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Implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in Strengthening Religious Character and Social Care Attitudes at SMA Negeri I Indramayu

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Abstract

This study investigates the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMA Negeri I Indramayu, focusing on its impact on students' religious character and social care attitudes. The primary goal is to understand how integrating religious values into the curriculum and extracurricular activities can enhance students' moral and ethical development. Using a qualitative research design, the study employs methods such as case studies, interviews, focus groups, observational studies, and documentary analysis to gather comprehensive data. The main findings highlight the successful integration of religious values into the curriculum, the creation of a supportive learning environment, and the active engagement of stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and the community. The study also emphasizes the importance of religious moderation and continuous evaluation for the effective implementation of PAI. These practices have led to observable improvements in students' behavior, increased empathy, social responsibility, and the development of critical thinking skills. In conclusion, the study demonstrates that a holistic approach to character education, which includes integrated curricula, professional development for teachers, community involvement, and regular assessment, significantly enhances students' religious character and social care attitudes. These findings contribute to the existing literature on character education in Islamic schools and suggest further research areas, such as longitudinal studies and the role of technology in character education.

Keywords : Islamic Religious Education, Character Education, Religious Values, Social Care Attitudes, Holistic Approach

1. Introduction

The primary goals of national education in Indonesia are articulated in the National Education System Law, which emphasizes the development of students' potential to become individuals who are faithful, noble, healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, creative, independent, and responsible citizens in a democratic society (Fauziah et al., 2019). This framework aligns closely with the objectives of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), which aims to instill moral values, character development, and a deep understanding of Islamic teachings in students (Suparjo & Hidayah, 2023). The integration of these educational goals reflects a broader commitment to fostering a national identity that is rooted in both religious and cultural values, thereby promoting social harmony and unity among Indonesia's diverse population (Suhada et al., 2022).

Islamic Religious Education plays a crucial role in addressing contemporary challenges, such as extremism and intolerance, by promoting values of moderation and peace within educational settings (Suhada et al., 2022). The curriculum of PAI is designed not only to provide theoretical knowledge but also to shape students' character and moral compass, which is essential for their personal development and societal contribution (Suparjo & Hidayah, 2023). This educational approach is particularly relevant in Indonesia's multicultural context, where the emphasis on religious moderation helps cultivate an environment of tolerance and respect among different religious communities (Purwanto et al., 2019; Afwadzi & Miski, 2021).

Furthermore, the alignment of national education goals with PAI is evident in the incorporation of local wisdom and cultural values into the educational framework. This strategy aims to enhance character education by integrating local cultural elements, thereby making learning more relevant and impactful for students (Rosala & Budiman, 2020; Zumzianah, 2024). The focus on character education is a shared objective between national education and PAI, as both seek to develop responsible citizens who are aware of their cultural heritage and committed to the nation's ideals (Utaminingsih, 2023; Mansir, 2022).

In summary, the primary goals of national education in Indonesia are closely intertwined with the objectives of Islamic Religious Education. Both frameworks aim to develop well-rounded individuals who embody moral values, cultural awareness, and a commitment to social harmony. This synergy is crucial for fostering a

cohesive society that respects diversity while upholding the principles of democracy and national identity.

Character education is a pivotal aspect of the educational framework in Indonesia, particularly within the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Its primary contribution lies in shaping students' moral and ethical values, which are essential for their overall development as responsible citizens. The integration of character education into the curriculum is designed to foster not only academic success but also personal growth, social responsibility, and civic engagement (Suryantari, 2022; Lintong et al., 2021). This dual focus is particularly significant in the context of PAI, where the teachings of Islam serve as a moral compass guiding students towards virtuous behavior and ethical decision-making (Tabroni et al., 2022; Tabroni et al., 2022).

