

## Islamic Soft Skills Development for Madrasah-Age Children through an Integrated *Didikan Subuh* Program at MIN 3 Labuhanbatu

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### ABSTRACT

Developing Islamic soft skills in madrasah-aged children is crucial for developing a religious character aligned with the values of everyday life. The integrated Dawn Reading program at MIN 3 Labuhanbatu Selatan is a systematic effort to instill Islamic values in students. A qualitative descriptive approach with strategic field studies is used to describe the implementation of activities in depth through observation, direct interaction, and documentation. A series of events, including recitation of Islamic verses (Quran), recitation of Quranic verses (Surah), memorization (tahfiz), nasyid (Islamic nasheed), prayers, and prayer practices, serve as a means for students to strengthen their religious understanding while simultaneously practicing social and spiritual skills. The implementation of Dawn Reading has had a positive impact on the development of students' Islamic soft skills, including discipline, responsibility, cooperation, respect, and worship skills. The religious madrasah environment and the role of teachers as mentors and role models also strengthen the internalization of these values. Activities carried out outside the classroom create a more open and enjoyable learning atmosphere, so that children feel comfortable and are motivated to participate actively. Overall, Dawn Education significantly contributes to the formation of Islamic character, which is reflected in students' daily behavior. It can be concluded that Dawn Education is integrated into an effective character training method because it is implemented routinely, structured, and directly involves students in various religious activities. To strengthen its impact, it is necessary to develop a variety of learning methods, improve teacher and student competencies, and involve parents in continuing the instillation of Islamic values in the home environment, so that character formation can take place comprehensively and sustainably.

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## Introduction

The formation of children's character in the modern era has become a major challenge for educational institutions, families, and society. The rapidly growing flow of digitalization not only provides easier access to information but also brings changes in interaction patterns as well as ethical and moral values among elementary school-aged children. One of the main issues currently faced by society is the weakness of Islamic character education among children. Various negative influences emerging through social media, entertainment content, and less supportive social environments often cause children to experience confusion in shaping their moral and spiritual direction (Sakinah et al., 2024). This condition is in line with the view of Yusuf and Fathurrahman (2022), who argue that modern information flows and social interactions can obscure fundamental Islamic values in children. Therefore, early guidance efforts are essential, particularly through religious programs that are systematically and sustainably designed. Suhartini (2021) also emphasizes that continuous religious mentoring plays a significant role in instilling moral values while shaping strong Islamic character in children. These conditions require educational institutions, especially madrasahs, not only to focus on improving academic competence but also to strengthen students' personality and character development. From the perspective of Islamic education, strengthening Islamic soft skills—

which include polite behavior, courteous communication, respect for others, responsibility, and the upholding of worship values and noble character—is an important part of the educational mission that must be instilled in students from an early age.

Madrasah-age children are in a sensitive developmental phase and are easily shaped through habituation. At this stage, they need not only informative learning materials but also environmental stimulation that can instill Islamic values in a concrete and applicable manner in daily life. The development of Islamic soft skills must be carried out through structured, repetitive activities that are relevant to the children's world, so that the values received do not stop at the level of knowledge but are internalized into habits and character. Activities based on the habituation of worship, positive social interaction, and the cultivation of Islamic manners serve as effective media to support this process.

One religious program that has proven to have a strategic role in children's character development is *Didikan Subuh*. *Didikan Subuh* is a religious education activity conducted at dawn, consisting of activities such as the recitation of Qur'anic verses, memorization of daily prayers, delivery of religious advice (*tausiyah*), practice of Islamic manners, and supporting activities such as educational games and group cooperation. This program is unique because it takes place in the early morning and emphasizes the values of discipline, orderliness, and spiritual strength. Moreover, *Didikan Subuh* provides opportunities for children to interact in a religious atmosphere that encourages the development of Islamic soft skills such as empathy, togetherness, mutual respect, and the ability to listen to others' opinions. In addition, through *Didikan Subuh*, students are guided to understand the importance of waking up at dawn, performing the Fajr prayer in congregation, and exploring the meaning and wisdom contained in the worship itself (Marbun et al., 2025). Through this habituation, children are not only trained to be disciplined in carrying out worship routines but are also directed to develop deeper spiritual awareness regarding the purpose and benefits of moral and character formation.

MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu is one of the madrasahs that has implemented an innovative approach to character development through an integrated *Didikan Subuh* program. In this context, *Didikan Subuh* does not stand merely as an additional activity but is directly connected to the madrasah curriculum, daily habituation, and school culture. The Community Service Program implemented at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu was designed to optimize the function of *Didikan Subuh* as a comprehensive medium for developing students' Islamic soft skills. This effort aims to strengthen students' religious, moral, social, and communication abilities through structured activities integrated into the madrasah culture. Qur'anic recitation and the reading of surahs serve as the main means to improve fluency in reading the Qur'an, correct pronunciation (*makhraj*), and habituate students to reading in an orderly and respectful manner in front of their peers. Memorization of short surahs is also reinforced through *tahfiz* sessions guided by teachers, enabling students not only to review existing memorization but also to gradually add new memorization through weekly habituation. Collective prayer activities become an important exercise for students in understanding proper manners of supplication and building spiritual sensitivity from an early age. On certain occasions, students are given the opportunity to lead prayers, which naturally fosters self-confidence, polite speaking skills, and the courage to appear in public. *Nasyid* sessions provide a lighter yet still Islamic form of expression, helping students develop creativity, cohesion, and joy within a religious atmosphere. Meanwhile, prayer practice functions to strengthen students' understanding of worship directly, starting from movements and recitations to devotion (*khushu'*), so that students not only understand the theory but also practice it correctly. All these activities run harmoniously and complement one another as part of the religious habituation that has been continuously implemented in the madrasah. *Didikan Subuh* does not stand alone but is integrated with the daily routine of Islamic value-based learning. Thus, this program not only enriches students' spiritual experiences but also strengthens discipline, responsibility, respect, and self-confidence as part of comprehensive Islamic soft skill development (Sulistiani & Murniyetti, 2022).

The existence of *Didikan Subuh* within the character development system at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu is particularly interesting to examine because the program not only strengthens spirituality but is also designed to develop the soft skills children need in social life. Values such as time discipline, responsibility, empathy, and Islamic communication are central to its development focus. This structured form of guidance positions *Didikan Subuh* as a holistic, integrative, and relevant approach to character formation for madrasah-age children. Therefore, this article is intended to describe in detail the implementation of the integrated *Didikan Subuh* program at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu. This study is also expected to serve as a model and reference for other Islamic educational institutions in developing effective character education programs based on spirituality and soft skills.

## Method

The community service activities were conducted at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu, with participants consisting of all students, religious guidance teachers, and the community service implementation team, who acted as activity facilitators. The research method applied in this community service program was descriptive qualitative, an approach that focuses on describing, understanding, and interpreting phenomena in depth based on the actual conditions occurring within the environment of MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu. This approach was selected because the community service activities were not intended to manipulate variables, but rather to provide a detailed explanation of the process of developing Islamic soft skills through *Didikan Subuh* activities integrated with the madrasah's religious programs (Abdussamad, 2021).

The research strategy employed was a field study. This strategy enabled the researchers to conduct direct observations, interact with students, teachers, and madrasah stakeholders, and document the overall development process in accordance with the social context formed during the implementation of *Didikan Subuh* (Abdussamad, 2021). The field study strategy was considered the most relevant because the activities took place directly within the madrasah environment at dawn and involved students, supervising teachers, and the community service team. Through field studies, the researchers were able to gain an in-depth understanding of how *tahsin*, *tahfiz*, daily prayers, and Islamic speech training were implemented, as well as how students naturally and actively responded to these activities.

The implementation procedures of the community service program were carried out through two main approaches, namely lecturing and interactive methods. The lecturing method was applied in the initial stage to provide students with conceptual understanding, particularly regarding proper etiquette in reciting the Qur'an, the importance of maintaining memorization, appropriate procedures for leading prayers, and ethics in delivering Islamic speeches. The material was delivered in a simple, communicative manner and adjusted to the developmental level of the students. Subsequently, the interactive method was implemented to ensure that students gained direct experience through practice, exercises, question-and-answer sessions, small-group mentoring, and demonstrations conducted by facilitators and teachers.

