

**STRENGTHENING STUDENTS' ISLAMIC VALUES THROUGH
ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (PAI) LEARNING AND RELIGIOUS
HABITUATION AT SMK 1 RAUDLATUL AL FALAH PROBOLINGGO**

Ifa Maulida¹

*ifamaulida1920@gmail.com

Lailatun Nufus²

nufuslailatun6@gmail.com

Choirun Nisa'³

choirun231@gmail.com

Jihan Nabila Wicaksono⁴

kacamatakubukadunia@gmail.com

M Jadid Khadavi⁵

jadid.boyz@gmail.com

^{1,2,3,4,5}Ahmad Dahlan Institute of Probolinggo, Indonesia

Abstract

This study examines the synergy between Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and religious habituation in strengthening students' Islamic values at SMK 1 Raudlatul Al Falah Probolinggo. Employing a qualitative approach with a case study design, the research collected data through in-depth interviews with students, PAI teachers, and the school principal, as well as systematic observations of religious habituation activities conducted within the school environment. The findings reveal that the integration of formal PAI instruction with consistent religious practices greatly enhances students' cognitive understanding, emotional awareness, and behavioral internalization of Islamic teachings. Religious habituation programs—such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, morning dhikr, and faith-based social activities—serve as effective reinforcement mechanisms that help shape students' moral character, discipline, and spiritual awareness. Students reported noticeable improvements in religious commitment and social behavior, including increased honesty, empathy, responsibility, and mutual respect. The study also highlights how supportive school culture, teacher role modeling, and collaborative involvement of stakeholders contribute significantly to the success of this integrative approach. Overall, the synergy between PAI learning and religious habituation proves to be a strategic model for cultivating strong Islamic values and fostering holistic religious character development among vocational high school students.

Keywords: *Islamic Values, Religious Habituation, PAI Learning, Religious Character, Educational Synergy.*

Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a central role in shaping the character and moral foundations of students in Indonesia, particularly at the vocational high school (SMK) level where students are prepared to enter the professional world. Beyond transmitting religious knowledge, PAI functions as a strategic instrument for cultivating ethical behavior, discipline, and everyday attitudes that are essential for future workplace demands. As highlighted by Maulidah et al. (2024), Islamic religious education policies are designed to strengthen students' religious understanding and moral values, which subsequently influence their social and psychological development. This character-building function is also reflected in the integration of Islamic values with professional dispositions in vocational education (Fajriati & Bahrudin, 2021).

PAI is expected to equip SMK students with strong moral integrity, including the internalization of foundational elements of Islamic identity such as tawhid values (Taufiq et al., 2022; Mulyadi, 2023). Through a balanced curriculum between general and religious subjects, students are envisioned to become responsible and ethically grounded individuals (Saiwanto et al., 2022). However, persistent challenges remain. A major issue is the gap between classroom instruction and students' daily application of religious teachings, which results in a disconnect between theoretical knowledge and real-life practice (Imelda, 2018; Nurlaelah & Subaik, 2023). Such problems indicate that internalization of Islamic values is not yet optimal in vocational contexts.

Scholars emphasize that PAI should encompass cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions to achieve holistic internalization (Harahap, 2023). Innovative pedagogies such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL) and Project-Based Learning (PjBL) are recommended to foster students' active engagement in applying Islamic teachings beyond the classroom (Jamal et al., 2023). This requires teachers to adopt contextually relevant approaches that consider students' socio-cultural realities (Sultani et al., 2023). Strengthening PAI therefore necessitates a multifaceted approach that integrates knowledge acquisition with daily religious practice, supported by parents, teachers, and local communities (Mustaqim, 2023).

PAI also significantly contributes to cultivating moral traits such as responsibility, honesty, and empathy. Teachers play a vital role as moral exemplars who nurture students' religious awareness (Oktavia & Fadriati, 2023), helping them develop commendable character valued in modern workplaces (Abidin, 2021). Integrating Pancasila values into PAI further promotes civic awareness and appreciation of diversity within Indonesia's multicultural context (Qisthi et al., 2024; Mubarak & Yusuf, 2024).