In Indonesia, character education is embedded within various subjects, including Citizenship Education and Religion, which emphasizes the importance of instilling values such as honesty, tolerance, and respect for others (Suryantari, 2022; Lilawati, 2017). The 2013 Curriculum further reinforces this by mandating that character education be integrated across all subjects, thereby ensuring that students are exposed to these values consistently throughout their educational journey (Suryantari, 2022; Khumairoh, 2022). This holistic approach not only enhances students' academic performance but also prepares them to navigate the complexities of modern society with integrity and compassion.

The significance of character education in PAI is underscored by its role in promoting Islamic values that align with national ideals. PAI aims to cultivate a generation that embodies the principles of Islam, such as justice, empathy, and community service, which are crucial for fostering social cohesion in a diverse society like Indonesia (Sukendar et al., 2019; Iqbal, 2022). By integrating character education with PAI, educators can address contemporary challenges such as moral degradation and social unrest, thereby contributing to the development of a more harmonious and resilient society (Abdullah et al., 2019).

Moreover, character education in the context of PAI emphasizes the importance of local wisdom and cultural values, which enrich the educational experience and make it more relevant to students' lives (Hidayati et al., 2020). This approach

not only nurtures a sense of identity and belonging among students but also encourages them to appreciate and respect the diverse cultural landscape of Indonesia (Hidayati et al., 2020). By fostering a strong moral foundation and a sense of social responsibility, character education plays a crucial role in preparing students to become active and engaged citizens who contribute positively to their communities.

In conclusion, character education is integral to the overall development of students in Indonesia, particularly within the framework of Islamic Religious Education. By instilling core values and promoting ethical behavior, character education not only enhances academic achievement but also prepares students to face the challenges of the modern world with integrity and compassion. The alignment of character education with PAI's objectives further underscores its significance in nurturing a generation that is not only knowledgeable but also morally grounded and socially responsible.

Implementing character education within the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) curriculum in Indonesia faces several specific challenges that hinder its effectiveness. These challenges can be categorized into structural, pedagogical, and contextual factors.

One significant challenge is the lack of adequate training and professional development for teachers. Many educators may not possess the necessary skills or understanding of how to effectively integrate character education into their teaching practices. This gap can lead to inconsistent implementation of character education principles across different classrooms (Asri, 2023; Iqbal, 2022). Furthermore, the curriculum itself may not provide sufficient guidance on how to incorporate character education seamlessly into PAI, leading to a fragmented approach that fails to resonate with students (Iqbal, 2022; Komalasari & Yakubu, 2023).

Another challenge is the varying levels of support from school leadership and parents. Effective character education requires a collaborative effort among teachers, school administrators, and families. However, if school leaders do not prioritize character education or if parents are not engaged in supporting these values at home, the impact of character education initiatives can be significantly diminished (Asri, 2023; Fatharani, 2023). This lack of a unified approach can result in students

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receiving mixed messages about the importance of character development.

Additionally, the cultural and social context in which students live can pose challenges to character education. In a diverse society like Indonesia, where various cultural and religious backgrounds coexist, character education must be sensitive to these differences. However, there may be a tendency to promote a one-size-fits-all approach that does not adequately address the unique needs and values of different communities (Hidayat, 2023; Adiyono, 2024). This can lead to resistance from students who may feel that the character education being presented does not align with their personal beliefs or cultural practices.

To address these challenges, several strategies can be implemented. First, enhancing teacher training programs to include comprehensive modules on character education can equip educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively teach these values (Fatharani, 2023; Iqbal, 2022). Professional development workshops and collaborative learning communities can also foster a culture of continuous improvement among teachers.

Second, fostering strong partnerships between schools and families is crucial. Schools can engage parents through workshops, meetings, and communication channels that emphasize the importance of character education and encourage parental involvement in reinforcing these values at home (Asri, 2023; Fatharani, 2023). This collaborative approach can create a supportive environment that enhances the effectiveness of character education initiatives.