## Results And Discussion

### Overview of the Implementation of the Integrated *Didikan Subuh* Program at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu

The implementation of the integrated *Didikan Subuh* program at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu is a religious development initiative designed to instill Islamic soft skills from the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary school) level. This program is conducted regularly every Friday from 05:30 to 07:30 a.m., a very early time that creates a calm and conducive atmosphere for cultivating values of worship and moral conduct. The selection of Friday further strengthens the spiritual dimension of the activity, as this day holds special significance in Islam. The program is implemented consistently using a learning pattern that combines educational lectures, hands-on practice, habituation of worship, and active interaction among teachers, students, and community service facilitators. All stages of the activities are carried out in a supportive religious atmosphere that fosters the development of discipline, politeness, self-confidence, and religious literacy among students. Interactive lecture methods are employed to focus students' attention while providing motivational encouragement, enabling them to understand the meaning of the Fajr prayer as a foundation for building disciplined and responsible Muslim character. The implementation of *Didikan Subuh* serves not only as a medium for imparting religious knowledge but also plays an important role in shaping positive behavioral patterns and disciplined character in children (Aswati et al., 2024).

The *Didikan Subuh* activities are conducted outside the classroom, specifically in the school courtyard, creating a fresher, more open, and calming environment. The cool morning atmosphere within the madrasah setting provides a comfortable and motivating experience for students, allowing them to engage in worship activities with greater devotion while enjoying the surrounding natural environment. Holding the activities in an open space also facilitates more fluid social interaction among students and supports the implementation of activities involving physical movement, such as prayer practice.



**Figure 1. Conditioning of Students in the *Didikan Subuh* Activity at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu**

The activity was opened and guided by a master of ceremonies who also came from among the students. Involving students as event hosts is an important part of developing Islamic soft skills, particularly in terms of self-confidence, public speaking ability, and the cultivation of responsibility in managing religious activities. Before the program began, the student protocol delivered greetings, read the agenda, and organized the movement of students to ensure that the activities ran in an orderly and systematic manner. The *Didikan Subuh* program was arranged in a structured and complementary sequence of activities. It began with Qur'anic recitation (*tilawah*), during which students took turns reciting verses of the Qur'an under the guidance of teachers. This activity aimed to improve students' Qur'anic reading skills while fostering love for the Holy Qur'an. It was followed by the collective recitation of short surahs, usually performed together to strengthen students' basic memorization.

Next, students performed Islamic-themed *nasyid* with enthusiasm. This *nasyid* activity helped develop students' confidence to perform, teamwork, and creative expression while remaining within the framework of Islamic values. The program then continued with a *tahfiz* session, namely Qur'anic memorization guided by teachers or facilitators. At this stage, students submitted their memorization individually or in groups, allowing their progress to be monitored from week to week. The subsequent session involved the recitation of daily prayers, including prayers before learning, prayers for protection, and supplications for blessings. This habituation aimed to instill daily spirituality and establish consistent worship routines among students. Teachers demonstrated the correct pronunciation of the prayers, after which students followed attentively. The culminating activity of *Didikan Subuh* was the collective prayer practice. Students lined up neatly in the school courtyard, while teachers guided the prayer movements, recitations, and accuracy of practice in accordance with Islamic law. Through this practice, students not only learned the theoretical aspects of prayer but also practiced it directly in an orderly congregational setting. This guidance is essential for building comprehensive understanding of worship and instilling discipline and devotion (*khushu'*).

All activities were designed to be integrated with the madrasah's routine agenda so that the guidance process remained continuous and became part of students' learning culture. Overall, the procedures of this community service activity flowed through stages of material delivery, practical mentoring, structured habituation, participatory observation, and reflection on the development of students' Islamic soft skills. Through a combination of lecturing and interactive methods, the *Didikan Subuh* activities at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu served as an effective means of fostering students' spiritual abilities, communication skills, responsibility, and strong Islamic character.

