the Prophet Muhammad. Finally, the infaq habit strengthens sincerity and social concern. We have observed an increase in worship awareness, discipline, and noble character among students."

The researcher concluded that these routine activities do not only habituate worship but also provide psychological calmness to students before they begin their academic lessons.

### *Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in the Implementation of the Friday Morning Tafakur Program*

The implementation is influenced by various factors that determine its success. Based on interviews with the PAI teacher and class teachers, the factors are identified as follows:

Supporting Factors: ***Adequate Facilities***; The school has sufficient infrastructure to support religious activities, ***Collaboration:*** Strong cooperation between the school principal and the teaching staff in managing the program,

Inhibiting Factors: ***Student Enthusiasm:*** Some students lack enthusiasm and a sense of responsibility when assigned specific tasks during the program, ***Punctuality:*** Some students still arrive late.

Regarding late arrivals, Mrs. Sartika Afiani, S.Pd. (Grade VI teacher) stated:

"We still allow students who arrive late to join the activity, but we provide them with advice and guidance so they do not repeat the behavior."

Mrs. Puspa Paryanti added that while they are initially given a chance, repeated tardiness results in sanctions or disciplinary consequences to maintain the program's integrity.

## Discussion

The implementation of the Friday Morning Tafakur program at SDN 81 Kota Bengkulu represents a significant localized effort to fulfill the mandate of the Indonesian National Education System Law No. 20 of 2003. As established in the introduction, education is a "conscious and planned effort" to develop spiritual strength and noble character. The findings of this study demonstrate that the Tafakur program serves as a

practical vehicle for achieving these legal and pedagogical goals, specifically by reinforcing the dimensions of faith (iman) and piety (taqwa) within the framework of the Kurikulum Merdeka.

### *The Mechanism of Religious Character Strengthening*

The systematic implementation of the Friday Morning Tafakur program—consisting of congregational *Dhuha* prayer, *istigfar*, *shalawat*, and *infaq*—functions as a holistic spiritual habituation. The consistency of this program, conducted once a week for the entire school community, aligns with the educational philosophy that character is formed through repetitive, meaningful action. As emphasized in the introduction, intelligence alone is insufficient for a nation's successors; it must be balanced with faith. By integrating these four core activities, SDN 81 Kota Bengkulu creates a "sacred space" that fosters "Moral Action." When students participate in *Dhuha* prayer, they are practicing discipline; when they recite *istigfar*, they cultivate humility; and through *infaq*, they internalize social empathy. This multifaceted approach ensures that religious character is not merely a theoretical concept taught in the classroom but a lived experience that shapes the students' daily lives.

### *Implications and the Role of Exemplary Leadership*

The implications of the program on the dimensions of faith and piety are evidenced by the marked improvement in students' worship discipline. However, as noted in the findings, a common challenge in character education is the gap between school behavior and home behavior (Aisyah & Anshori, 2023). This highlights the importance of the "Teacher as a Role Model" (Keteladanan). The data shows that the teaching staff at SDN 81 do not only supervise the program but actively participate in the rituals themselves. This practice is crucial, as students in the primary age group learn best through imitation and consistent habituation (Nurhayati & Hanif, 2025). When teachers demonstrate a commitment to istigfar and prayer, it reinforces the students' perception of these activities as essential life values rather than school-mandated chores, creating a spiritual harmony that supports the school's vision of forming a generation with noble character (Maarif et al., 2024).

To validate these findings, it is essential to compare them with existing academic literature. This study finds significant commonalities with the research of Anggitasari (n.d.), who explored the same program at SDN Ngadirejo, noting that structured religious assemblies are vital for child development. Similarly, the findings are supported by Fitri (2023), who concluded that religious-based school programs effectively foster sincerity

Volume 6 Issue 1, June 2026
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Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu



and religious identity through exemplary leadership and discipline. Furthermore, the integration with the Kurikulum Merdeka in this study echoes the findings of Safitri et al. (2022) and Marlina (2024), confirming that religious character strengthening—specifically the dimension of faith and piety—is a primary pillar in modern Indonesian education. These comparisons suggest that the Tafakur program at SDN 81 is part of a larger, successful movement in Indonesian pedagogy to balance academic excellence with spiritual depth (Hadi et al., 2025).