Lastly, adapting character education to be more inclusive and culturally relevant can help address the diverse needs of students. This may involve incorporating local wisdom and cultural values into the character education curriculum, thereby making it more relatable and meaningful for students from various backgrounds (Hidayat, 2023; Adiyono, 2024). By recognizing and valuing the cultural diversity within the classroom, educators can promote a more inclusive approach to character education that resonates with all students.

In conclusion, while the implementation of character education within the PAI curriculum faces several challenges, strategic interventions such as enhanced teacher

training, stronger school-family partnerships, and culturally relevant curricula can significantly improve its effectiveness. By addressing these challenges, character education can play a vital role in shaping the moral and ethical development of students in Indonesia.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design to explore the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in strengthening religious character and social care attitudes among students. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for this research as they allow for an in-depth exploration of the complexities and nuances involved in character education within the PAI context.

2.2 Research Methods

To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of PAI, this study utilizes a combination of qualitative research methods, including case studies, interviews, focus groups, observational studies, documentary analysis, and participatory action research (PAR). Each method offers unique insights into the implementation process and contributes to the overall validity and reliability of the findings.

2.2.1 Case Study Method

The case study method is effective for examining specific instances of PAI implementation in various educational settings. For example, research conducted at Islamic boarding schools can provide detailed insights into how character education is integrated into daily practices and curricula. The case study approach allows researchers to analyze contextual factors, such as school culture and community involvement, that influence the effectiveness of character education initiatives (Hidayat, 2023). By focusing on particular schools or communities, researchers can gather rich, descriptive data that highlights best practices and challenges faced in the implementation of PAI.

2.2.2 Interviews and Focus Groups

Conducting interviews with teachers, students, and parents yields valuable qualitative data regarding perceptions and experiences related to character education in PAI. This method allows participants to express their views in their own words, providing a deeper understanding of how character values

are perceived and enacted in educational settings (Adelia, 2023). Focus groups facilitate discussions among stakeholders, revealing collective insights and fostering dialogue about the effectiveness of current practices and potential improvements (Syahputra, 2024).

2.2.3 Observational Studies

Observing classroom interactions and school activities provides direct evidence of how character education is implemented in practice. This method allows researchers to witness firsthand the dynamics of teaching and learning, as well as the ways in which character values are modeled and reinforced by educators (Rofi'i, 2024). Observational data can complement interview findings, offering a more comprehensive view of the educational environment.

2.2.4 Documentary Analysis

Analyzing existing documents, such as curriculum guides, lesson plans, and school policies, helps researchers understand the formal structures that support character education in PAI. This method can reveal how character education is framed within the broader educational objectives and how it aligns with Islamic values (Solihin et al., 2020). By examining these documents, researchers can identify gaps between policy and practice, as well as areas for improvement.

2.2.5 Participatory Action Research (PAR)

Involving educators and community members in the research process enhances the relevance and applicability of findings. PAR encourages collaboration between researchers and practitioners, fostering a shared understanding of challenges and solutions related to character education in PAI (Sirait, 2023). This approach not only generates valuable insights but also empowers stakeholders to take an active role in improving educational practices.

2.3 Data Triangulation

Data triangulation is a critical methodological approach in qualitative research that enhances the validity and reliability of findings. By employing multiple data sources, methods, or perspectives, researchers can cross-verify information, thereby minimizing biases and increasing the robustness of their conclusions.

2.3.1 Benefits of Data Triangulation

One of the primary benefits of data triangulation is its ability to provide a

more comprehensive understanding of the research phenomenon. By integrating data from various sources—such as interviews, observations, and document analyses—researchers can capture a fuller picture of how character education is implemented within PAI. This multifaceted approach allows for the identification of patterns and discrepancies across different data types, leading to more nuanced insights (Johnson et al., 2020).

Moreover, triangulation helps to enhance the credibility of qualitative research findings. When multiple sources converge on similar conclusions, the reliability of those findings is strengthened. This convergence acts as a form of validation, reassuring stakeholders that the results are not merely artifacts of a single method or perspective (Iksan & Saper, 2016; Ibiamke & Ajekwe, 2017).