### **Islamic Soft Skills Developed in Madrasah-Age Children**

The implementation of the integrated *Didikan Subuh* program at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu functions not only as a routine worship activity but also as a strategic medium for fostering various Islamic soft skills relevant to the development of madrasah-age children. *Didikan Subuh* is a form of religious education conducted at dawn and generally includes activities such as Qur'anic recitation, memorization of daily prayers, congregational prayer, and listening to short sermons or religious advice (Imamuddin et al., 2023). Through a series of activities including *tilawah*, surah recitation, *nasyid*, *tahfiz*, daily prayers, and congregational prayer practice, students gain comprehensive learning experiences from spiritual, social, and personal skill perspectives. The soft skills developed are the result of a combination of worship habituation, active student participation, and educational interaction occurring throughout the activities (Imami et al., 2024).

One of the primary soft skills developed is discipline. Activities that begin at 05:30 a.m. require students to wake up early, promptly prepare themselves, and arrive at the madrasah on time. Consistent participation in *Didikan Subuh* every Friday fosters a habit of discipline that is essential for character development in elementary school-aged children. This discipline is also evident in students' compliance with



the protocol's instructions, orderly line formation, maintenance of decorum, and adherence to the program sequence without causing disruption. In addition to discipline, *Didikan Subuh* activities also enhance self-confidence. This can be observed through students' roles as event hosts, prayer leaders, *nasyid* performers, memorization presenters, and participants who appear in front of the public during prayer practice or *tilawah*. These rotating opportunities provide valuable experiences for students to speak and behave confidently while upholding Islamic etiquette. The program thus serves as a safe and supportive space for students to learn how to perform in front of their peers without excessive fear or embarrassment.



**Figure 2. Qur'anic Recitation by One Student in Front of Peers to Develop Courage**

Another soft skill that develops through *Didikan Subuh* is Islamic communication ability. In this program, students learn to deliver greetings, recite prayers clearly, and recite Qur'anic verses with proper *tartil*. When serving as the protocol or master of ceremonies, they also learn to manage intonation, structure sentences, and convey information politely. Through these activities, students not only become more proficient speakers but also gain an understanding of Islamic communication ethics that emphasize gentleness, orderliness, and courtesy.

The *tahfiz* sessions, collective surah recitation, and *tilawah* activities also contribute to improving focus and concentration. Madrasah-age children generally have relatively short attention spans; therefore, guided memorization and recitation activities train them to pay attention, listen carefully, and follow the recitation correctly. Repetitive memorization practices further strengthen memory capacity and perseverance in achieving specific memorization targets.



**Figure 3. Students' Activities during the Implementation of *Didikan Subuh***

The *nasyid* activities conducted collectively also foster cooperation and group cohesion. Students learn to harmonize their voices, follow rhythms, and pay attention to the cues given by the group leader. Through these activities, they become aware of the importance of working together, respecting peers, and maintaining harmony within togetherness. Another Islamic soft skill that develops is a sense of responsibility.

For instance, when students are assigned as the event protocol, they assume an important role in managing the flow of the program. Similarly, when tasked with leading prayers or submitting memorization, students are required to prepare themselves and demonstrate seriousness. This sense of responsibility grows as they are frequently involved in small tasks that carry character education values. Equally important, the practice of congregational prayer shapes worship ethics and spiritual manners. Students learn to maintain devotion (*khushu'*), line up neatly in prayer rows, follow the imam, and understand worship movements correctly. The attitudes of respect, patience, and calmness demonstrated during the practice are part of Islamic soft skills that continue to be reflected in their daily behavior (Yahya et al., 2024). Overall, the integrated *Didikan Subuh* program at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu serves as an effective medium for developing Islamic soft skills, including discipline, self-confidence, polite communication, cooperation, focus, responsibility, and worship ethics. These soft skills grow through direct experiences that integrate spiritual, social, and personal elements within structured activities and regular Friday morning routines. Thus, the program not only teaches obedience in worship but also shapes noble character as an essential foundation for the lives of madrasah-age children.

