

# Islamic Religious Education Teachers Strategies In Forming Student Religious Character At SMK PAB 8 Sampali

## Strategi Guru Pendidikan Agama Islam Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Religius Peserta Didik Di SMK PAB 8 Sampali

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### ABSTRAK

Riset ini berfokus pada upaya menggali bagaimana pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) berkontribusi dalam membentuk sikap religius siswa di SMK Swasta PAB 8 Sampali. Pendekatan yang dipakai yaitu kualitatif dengan jenis deskriptif, sedangkan data diperoleh melalui wawancara serta pengamatan langsung bersama guru PAI, Bapak Edi Susanto, S.Pd.I. Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa nilai karakter yang ditanamkan meliputi religiusitas, kejujuran, disiplin, tanggung jawab, sopan santun, toleransi, dan kepedulian sosial. Strategi pembelajaran yang diterapkan mencakup keteladanan, pembelajaran berbasis proyek, demonstrasi, pembiasaan ibadah, serta penetapan aturan kelas. Kendala utama yang dihadapi adalah rendahnya motivasi belajar siswa, yang diatasi dengan menciptakan suasana belajar menarik, pemberian motivasi, dan penerapan reward system. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa PAI berperan penting dalam menanamkan nilai religius sekaligus membentuk akhlak mulia siswa, tercermin dari meningkatnya kedisiplinan, sikap sopan, dan kepedulian sosial mereka..

### ABSTRACT

This research focuses on exploring how Islamic Religious Education (PAI) contributes to shaping students' religious attitudes at SMK Swasta PAB 8 Sampali. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through interviews and direct observations involving the PAI teacher, Mr. Edi Susanto, S.Pd. The findings reveal that the character values instilled include religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, politeness, tolerance, and social care. The strategies implemented consist of teacher role-modeling, project-based learning, demonstration, habituation of worship practices, and classroom rules enforcement. The main challenge faced is students' low learning motivation, which is addressed by creating an engaging learning atmosphere, providing motivation, and applying a reward system. The study concludes that PAI plays a crucial role in fostering religious values and shaping students' noble character, as reflected in their improved discipline, politeness, and social awareness.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Learning activities are essentially the process of passing on knowledge, skills, and behavioral patterns from one generation to the next through a systematically designed process. The essence of education lies in developing one's full potential, resulting in the development of mature individuals who are able to respond wisely to life's challenges. Therefore, education is the primary medium for instilling life values that play a role in shaping a higher quality of human character (M. P. Parhan, 2018).

One crucial pillar of education that should not be overlooked is religious instruction. For children, religious education provided from childhood, both within the family and in educational institutions, is the primary foundation for shaping character, mindset, and personality. The family is the initial and most important space for children to learn and instill fundamental life values, including religious aspects (M. Parhan & Kurniawan, 2020). With a spiritual foundation derived from Islamic teachings, children are

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expected to avoid moral deviations, grow as individuals of faith, knowledge, and good deeds, and become individuals of noble and beneficial character (Rufaedah, 2020).

A child's personality is greatly influenced by parental guidance. From an early age, the religious education a child receives serves as the primary foundation for developing good morals. As explained by Djaelani (in Somad, 2021), religious education is often essentially structured and rational. However, in some situations, the approach adopted is practical, aimed at enabling children to adapt and live their lives in accordance with religious values. In the Islamic context, religious education is understood as education based on the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, serving not only as a means of transferring knowledge but also as a means of internalizing values so that religion becomes a guide for life (Muhaimin, 2009). During adolescence, religious education becomes increasingly important because it serves as a bulwark against deviant behavior. The lack of instilling religious values from an early age often leads to juvenile delinquency, such as delinquency, impolite speech, and disruptive behavior. Therefore, parents play a crucial role in supporting children's development during this critical period, through guidance, creativity, and optimal utilization of their potential (Novrinda et al., 2017).

On the other hand, technological developments and globalization also pose significant challenges for the younger generation. Unlimited access to information opens the door to the influx of external cultures that are inconsistent with national morals (Swastiwi, 2024). The phenomena of hedonistic lifestyles, individualism, declining social awareness, and increasing cases of juvenile delinquency, such as brawls, bullying, drug abuse, promiscuity, and crime, indicate a serious character crisis. This situation emphasizes the crucial role of education, particularly Islamic Religious Education (PAI), as a strategic tool for instilling religious character in the younger generation (Judrah et al., 2024).