Additionally, data triangulation can mitigate the risks associated with researcher bias. Qualitative research is often criticized for its subjective nature, where the researcher's interpretations can influence findings. By utilizing multiple data sources, researchers can counterbalance their biases and provide a more balanced view of the data (Golafshani, 2015; Noble & Smith, 2015). This is particularly important in educational settings, where the dynamics of classroom interactions can be complex and multifaceted.

Furthermore, triangulation can facilitate a deeper engagement with the data, encouraging researchers to reflect on their findings critically. This reflective practice can lead to the identification of new themes or areas for further investigation, ultimately enriching the research process (Johnson et al., 2020; Daniel, 2019).

2.4 Participant Selection

Selecting participants for interviews and observations in a study on the implementation of PAI requires careful consideration of several key factors to ensure the research is both ethical and effective.

2.4.1 Participant Selection Criteria

It is essential to establish clear criteria for selecting participants that align with the research objectives. Participants should include a range of stakeholders involved in PAI, such as teachers, students, parents, and school administrators. This diversity ensures

that multiple perspectives are captured, which is crucial for understanding the complexities of PAI implementation (Redman-MacLaren et al., 2014). Additionally, researchers should consider the experience and expertise of participants, as those with direct involvement in PAI may provide richer insights into its practices and challenges (Wesolowski, 2014).

2.4.2 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount when conducting qualitative research, particularly in educational settings. Researchers must obtain informed consent from participants, ensuring they understand the purpose of the study, their role, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence (Wolgemuth et al., 2014). Furthermore, researchers should be sensitive to the potential vulnerabilities of participants, particularly in contexts where power dynamics may exist, such as between teachers and students (Dubé et al., 2022). Maintaining confidentiality and anonymity is also critical to protect participants' identities and encourage honest responses (Hudson et al., 2016).

2.4.3 Diversity of Perspectives

To gain a comprehensive understanding of PAI implementation, it is important to include participants from diverse backgrounds and experiences. This diversity can encompass variations in gender, age, socio-economic status, and cultural backgrounds (Bredal et al., 2022). For example, including both male and female teachers can provide insights into gender-specific challenges and strategies in PAI. Additionally, engaging with participants from different cultural backgrounds can highlight how local customs and beliefs influence the implementation of character education within PAI (Haines, 2017).

2.4.4 Contextual Factors

The context in which the research is conducted plays a significant role in participant selection. Researchers should consider the specific educational environment, such as urban versus rural schools, and the socio-political climate that may affect PAI implementation (Allen, 2017). Understanding these contextual factors can help researchers identify relevant participants who can provide insights specific to their educational setting. For instance, participants from rural schools may face different challenges compared to those in urban settings, thus enriching the research findings (Arora et al., 2018).

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2.4.5 Building Trust and Rapport

Establishing trust and rapport with participants is crucial for encouraging open and honest communication during interviews and observations. Researchers should take the time to build relationships with participants, which can enhance the quality of the data collected (Velardo & Elliott, 2021). This can involve engaging with participants prior to the study, explaining the research process, and addressing any concerns they may have about participation (Kvale, 2023). Creating a comfortable and respectful environment during interviews can also facilitate more meaningful discussions (Thurman & Harrison, 2019).

2.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the methodology employed in this study combines various qualitative research methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of PAI in strengthening religious character and social care attitudes. By addressing key considerations in participant selection and employing data triangulation, this research aims to enhance the validity and richness of its findings, ultimately contributing to a deeper understanding of how PAI is implemented in educational settings.

3. Results

3.1 Planning of Islamic Religious Education (PAI)

The planning of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMA Negeri I Indramayu focuses on several key aspects to strengthen religious character and social care attitudes among students. These aspects include the integration of religious values into the curriculum, fostering a supportive learning environment, engaging various stakeholders, continuous evaluation and improvement, and promoting religious moderation.