### **The Role of Teachers and the Madrasah Environment in Strengthening Soft Skills**

The implementation of *Didikan Subuh* every Friday at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu functions not only as a medium for worship development but also as a strategic space for teachers and the madrasah environment to strengthen students' Islamic soft skills. The activities, conducted from 05:30 to 07:30 a.m. in the school courtyard, provide opportunities for teachers to engage directly in character development through practice, role modeling, and structured mentoring of religious activities. Teachers play a central role in directing, guiding, and ensuring that each stage of the *Didikan Subuh* activities aligns with the objectives of character education (Sidauruk et al., 2023). At the initial stage, teachers ensure that all students arrive on time and line up neatly. This process indirectly instills discipline, as teachers demonstrate firmness and exemplary behavior by arriving early themselves. Morning activities require careful supervision, positioning teachers as controllers of the activity rhythm to ensure that students participate in an orderly and earnest manner.

During core activities such as *tilawah*, surah recitation, and *tahfiz*, teachers act as mentors who ensure that students' recitations comply with the rules of *tajwid* and correct pronunciation (*makhraj*). Immediate corrections provided by teachers offer constructive feedback while reinforcing students' focus, accuracy, and responsibility for the quality of their worship. Guided memorization in a structured atmosphere also helps students develop memory skills, courage in submitting memorization, and self-confidence when appearing in front of peers. Soft skill development is also evident in teachers' support for students serving as the activity protocol. Although students act as hosts, teachers provide guidance on proper event facilitation, program flow organization, speech delivery, and appropriate body language in public. This process serves as a learning medium for students to develop Islamic communication skills, basic leadership abilities, and self-confidence. Teachers ensure that each student assigned to a role understands their responsibilities and performs them effectively (Marbun et al., 2025).

During *nasyid* sessions, teachers guide students' coordination and expression to ensure alignment with Islamic values. *Nasyid* activities are not merely religious entertainment but also a means of fostering teamwork, artistic skills, and positive self-expression. Teachers provide examples and motivation so that students can perform confidently while maintaining etiquette and order. Moreover, conducting *Didikan Subuh* in an open space creates a more dynamic atmosphere and allows students to learn in an environment different from the classroom. Open spaces enable freer movement during prayer practice, lining up, or large-group activities. A well-organized, clean, and safe environment also cultivates positive habits such as maintaining cleanliness, respecting facilities, and taking responsibility for the surrounding environment (Imami et al., 2024).

In addition, a supportive madrasah social environment helps foster mutual respect, solidarity, and togetherness among students. Students learn to support one another, maintain order, and encourage peers who perform during activities. These habits strengthen interpersonal skills that are crucial during the madrasah age. Teachers and the madrasah community collectively create a friendly, open, and religious atmosphere in which every child feels safe to participate and develop. Teachers also function as role models in terms of etiquette, communication ethics, and spiritual attitudes. Behaviors demonstrated by teachers—such as patience, gentleness in guidance, and firmness in maintaining order—are implicitly emulated by students and become part of their Islamic soft skill formation. Teachers' exemplary conduct in performing worship, reciting prayers fluently, and maintaining decorum throughout activities strengthens the internalization of Islamic values among students. Overall, the role of teachers and the madrasah environment in implementing the integrated *Didikan Subuh* program at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu contributes significantly

to strengthening Islamic soft skills such as discipline, polite communication, self-confidence, responsibility, cooperation, and noble character. The synergy between teacher guidance, active student participation, and environmental support creates holistic and sustainable character development, positioning *Didikan Subuh* not merely as a routine activity but as an effective medium for shaping Islamic character in madrasah-age children.

### **The Impact of *Didikan Subuh* on the Formation of Islamic Character**

The routine implementation of *Didikan Subuh* every Friday morning at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu has a significant impact on the formation of Islamic character among madrasah-age children. Activities beginning at 05:30 a.m. indirectly habituate students to waking up early, starting the day in a religious atmosphere, and developing time discipline. The routine of arriving before sunrise cultivates responsibility and self-discipline, as students are required to prepare themselves independently before participating in the activities. A series of activities—including *tilawah*, surah recitation, *tahfiz*, prayers, and congregational prayer practice—serve as strong media for internalizing religious values. Children do not merely hear or observe religious material but actively engage in worship practices. Weekly repetition strengthens spiritual capacity, enhances love for the Qur'an, and fosters understanding that worship is a daily activity that must be performed in an orderly manner. The effects are reflected in increased religious character, such as devotion, worship awareness, and the ability to maintain proper etiquette in daily life.