Islamic Religious Education not only prioritizes the relationship with God (*hablun min Allah*) but also emphasizes social interaction with other humans (*hablun min an-nas*) and the natural environment. Moral values, in the form of commendable attitudes, serve as guidelines that can be applied in daily routines. Unfortunately, the implementation of PAI in schools is often suboptimal. Many educational institutions still view PAI as merely a supplementary subject. The learning process tends to focus on cognitive aspects, such as memorization, while the character-building dimension is underdeveloped. As a result, even though students can master religious theory, their behavior does not always reflect religious teachings in their daily lives (Arifin & Nurhakim, 2025). In fact, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) should be the primary foundation that unites intellectual aspects with spirituality, thus producing a generation with religious character (Agustin et al., 2021). In the school context, Islamic Religious Education teachers function as key figures in educating, guiding, being role models, and providing motivation to shape students' character. However, in practice, various challenges must be faced. At SMK PAB 8 Sampali, for example, there are still students who demonstrate a lack of religious attitudes and do not take religious lessons seriously. Although Islamic Religious Education teachers have made efforts through role-modeling strategies, direct guidance, providing rewards, and fostering religious habits such as congregational prayer, the results have not been fully optimal. External factors such as a lack of family support, minimal collaboration between teachers and parents, and the social environment also influence the effectiveness of religious character formation in schools.

In line with this, a holistic, systematic, and sustainable Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning method is needed. Teachers are not merely tasked with delivering material, but also instilling religious values in various school activities, both through formal learning and extracurricular activities. An approach that involves habituation, role models, advice, and educationally enforcing discipline is a crucial step in instilling religiosity in students. Considering this background, the researcher deemed it important to examine in more detail the approach used by Islamic Religious Education teachers in cultivating the religious character of students at SMK PAB 8 Sampali. This study is expected to provide an understanding, not just an overview, of the strategies implemented by teachers, but also to identify inhibiting factors and relevant solutions. Furthermore, the results of this study are expected to contribute ideas and practical references for the development of Islamic religious education in schools, thereby forming a young generation that is religious, has noble morals, and is beneficial to religion, the nation, and the wider community.

## 2. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. According to Lexy (2007), qualitative research is a procedure that produces data in the form of descriptions, both written and spoken, from informants, as well as directly observable behavior. Through this approach, the researcher sought to describe and elaborate on the approach employed by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in fostering the religious character of students at SMK PAB 8 Sampali. This research was conducted in July 2025 at the vocational school, with the resource person being the school's Islamic Religious Education teacher, Mr. Edi

Susanto, S.Pd. This study relied on primary data collected through in-depth interviews with Islamic Religious Education teachers and direct observation of learning and religious activities at the school, such as congregational prayer and the practice of praying together. In addition, additional data were obtained from literature in the form of books, articles, and research journals relevant to the study's focus.

Data were collected using several approaches, including interviews, observation, and documentation. The interviews aimed to obtain information on the methods, obstacles, and efforts made by teachers in developing students' religious character. Observations were conducted to directly observe the dynamics of interactions between educators and students, both during class hours and outside of class, to obtain a concrete picture of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning practices. To support this process, researchers used interview guidelines. The data obtained were then processed using the techniques described by Miles and Huberman, namely through three main stages: data simplification, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by filtering and focusing data that aligns with the research objectives. Data were presented in a structured and easily understood descriptive form. Next, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the collected information to produce valid research findings..

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Referring to information obtained through interviews with the Islamic Religious Education teacher at SMK Swasta PAB 8 Sampali, namely Mr. Edi Susanto, S.Pd, it can be understood that Islamic Religious Education plays a significant role, not only in conveying religious knowledge, but also in instilling moral values and commendable morals in students. The teacher emphasized that the main objective of learning Islamic Religious Education at this school is to foster religious values in students, so that they not only master Islamic teachings in theory, but are also able to apply them in everyday life. QS. Al-Baqarah verse 2 states that the Qur'an is a book that is beyond doubt and a guide for those who are pious. The meaning of this verse emphasizes that the religious values contained in the Qur'an should be a guide for life for every believer. Therefore, it is important to instill these principles through formal education, including in schools, so that students can internalize religious teachings and form religious characters and behaviors that are in line with moral and spiritual values.