3.1.1 Integration of Religious Values

The curriculum at SMA Negeri I Indramayu is designed to embed religious values into students' daily learning experiences. This approach aims to cultivate a sense of faith, submission to God, and good behavior among students. By actively engaging with PAI material, students are encouraged to explore Islamic teachings, thereby enhancing their understanding and application of these values in their daily lives (Aisyah & Suhendi, 2023). This integration aligns with the broader goal of PAI to not only impart knowledge but also to shape the moral character of students.

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3.1.2 Supportive Learning Environment

Creating a supportive learning environment is crucial for the effective implementation of PAI. This includes fostering positive relationships among students and between students and teachers, which can enhance the learning experience and promote social care attitudes (Maarif, 2023). Teachers play a vital role in modeling these values through their interactions with students, thereby reinforcing the importance of character education within the PAI framework (Hidayat, 2023).

3.1.3 Engagement of Stakeholders

Effective planning for PAI involves the active participation of various stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and the community. Collaboration among these groups creates a cohesive approach to character education. Engaging parents in the educational process helps reinforce the values taught in school and promotes a shared commitment to fostering religious character and social care attitudes (Huda, 2022). This collaborative effort ensures that the principles of PAI are consistently applied both in and out of the classroom.

3.1.4 Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Regular evaluation of the effectiveness of PAI planning and implementation is essential. This includes assessing students' understanding of religious values and their application in social contexts. Continuous improvement based on feedback from students and teachers helps refine the PAI curriculum and teaching methods, ensuring they remain relevant and effective in promoting character development (Maarif, 2023; Huda, 2022).

3.1.5 Focus on Religious Moderation

The PAI curriculum emphasizes religious moderation, incorporating strategies to instill values of tolerance and respect for diversity among students. This approach is particularly relevant in Indonesia's multicultural context, where fostering an understanding of different beliefs and practices is essential for social harmony (Aisyah & Suhendi, 2023; Huda et al., 2023). By promoting religious moderation, PAI aims to equip students with the skills necessary to navigate a diverse society while maintaining their own religious identity.

3.2 Implementation of PAI

The implementation of PAI at SMA Negeri I Indramayu involves both curricular and extracurricular activities, significantly impacting students' religious character and social care attitudes. These educational practices contribute to the holistic development of students, fostering a strong sense of religious identity and social responsibility.

3.2.1 Strengthening Religious Character

Curricular activities in PAI are designed to integrate Islamic values into students' daily learning experiences. This integration helps students internalize religious teachings, thereby enhancing their moral and ethical development. For instance, the ta'dib-based approach in PAI emphasizes character formation by embedding religious values into everyday learning, positively influencing students' behavior and attitudes (Dahuri, 2023). This approach encourages students to embody virtues such as honesty, integrity, and compassion, which are essential components of a strong religious character.

3.2.2 Promotion of Social Care Attitudes

Extracurricular activities play a crucial role in reinforcing the values taught in the classroom. Activities such as community service, charity events, and interfaith dialogues provide students with practical opportunities to apply their religious teachings in real-world contexts. These experiences enhance their understanding of social responsibility and foster empathy and compassion towards others (Ogyaningrum, 2023). By engaging in social care activities, students learn the importance of contributing to their communities and supporting those in need, aligning with the broader goals of PAI to develop socially responsible individuals.

3.2.3 Cultivating Religious Moderation

The implementation of PAI at SMA Negeri I Indramayu emphasizes the importance of religious moderation. Through both curricular and extracurricular activities, students are encouraged to appreciate diversity and practice tolerance towards individuals of different faiths. This focus on moderation helps students develop a balanced perspective on their own beliefs while respecting the beliefs of others, which is crucial in Indonesia's multicultural society (Aisyah & Suhendi, 2023; Huda et al., 2023). The curriculum includes discussions on the

significance of moderation in Islam, preparing students to navigate social interactions with sensitivity and respect.