Despite the overall success, the research identified critical inhibiting factors: the variation in student enthusiasm and the persistence of tardiness. These challenges reflect the need for strategic approaches in habituation, as the duration and consistency of a program significantly affect the effectiveness of moral value internalization (Hikmah, 2023). SDN 81 has proactively sought solutions by balancing discipline with positive reinforcement. The use of "reprimand sanctions" for latecomers ensures accountability, while "motivational rewards" encourage a positive emotional connection to the program. This balanced approach is necessary because, as Yanti (2017) and Ayazi (2010) argued in a global context, values-based education must create an inclusive and encouraging environment to prevent students from feeling alienated by religious requirements. The supporting factors—namely adequate facilities and strong institutional cooperation—provide the necessary foundation to overcome these human-resource challenges (Pridayani & Rivauzi, 2022).

Ultimately, the Friday Morning Tafakur program is more than a religious assembly; it is an implementation of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila. By prioritizing faith and piety, SDN 81 Kota Bengkulu is preparing its students to navigate the challenges of the modern age with a solid moral compass (Niskaromah et al., 2025). As stated in the introduction, the advancement of the era must be balanced with religious education to ensure the safety of students in both the world and the hereafter (Anisha & Suniarti, 2025). This research concludes that while the system of the program is already excellent, the next step involves deepening the internalization process through continuous habituation so that students' religious character becomes self-sustaining (Sholikah et al., 2025). The synergy between school policy, teacher modeling, and parental support remains the key to ensuring that the seeds of faith and piety sown during Friday mornings continue to grow throughout the students' lives (Muamar et al., 2025).

Volume 6 Issue 1, June 2026
E-ISSN: 2776-6047
P-ISSN: 2964-3465
Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu



## Conclusion

The research concludes that the implementation of the "Friday Morning Tafakur" program at SDN 81 Kota Bengkulu serves as a highly effective and systematic strategy for strengthening students' religious character within the dimensions of faith and piety. The program is executed with remarkable consistency, involving the entire school community in a structured series of spiritual activities, including congregational Dhuha prayer, istigfar, collective shalawat, and infaq. These activities are not merely ceremonial but function as a vital habituation process that successfully aligns with the mandates of the Indonesian National Education System Law and the objectives of the Kurikulum Merdeka. By transforming religious values into a weekly collective ritual, the school has created a spiritual environment that reinforces the "Faith and Piety" pillar of the Profil Pelajar Pancasila.

Furthermore, the program has demonstrated significant positive implications for the students' moral development. It has fostered a culture of worship discipline, spiritual humility, and social empathy. The integration of infaq effectively bridges ritualistic piety with social action, teaching students the value of sincerity and altruism from an early age. A critical factor in this success is the exemplary leadership provided by the teaching staff; by actively participating alongside the students, teachers provide a living model of religious integrity that encourages students to internalize these values. While challenges such as varying student enthusiasm and minor issues with punctuality persist, the school's proactive use of educational sanctions and motivational rewards ensures the program's continued efficacy and relevance. Ultimately, this program proves that consistent spiritual habituation in a supportive school environment can successfully build a generation that is both academically capable and spiritually grounded.

Based on the findings of this study, several suggestions are proposed to further enhance the impact of the program. First, the school administration is encouraged to maintain the program's consistency while introducing creative variations—such as Islamic storytelling, audio-visual religious history sessions, or student-led reflections—to sustain high levels of enthusiasm and prevent spiritual stagnation among the students. Second, teachers should continue to prioritize their role as moral exemplars (*uswatun hasanah*), employing more personalized and persuasive approaches to engage students who currently show lower levels of motivation. Finally, it is essential to strengthen the synergy between the school and parents; a collaborative monitoring system is recommended to ensure that the religious character and worship discipline cultivated during the Friday Morning Tafakur program are consistently practiced and reinforced within the students' home environments, leading to a permanent transformation of character.

Volume 6 Issue 1, June 2026
E-ISSN: 2776-6047
P-ISSN: 2964-3465
Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu



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