#### Character Values That Need to Be Instilled in Students

According to the resource person, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning at the Private Vocational High School PAB 8 Sampali emphasizes character development in students through core values, including:

- a) Religiosity, namely instilling an awareness to always worship Allah, performing prayers at the designated times, reading the Quran regularly, and reciting prayers before engaging in activities.
- b) Honesty is instilled by encouraging students to avoid cheating, lying, and telling the truth.
- c) Discipline is demonstrated by the habit of arriving on time, following school rules, and completing assignments on schedule.
- d) Responsibility, such as a willingness to admit mistakes, maintaining a clean classroom environment, and carrying out assigned responsibilities.
- e) Politeness, especially in interactions with teachers and peers, involves being mindful of one's words and behaving according to norms.
- f) Tolerance and social awareness, through respecting differences and participating in cooperation and social action activities.

#### Teacher Strategies in Islamic Religious Education Learning

The teacher explained that Islamic Religious Education learning is carried out using various strategies. In addition to the lecture method for conveying theory, the teacher also uses discussion methods, questions and answers, case studies, and direct practice. For example, when discussing praiseworthy morals, students are asked to share their experiences in helping their parents at home or doing good to their friends. From these real experiences, the teacher then relates them to teachings in accordance with religious guidelines so that students feel closer to the material. In order to instill these values, the teacher uses several applicable learning strategies so that students not only understand the theory but are also able to put it into practice.

Based on data obtained from the resource person, several strategies are implemented, namely: First, the teacher establishes clear class rules so that students are accustomed to following the rules. Second, the teacher displays consistency in role models so that students have real role models to refer to. Third, the teacher creates an interactive and positive learning experience that makes students feel valued and comfortable when interacting. Fourth, positive behavior is cultivated, for example, by saying hello,

maintaining cleanliness, and completing assignments on time. In addition, teachers and parents need to establish consistent communication and collaboration so that character building can take place consistently outside of school. It is important to note that the instilling of good attitudes is not entirely in the hands of the school, but also depends on the role of the family and the surrounding community. Some aspects used by SMK Swasta PAB Sampali in instilling commendable character in students through Islamic Religious Education learning include:

- a) First, the main character value that is the focus of Islamic Religious Education learning is religiosity, which includes noble morals such as honesty, courage to take responsibility, discipline, tolerance, and an attitude of mutual assistance. These values are the main foundation because they are considered capable of developing students who are not only cognitively intelligent but also have positive character in their daily lives. This is in line with QS. An-Nahl verse 90, which means: "Indeed, Allah commands (you) to act justly and do good, giving to relatives, and Allah forbids from indecency, evil, and hostility. He teaches you so that you may learn a lesson." The meaning of this verse emphasizes the importance of guiding students to live with discipline and responsibility, as well as to accustom themselves to good behavior, so that education not only teaches knowledge but also forms commendable character.
- b) Second, so that students not only understand the concepts of religious teachings but also can apply them in everyday life, teachers use project-based learning as a primary strategy. Students are directed to work on projects related to religious values, for example, making presentations about the stories of the prophets, holding social activities for the local community, or engaging in real actions that foster social awareness. In addition, teachers also use a demonstration strategy, namely, providing direct examples of how religious teachings should be put into practice. With this strategy, students can learn through concrete experiences and emulate the teacher's behavior.
- c) Third, in developing discipline, responsibility, and politeness in students, teachers establish clear rules, create a positive classroom environment, and provide consistent role models. In their daily school life, teachers always strive to demonstrate good behavior, such as greeting each other politely, keeping promises, and maintaining consistency in worship. Thus, students see real-life role models to emulate. This is in line with QS. Al-Ahzab verse 21, which means, "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have a good example to follow for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day and who remembers Allah often." This verse emphasizes the importance of emulating good behavior. In this context, teachers who serve as role models for students are believed to significantly influence character formation, because students tend to imitate real behavior more easily than just listening to theory.
- d) Fourth, in addition to formal learning, schools also implement various habituation programs that support the formation of students' religious character, such as praying Dzuhur together, reciting the Koran before classes begin, and activities to commemorate religious holidays, as well as social service activities. All of these activities are not merely formalities, but are aimed at forming good habits (habituation) that will be carried into everyday life. For example, through the habituation of congregational prayer, students are trained to be disciplined in time, be patient in waiting for their turn, and strengthen the sense of brotherhood with friends.