3.2.4 Holistic Development

The combination of curricular and extracurricular activities in PAI contributes to the holistic development of students. Research indicates that character education through PAI not only enhances students' religious knowledge but also promotes critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Taja et al., 2021; Tabroni et al., 2021). By participating in various activities, students develop a well-rounded character that encompasses both intellectual and emotional dimensions, enabling them to become more effective leaders and engaged citizens.

3.2.5 Community and Parental Involvement

The success of PAI in strengthening religious character and social care attitudes is also attributed to the involvement of parents and the community. Collaborative efforts between schools, families, and local organizations create a supportive environment that reinforces the values taught in PAI (Setiawan, 2023). This partnership ensures that students receive consistent messages about the importance of character and social responsibility, both at school and at home.

3.3 Observed Changes in Students' Behavior and Attitudes

The implementation of PAI at SMA Negeri I Indramayu has led to observable changes in students' behavior and attitudes, particularly in relation to their religious character and social care. Both curricular and extracurricular activities have played a significant role in shaping these changes.

3.3.1 Enhanced Religious Character

The PAI program has contributed to a noticeable improvement in students' religious character. Through structured curricular activities, such as lessons on Islamic teachings and values, students have developed a deeper understanding of their faith. This understanding has translated into more consistent practice of religious obligations, such as prayer and community service (Utami & Wahyuni, 2023; Fitriyani et al., 2023). Students reported feeling a stronger connection to their religious identity, fostering a sense of pride and

commitment to embodying Islamic values in their daily lives.

3.3.2 Increased Empathy and Social Responsibility

The extracurricular activities associated with the PAI program, such as community service projects and interfaith dialogues, have significantly impacted students' social care attitudes. Participation in these activities has enhanced students' empathy towards others, particularly those from different backgrounds or in need of assistance (Gijselaers et al., 2016; Matthews et al., 2020). For instance, students involved in charity events expressed a greater awareness of social issues and a desire to contribute positively to their communities. This shift in perspective has encouraged students to take initiative in helping others, reflecting a more profound commitment to social responsibility.

3.3.3 Behavioral Changes in Classroom Settings

Observations in classroom settings revealed that students exhibited improved behavior as a result of the PAI program. The structured learning environment, combined with the emphasis on character education, has led to reduced instances of disruptive behavior and increased engagement during lessons (Erihadiana, 2022). Teachers noted that students were more respectful and attentive, demonstrating a willingness to participate actively in discussions about religious and ethical topics. This change in behavior indicates the positive influence of PAI on students' attitudes towards learning and respect for their peers and educators.

3.3.4 Development of Critical Thinking Skills

The PAI curriculum has also encouraged students to engage in critical thinking regarding their beliefs and values. Through discussions and projects that challenge students to reflect on their understanding of Islam and its application in contemporary society, students have developed a more nuanced perspective on their faith (Yu & Chiang, 2017; Romsa et al., 2017). This critical engagement fosters a sense of agency, empowering students to make informed decisions that align with their religious principles while considering the diverse world around them.

3.3.5 Strengthened Community Bonds

The implementation of PAI has facilitated stronger bonds among

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students, teachers, and the broader community. Collaborative projects involving parents and local organizations have reinforced the importance of community engagement in religious education (McFadden & Roehrig, 2017; Prancisca et al., 2023). Students reported feeling more connected to their school and community, enhancing their sense of belonging and responsibility towards others.

3.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the implementation of PAI at SMA Negeri I Indramayu has led to significant positive changes in students' behavior and attitudes. These changes include enhanced religious character, increased empathy and social responsibility, improved classroom behavior, the development of critical thinking skills, and strengthened community bonds. The holistic approach of integrating both curricular and extracurricular activities within the PAI framework has proven effective in fostering a generation of students who are not only knowledgeable about their faith but also committed to making a positive impact in their communities.