Alongside classroom instruction, religious habituation represents a crucial component of Islamic education. Daily practices such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, and dhikr routines help reinforce

religious understanding and behavioral discipline. These habits are strengthened through systematic managerial efforts in school culture (Wiyani, 2020). Prior studies show that religious habituation—such as Dhuha prayer—effectively enhances discipline and moral internalization (Yugo, 2024; Hafidzh & R.F., 2024). Holistic character formation requires a combination of modeling, habituation, and sustained attention from teachers, parents, and school stakeholders (Luciana, 2022; Yanti, 2022). Various studies also report that habitual practices like Asma'ul Husna recitation significantly influence students' religious behavior (Mafruhah et al., 2023).

A strong religious character positively affects students' social interactions and community engagement (Kartini et al., 2024). Since religious personality is shaped gradually through consistent habituation (Jannah, 2019), such practices not only build ritual discipline but also promote moral and ethical development (Annisa et al., 2023). Nevertheless, challenges remain. Differences in students' backgrounds and varying levels of parental support may hinder the effectiveness of religious habituation (Yanti, 2022). Yet, empirical evidence shows that supportive school environments and adequate facilities enhance this process (Yudabangsa, 2020; Sasmita & Hafidz, 2023).

Given these realities, there is a clear research gap: although many studies discuss PAI or religious habituation separately, fewer examine the synergy between PAI learning and religious habituation specifically within the SMK context, where vocational demands interact with religious character formation. This study addresses that gap by analyzing how both components interact to strengthen students' Islamic values at SMK 1 Raudlatul Al Falah Probolinggo.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of an integrative Islamic education model encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions. Practically, it offers insights for schools in designing meaningful and contextual religious learning strategies. The urgency of this study lies in addressing moral degradation among youth and reinforcing Islamic identity amid the pressures of globalization and modernization.

Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to gain an in-depth understanding of the synergy between Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and religious habituation at SMK 1 Raudlatul Al Falah Probolinggo. The case study design was selected because it allows the researcher to explore a specific social situation comprehensively within its real-life context, enabling a detailed interpretation of how religious learning and habitual practices are integrated in the school environment. The research was conducted over three months, covering the stages of planning, field observations, interviews, and verification of findings. The participants included PAI teachers, the school principal, and students from grades X, XI, and XII, all of whom were directly involved in PAI learning and daily religious

activities. Students were selected through purposive sampling to ensure the data reflected diverse experiences and perceptions across different grade levels.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participant observations, and documentation analysis. In-depth interviews with students, teachers, and the principal were designed to explore personal experiences, perceptions, and interpretations regarding the implementation of PAI learning and religious habituation. Participant observations were conducted during activities such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, and daily religious routines to observe how habituation was enacted, reinforced, and internalized in the school setting. Documentation, including school policy documents, religious activity schedules, photographs, and written reports, was analyzed to strengthen the empirical basis of the findings and provide institutional context.

The data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. This analytical process allowed the identification of recurring themes, patterns of student behavior, and the relational dynamics between classroom instruction and habitual religious practices. To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, methodological triangulation was applied by comparing interview data, observation field notes, and documentation records. Member checking was conducted by confirming interpretations with selected participants, while prolonged engagement in the field and detailed field notes enhanced authenticity and depth of analysis. Ethical considerations were observed throughout the study; participants were informed about the research objectives, participated voluntarily, and were assured that their identities would remain confidential.

Through this methodological framework, the study generated a comprehensive understanding of how PAI learning and religious habituation intersect and mutually reinforce one another in shaping students' Islamic values within the vocational school context.

Results and Discussion

The results of this study, obtained from interviews with students, PAI teachers, and the school principal at SMK 1 Raudlatul Al Falah, indicate that the synergy between Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and religious habituation plays a significant role in strengthening students' understanding and internalization of Islamic values. Students consistently reported that the combination of structured classroom learning and daily religious routines helped them integrate Islamic teachings more effectively into their behavior. This finding reinforces the holistic nature of PAI when combined with religious practices, aligning with Hidayatillah et al. (2022), who argue that habituation transforms religious knowledge into lived practice. Observations at the school support the view that systematic habituation (facilitated through cooperation among teachers, students, and administrators) effectively builds students'

religious character. This corresponds with Yuliana (2022), who found that consistent religious routines cultivate visible improvements in students' attitudes.