As recommended in Surah Al-Baqarah verse 43, which translates as: "And establish prayer, pay zakat, and bow with those who bow," it serves as a means to instill discipline and a sense of community in students. In addition to being an individual act of worship, this practice also fosters social awareness and concern for others. Through routine activities like this, students not only understand religious values theoretically but also learn to internalize attitudes of responsibility, tolerance, and empathy in their daily lives.

### **Obstacles in Islamic Religious Education Learning**

The resource person stated that in practice, teachers also face a number of obstacles. One of these is low motivation among some students. Some students consider religious studies less important than subjects directly related to their majors. Furthermore, technological developments and the influence of the social environment also pose challenges, as many students are more preoccupied with gadgets or social media than paying attention to their lessons. To address this, teachers strive to create an engaging and comfortable learning environment, provide positive motivation, and implement a reward system as a form of appreciation or recognition for students who demonstrate greater dedication. Teachers also help students set clear learning goals and create a more structured study schedule to provide direction in their learning. With this contextual approach, students become more understanding and motivated.

Surah Al-Mujadilah, verse 11, reminds us that Allah will exalt those who believe and those who are given knowledge, which means: "Allah will exalt those who believe among you and those who are given knowledge, by degrees." This message is an important motivation for students who are seeking knowledge, including religious knowledge, not only broadens horizons, but is also a path to attaining a noble position in the sight of Allah.

### **Impact of Islamic Religious Education Learning on Student Character**

Interview findings indicate that Islamic Religious Education learning has a significant positive impact on student behavior. In general, students become more polite, behave honestly, and take greater responsibility. For example, some students were previously often late, but after being accustomed to discipline through Islamic Religious Education learning, they began to strive to arrive on time. Some students, who initially cared little about classroom cleanliness, are now more active in maintaining the school environment. Teachers also observed that students who diligently participate in Islamic Religious Education learning tend to have more stable personalities, are easier to work with, and show respect for others. These positive impacts are not always immediately apparent in all students, but the changes are gradually evident. Teachers emphasized that character development in students still requires consistent practice and role models. Therefore, character education through Islamic Religious Education must be consistently maintained, both at school, in the family, and in the community.

This also aligns with the view of Thomas Lickona (in Damariswara et al., 2021), who emphasized that character education encompasses three important dimensions: moral knowledge, moral awareness or feeling, and the application of morality in concrete actions. In other words, students need to be more than just familiar with the concept of goodness; they also need to instill a love for these values and express it in their daily behavior. This is evident in the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching practices at SMK PAB 8 Sampali, where teachers strive to integrate knowledge, attitudes, and actions through a combination of learning strategies, role models, habituation, and religious activities..

## **4. CONCLUSION**

The conclusion drawn from the research results above is that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at the Private Vocational School PAB 8 Sampali, guided by Mr. Edi Susanto, S.Pd. Serves as a key pillar in shaping students' behavior and character. PAI not only provides religious knowledge but also instills ethical and moral principles such as religiosity, honesty, discipline, responsibility, courtesy, tolerance, and social awareness. These values are instilled through a combination of varied learning strategies, teacher role models, and the inclusion of religious activities in the school. Despite challenges such as low motivation among some students, teachers strive to address this by creating an engaging learning environment, providing motivation, and implementing a reward system. Consequently, students' behavior shows positive changes, such as increased discipline, politeness, and concern for the environment. This demonstrates that PAI contributes significantly to student character formation, incorporating the principles of Islamic teachings as enshrined in religious guidelines, while also aligning with the principles of character education, which emphasize understanding moral values, emotional appreciation, and application in concrete actions. Thus, Islamic Religious Education learning becomes an important instrument in forming a generation that is religiously devout, knowledgeable, and behaves in a commendable manner.

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