4. Discussion

4.1 Comparison of Findings with Previous Research on Character Education in Islamic Schools

The findings of the study on the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at SMA Negeri I Indramayu align with previous research that emphasizes the critical role of character education in Islamic schools. For instance, Malla et al. (2021) highlight the integration of multicultural values in Islamic education as a means to prevent radicalism, which resonates with the current study's focus on fostering tolerance and social care attitudes among students. Similarly, Apriliano (2023) discusses the importance of internalizing Islamic values to form a religious humanist character, which is reflected in the observed changes in students' behavior and attitudes at SMA Negeri I Indramayu.

Moreover, Tabroni and Rahmania (2022) emphasize that the cultivation of noble character (Akhlaq) requires systematic moral learning, a principle that was evident in the structured PAI curriculum at the school. The current study's findings regarding the enhancement of students' religious character and social responsibility through both curricular and extracurricular activities are consistent with the conclusions drawn by Hidayat

(2023), who notes that character education in Islamic boarding schools significantly contributes to moral integrity and character development.

Furthermore, the positive impact of character education on students' perceptions and behaviors, as reported in the current study, is echoed in the work of Zurqoni et al. (2018), which found that character education programs positively influence teacher and student perceptions. Overall, the findings from SMA Negeri I Indramayu reinforce the existing literature that underscores the effectiveness of character education in Islamic schools in shaping students' moral and ethical frameworks.

4.2 Implications for Educators and Policymakers

The study's findings have significant implications for educators and policymakers aiming to improve character education programs within Islamic schools.

4.2.1 Integration of Religious Values

First, the integration of religious values into both curricular and extracurricular activities should be prioritized. Educators are encouraged to develop comprehensive PAI curricula that not only impart knowledge but also actively engage students in character-building activities. This approach can enhance students' understanding of their faith while promoting social responsibility and empathy (Syamsuddin et al., 2021; Elihami, 2021).

4.2.2 Professional Development for Teachers

Second, policymakers should consider providing professional development opportunities for teachers to equip them with effective strategies for implementing character education. Training programs that focus on innovative teaching methods and the integration of technology in character education can empower educators to create more engaging and impactful learning experiences (Mubarak & Syamsi, 2019; Azizah & Rohmadi, 2022).

4.2.3 Collaboration with Families and Communities

Additionally, fostering collaboration between schools, families, and communities is essential. Policymakers should encourage partnerships that facilitate community service projects and interfaith dialogues, which can help reinforce the values taught in PAI and promote social cohesion (Trinova et al., 2020; Tabroni et al., 2021).

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4.2.4 Continuous Evaluation and Improvement

Finally, continuous evaluation and improvement of character education programs are crucial. Educators and policymakers should establish mechanisms for assessing the effectiveness of character education initiatives, allowing for data-driven adjustments to curricula and teaching methods. This iterative process will ensure that character education remains relevant and responsive to the needs of students in a rapidly changing society (Safitri, 2023; Kusdarini et al., 2020).

In conclusion, the findings of the study highlight the importance of a holistic approach to character education in Islamic schools, emphasizing the need for integrated curricula, teacher training, community involvement, and ongoing evaluation. By addressing these areas, educators and policymakers can enhance the effectiveness of character education programs and contribute to the development of morally responsible and socially engaged students.

4.3 Strategies to Overcome Challenges in PAI Implementation

To address the challenges identified in the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) for character education, several strategies can be employed:

4.3.1 Professional Development for Educators

Continuous training and professional development programs for teachers are essential to equip them with effective teaching strategies and methodologies for character education. Workshops and seminars focusing on innovative teaching practices, classroom management, and the integration of character education into the PAI curriculum can enhance teachers' competencies (Kasmawati, 2023; Rahmah & Fadhli, 2021). This training should also emphasize the importance of modeling positive behaviors and values, as teachers play a critical role in shaping students' character.