Within the classroom setting, relevance of pedagogical content emerged as a key factor. Lessons related to akhlak (ethics) and worship were seen by students as more meaningful when directly linked to real-life situations. Several students expressed that their understanding of prayer practices deepened after concrete explanations and modeling during PAI lessons. This supports the findings of Sya'bana et al. (2024), who affirm that effective Islamic pedagogy strengthens both academic performance and spiritual awareness.



Figure 1. PAI Learning Activities at SMK Raudlatul Al Falah

The study also confirms that PAI at this school extends beyond instructional delivery to include moral development, social awareness, and character formation. Consistent with Fathuddin et al. (2023), Islamic education contributes significantly to shaping individuals with moral integrity and life skills. The integration of Islamic values in students' daily routines helps build responsible and socially conscious learners.

Religious habituation programs such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, and morning dhikr were found to reinforce classroom instruction in meaningful ways. Many students reported that these routines increased their motivation and sense of discipline, particularly regarding daily prayer obligations. This is in line with Safitri et al. (2023), who highlight the role of habituation in fostering respect, compassion, and moral sensitivity. Similarly, Siregar et al. (2023) note that religious programs effectively promote the

application of Islamic values in school and community settings. The structured nature of religious activities also facilitated students' development of empathy and tolerance, as observed during social programs embedded in school routines.



Figure 2. Congregational Prayer as a Form of Religious Habituation

A strong religious school culture further contributes to student character development. Badrudin (2020) emphasizes that well-designed religious programs promote awareness of religious duties, while Hussin and Tamuri (2019) highlight that contextualizing religious learning enhances students' ability to apply values in social interactions. The present study supports these findings, demonstrating that value-based school activities foster positive social behavior and strengthen the school's moral climate.

Despite the success of this integrative approach, several challenges remain. Not all students consistently applied Islamic values outside school, due to external influences such as family environment, peer pressure, and community norms. These challenges echo Yanti's (2022) findings on the importance of parental involvement and shared commitment among stakeholders in sustaining students' religious character. Strengthening collaboration between school, family, and community is therefore essential for extending religious habituation beyond the school environment (Adawiyah, 2023).

Teachers addressed these challenges using various instructional models, such as advisory models, role modeling, and habitual reinforcement, yet obstacles such as limited religious knowledge and unsupportive environments persist. Continuous improvement and increased parental cooperation are needed to maximize program outcomes. Muliatul et al. (2024)

highlight the need for technological and innovative teaching approaches to broaden the reach of religious character education.

The synergy between PAI learning and religious habituation was found to positively influence students' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Teachers played a key role by modeling ethical behavior and implementing appropriate teaching strategies (Diana & Sugiharto, 2024). This reinforces the notion that PAI is not limited to teaching aqidah and shariah, but extends to moral cultivation and character guidance. Despite challenges, the integrated program effectively shaped students with strong moral foundations, as supported by Agung (2021), who found that Islamic education, when supported by adequate facilities, successfully develops morally committed learners.