Furthermore, *nasyid* activities and collective prayer recitations provide positive and enjoyable emotional experiences for students. The sense of togetherness in the school courtyard creates a warm religious climate, allowing Islamic values to be absorbed not only through instructional content but also through pleasant social experiences. Children learn to cooperate, respect peers, and demonstrate politeness throughout the activities, thereby strengthening values of trustworthiness, cooperation, and social care (Sulistiani & Murniyetti, 2022). Assigning students as event protocols further enhances character formation. Opportunities to lead activities train self-confidence, responsibility, and public speaking skills. Peer modeling also plays an important role in motivating other students to perform and participate actively. As a result, character values such as leadership, initiative, and courage develop naturally through direct practice.

Overall, *Didikan Subuh* at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu is not merely a routine religious agenda but functions as an effective instrument for comprehensively instilling Islamic character. Activities conducted outside the classroom, in the open school courtyard, create a fresher and more enjoyable atmosphere that encourages enthusiastic learning. Through structured activities integrating spiritual, emotional, social, and moral aspects, *Didikan Subuh* has demonstrated a tangible impact in shaping students who are religious, disciplined, confident, and possess noble character in accordance with Islamic teachings.

## **Conclusion**

The implementation of the integrated *Didikan Subuh* program at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu demonstrates that this program plays a highly important and strategic role in strengthening Islamic soft skills among madrasah-age children. The activities, conducted regularly every Friday morning from 05:30 to 07:30 a.m., consist of a series of programs such as *tilawah*, surah recitation, *tahfiz*, daily prayers, *nasyid*, prayer practice, and student involvement as event protocols. These activities serve as a comprehensive and continuous medium for character development. Conducting the program in the school courtyard creates a natural, pleasant, and communal religious atmosphere, allowing children to internalize Islamic values through direct activities as well as positive social interactions with teachers and peers. *Didikan Subuh* has proven not only to enhance students' spiritual competence but also to strengthen various Islamic soft skills, including discipline, responsibility, cooperation, politeness, and self-confidence. The role of teachers and a supportive madrasah environment further enhances the effectiveness of the program, as the role modeling and mentoring provided contribute significantly to the internalization of values among students. Thus, *Didikan Subuh* at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu serves as an integrative educational model that emphasizes not only religious cognitive aspects but also the development of noble character and social competencies essential for children's daily lives. This program ensures that Islamic values are not merely understood but also manifested in real behavior, thereby shaping a generation that is morally upright, religious, and grounded in strong character foundations.

### **Recommendations**

To enhance the effectiveness of the integrated *Didikan Subuh* program at MIN 3 South Labuhanbatu, more directed and sustainable reinforcement efforts are necessary. First, the madrasah may increase the

variety of learning methods in each session, such as Islamic educational games, worship simulations, or light discussions relevant to daily life, to foster greater student enthusiasm and contextual understanding of Islamic values. Second, training for teachers and students serving as event protocols should be strengthened so that their roles in managing activities become more optimal, professional, and exemplary for other participants. Third, parental involvement should be reinforced through regular coordination, ensuring that the habituation of worship and Islamic morals cultivated at the madrasah can be continuously reinforced at home. In addition, the madrasah may develop simple assessment instruments to periodically monitor the development of students' Islamic soft skills. This approach would assist teachers in providing more personalized guidance while ensuring that all aspects of character development are achieved equitably. The madrasah environment should also be consistently maintained as a religious, safe, and supportive space, particularly during *Didikan Subuh* activities conducted in the school courtyard. With these enhancements, the *Didikan Subuh* program can become a more effective, inspiring, and impactful medium for Islamic character education, contributing to the long-term spiritual and social development of students.

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