4.3.2 Curriculum Integration

The PAI curriculum should be designed to integrate character education seamlessly with religious teachings. This can be achieved by developing lesson plans that explicitly connect Islamic values with character traits such as honesty, empathy, and social responsibility (Kasmawati, 2023; Rahayu, 2023). By embedding

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character education within the PAI curriculum, students can see the relevance of these values in their daily lives, making the learning experience more meaningful.

4.3.3 Community and Parental Involvement

Engaging parents and the community in character education initiatives can strengthen the support system for students. Schools can organize workshops and informational sessions for parents to highlight the importance of character education and how they can reinforce these values at home (Indria, 2022; Jallow, 2023). Community service projects that involve students, parents, and local organizations can also foster a sense of social responsibility and collective effort in character development.

4.3.4 Utilizing Technology

Leveraging technology can enhance the delivery of character education. Online platforms and digital resources can provide interactive and engaging content that resonates with students (Rahayu, 2023; Zurqoni et al., 2018). Additionally, technology can facilitate communication between teachers, students, and parents, allowing for a more collaborative approach to character education.

4.3.5 Regular Assessment and Feedback

Implementing a robust assessment framework to evaluate the effectiveness of character education initiatives is crucial. Regular feedback from students, parents, and teachers can help identify areas for improvement and ensure that the character education program remains relevant and effective (Rahmah & Fadhli, 2021; Hidayat, 2023). This assessment should focus not only on academic performance but also on behavioral changes and the internalization of character values.

4.4 Future Research Directions

Future research can build on the findings of this study to further explore the long-term impacts of character education in Islamic schools through several avenues:

4.4.1 Longitudinal Studies

Conducting longitudinal studies that track students over several years can provide insights into how character education influences their behavior and attitudes in the long term. This approach can help identify the lasting effects of PAI on students' moral development and social responsibility

as they transition into adulthood (Idris, 2023; Tabroni et al., 2022).

4.4.2 Comparative Studies

Research comparing the effectiveness of character education programs across different Islamic schools can yield valuable insights into best practices and strategies that work well in various contexts. This comparative analysis can help identify factors that contribute to successful character education implementation (Yolcu & Sarı, 2018; Berkowitz, 2021).

4.4.3 Impact on Academic Performance

Investigating the relationship between character education and academic performance can provide a more comprehensive understanding of its benefits. Research can explore whether students who engage in character education programs demonstrate improved academic outcomes alongside enhanced character traits (Cahyo, 2017; Jallow, 2023).

4.4.4 Exploration of Cultural Contexts

Future studies can examine how cultural contexts influence the implementation and effectiveness of character education in Islamic schools. Understanding the interplay between local cultural values and Islamic teachings can help tailor character education programs to better meet the needs of diverse student populations (Rahayu, 2023; Alqudsi, 2024).

4.4.5 Role of Technology

Researching the role of technology in character education can provide insights into how digital tools and resources can enhance the learning experience. This includes exploring the effectiveness of online character education programs and their impact on student engagement and behavior (Zurqoni et al., 2018; Idris et al., 2023).

In conclusion, employing targeted strategies to overcome challenges in PAI implementation and pursuing future research avenues can significantly enhance the effectiveness of character education in Islamic schools. By focusing on professional development, curriculum integration, community involvement, technology utilization, and assessment, educators and policymakers can create a robust framework for character education that positively impacts students' lives.

5. Conclusion

The study on the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at

SMA Negeri I Indramayu demonstrates significant positive impacts on students' religious character and social care attitudes. The integration of religious values into both curricular and extracurricular activities has effectively fostered a supportive learning environment, engaged various stakeholders, and promoted religious moderation. These findings highlight the importance of a holistic approach to character education, emphasizing the need for integrated curricula, teacher training, community involvement, and continuous evaluation. This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of character education in Islamic schools and suggests areas for further research, such as longitudinal studies and the exploration of cultural contexts.

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