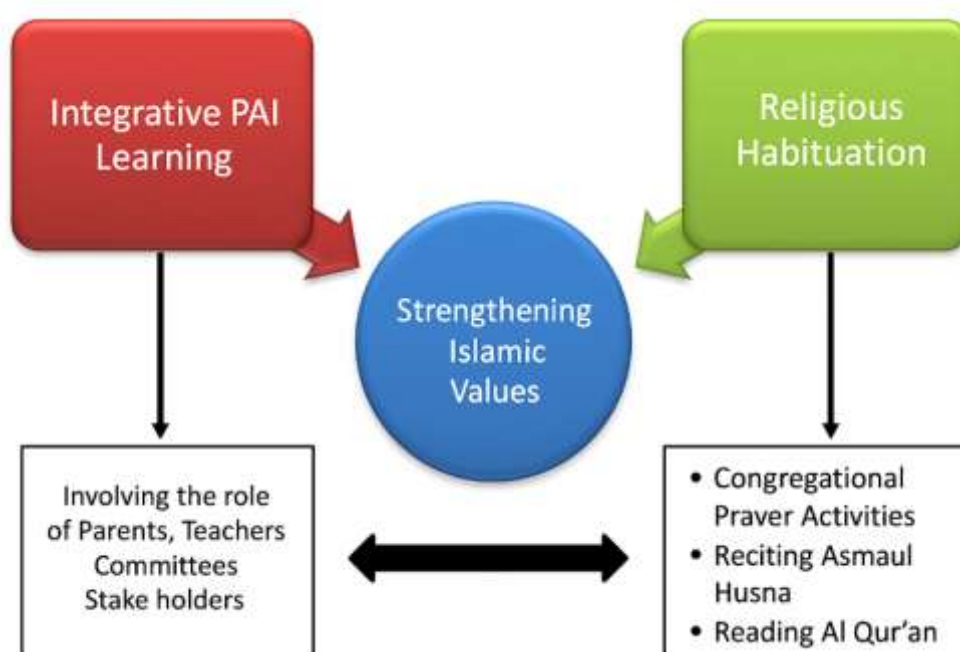


Figure 3. Model of Strengthening Islamic Values

Ultimately, the findings highlight the necessity of holistic learning approaches that address cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions. This is in accordance with Aziz (2022), who argues that vocational schools must focus on character-based religious education to prepare students for complex societal challenges. Integrating PAI learning with religious habituation thus represents a strategic pathway for producing students who are ethical, responsible, and spiritually resilient.

The findings of this study offer several important implications. First, the integration of PAI learning and religious habituation provides a practical model for strengthening character education in vocational schools, demonstrating that cognitive learning must be continually supported by behavioral routines. Second, the results underscore the significance of school culture as a foundation for internalizing Islamic values, suggesting that

character formation requires not only curriculum adjustments but also consistent environmental reinforcement. Third, the study contributes to a broader understanding of how religious instruction can be contextualized to meet the developmental needs of adolescents preparing for professional life, particularly in institutions where moral grounding is essential.

Theoretically, this research enriches the literature on Islamic education by offering an integrated framework that combines cognitive (PAI learning), affective (spiritual awareness), and behavioral (religious habituation) domains. This model contributes to existing theories by demonstrating how these elements mutually reinforce one another in vocational school settings. Practically, the study provides actionable insights for schools, teachers, and policymakers in designing effective religious character education programs. It highlights the importance of collaboration among school stakeholders and suggests that consistent habituation practices are essential for achieving long-term religious character development. Additionally, the model developed in this study can be adapted by other educational institutions seeking to strengthen Islamic values among students.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the synergy between Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and religious habituation at SMK Raudlatul Al Falah effectively strengthens students' Islamic values. This integrative approach enhances students' cognitive understanding of Islamic teachings while simultaneously reinforcing their behavioral and affective internalization through daily religious routines. Students not only gained deeper comprehension of essential Islamic concepts but were also able to apply these values consistently in worship practices, interpersonal interactions, and broader social engagement. The results confirm that combining structured PAI instruction with systematic religious habituation produces a more holistic form of character development, one that nurtures intellectual competence, moral awareness, and spiritual maturity.

Furthermore, the synergy between PAI learning and religious habituation contributes significantly to shaping students into individuals who exhibit noble character, discipline in worship, empathy, honesty, and social responsibility. This integrated model provides compelling evidence that Islamic education, when supported by a conducive school culture and active stakeholder involvement, can serve as an effective foundation for forming morally grounded and spiritually resilient youth. As such, the model implemented at SMK 1 Raudlatul Al Falah offers a promising framework that can be adopted or adapted by other schools seeking to strengthen students' religious character in a more comprehensive and meaningful way.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the growing body of literature on Islamic education by providing an integrative framework that connects cognitive learning with affective and behavioral dimensions. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of collaborative efforts

among teachers, parents, and school communities in sustaining religious character development. Future research may explore the long-term impact of this integrative approach, compare its effectiveness across different educational settings, or examine how technological innovation can further enhance religious habituation and PAI learning in contemporary schools.

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