

Research Article

The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers as a Model of Character Education in SMK Negeri 1 Sambirejo

Ilham Wahyu*, Nurul Latifatul Inayati

Department of Islamic Religious Education, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, Jawa Tengah, Indonesia, 57169

*Corresponding Author: g000210154@student.ums.ac.id | Phone: +62895397898100

ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in shaping students' character at SMK Negeri 1 Sambirejo. By using a qualitative approach and phenomenological method, this study explores the role of PAI teachers as educators, mentors, evaluators, and motivators in shaping student character. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed by data reduction techniques, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that PAI teachers have an important role in shaping student character through habituation of worship, exemplary, and moral and spiritual guidance. However, there are several challenges in the implementation of character education, such as low student discipline and motivation, the negative influence of the social environment, and the lack of family support. Supporting factors such as the character-based curriculum and school policies that support religious education help overcome these obstacles. This study confirms that a sustainable approach and synergy between teachers, schools and families are needed to create strong student characters that are in line with Islamic values.

Keywords: Character Building; PAI Teacher; Islamic Teacher; Islamic Religious Education

1. INTRODUCTION

Character education is not a new concept in Indonesian society. In fact, since the time of independence until the era of the old order, new order, and currently the reformation period, there have been many efforts in developing character education with various approaches and terminology. Although the 2003 Law (UU) on the National Education System (SISDIKNAS) has included character education, it has not fully become the center of attention in the education system (Gunawan, 2012). Talking about character is a very essential and important aspect. Character is the essence of life that distinguishes humans from animals. Individuals who do not have character will be difficult to distinguish from animals due to the absence of boundaries in behavior and morality. People who have strong and good character, both in individual and social contexts, are those who have good ethics, morality, and integrity. Given the importance of this character, educational institutions have the responsibility to instill it through the learning process. Strengthening character education in the current era is very relevant to overcome the moral crisis that is currently engulfing our country. We cannot ignore the real and worrying crises in society, especially those involving our children. This crisis includes an increase in promiscuous behavior, an increase in violence against children and adolescents, violations against peers, bullying, and so on. These moral crises give children an unfavorable judgment, thus requiring us as educators to improve their character building (Rizal, 2014).

Education has a comprehensive role, not only in developing individual potential, but also in actualizing it. Learners are not like empty glasses that must be filled from outside, they already have their own knowledge and experience. Therefore, guidance is needed so that they can apply their knowledge and skills appropriately. This explains why education often leads to the improvement of learners' abilities (Sukmadinata, 2007). If a person does not get adequate education or is reluctant to learn due to laziness, then his ability to develop will be hampered and he will be left behind in keeping up with the fast-paced times. In the context of education, the learning process has a significant impact on the achievement of student learning outcomes. Purwanto argues that learning outcomes reflect the achievement of educational goals, so that the measurement of learning outcomes is closely related to the stated educational goals (Ngalim, 2011).

Islamic Religious Education, especially moral education, has a very important role in preventing behaviors that are considered negative and deviate from the values of Islamic teachings. Therefore, it is advisable that these values are instilled from an early age. Childhood is the right time to instill religious values, especially in terms of strengthening childhood beliefs. Thus, these values will seep into the child's soul until adulthood. This is due to the fact that early education is the main foundation for the formation of a child's personality who will enter adolescence. The values instilled through moral education will have an impact on human behavior, which is reflected in outward actions. The purpose of moral education is to form individuals who have good morality, strong determination, polite behavior, noble behavior, wise nature, perfection, sincerity, honesty, and purity. In other words, moral education aims to produce humans who have moral excellence. Therefore, every moment, situation, activity is a means for moral education, and every aspect of education should respect and prioritize morality above all else.

SMK Negeri 1 Sambirejo is an educational institution that implements character education involving Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to optimize character building in the school environment. However, despite this, challenges related to students' moral behavior cannot be overcome easily, as revealed in the survey conducted, there are still many students who have not shown positive character or good behavior. There are still students who lack discipline in managing time, lack responsibility in completing assignments, are less polite in interacting with teachers, and there are still those who do not show Islamic attitudes in dressing and speaking. If this character building lacks attention in the family environment and the surrounding community, then further formation can be carried out by PAI teachers at school by instilling Islamic values to form a strong and sturdy character.

The role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in shaping character is certainly expected to be able to make students have a strong character, so that they can overcome the moral challenges faced. Especially considering that many students just go through school hours without realizing the importance of knowledge for their lives. However, if they have a responsible character, then they will appreciate the importance of knowledge and be responsible for learning, not just completing their study time. SMK Negeri 1 Sambirejo has a strong commitment to children's character building, understanding that strong character will improve the quality of education and human resource development. With a strong character, children not only fulfill their obligations as students, but also as servants who are obliged to seek knowledge to live their lives.

If we observed the phenomena around at this time, it appears that not only the problem of irresponsibility in learning activities is a concern, but also many other cases such as mischievous behavior among students, fights between students, acts of violence, thuggish practices, consumption of alcohol, violations of traffic ethics, and increased criminality, which are increasingly complex from time to time. The emergence of these problems is not only caused by the shortcomings of Islamic religious education in schools that emphasize cognitive aspects, but also encourages Islamic religious education teachers to introspect and find solutions through the development of Islamic religious learning that focuses more on the formation of values (affective) and the character of students. Therefore, further emphasis in this description will be focused on the formation of student character, especially in efforts to instill moral values in accordance with the author's research focus, namely "The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers as a Character Learning Model at SMK Negeri 1 Sambirejo".

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach. This approach is a series of steps or methods in which research produces descriptive data in the form of words, both written and oral, obtained from individuals or from behaviors that have been analyzed (Wulandari, 2021). The qualitative method applied is the Phenomenology approach, which aims to deeply understand the subjective experiences of individuals towards phenomena or events in their lives. This research was conducted directly at SMK N 1 Sambirejo. The source of data obtained from this research is the results of interviews with Mr. Abu Bakar As-shidiq Al-Amin as an Islamic religious education teacher at SMK N 1 Sambirejo. In this study using two types of data used, namely primary and secondary data sources. Primary data sources in this study are data sources that come from Islamic Religious Education Subject Teachers at SMK Negeri 1 Sambirejo, which directly provide information to researchers regarding the student character education model. Meanwhile, secondary data sources in this study consist of documents, daily notes during observations at SMK Negeri 1 Sambirejo, as well as related literature derived from publications or journals, not directly obtained by researchers from their research subjects. In this study, researchers collected data using several techniques, including; observation, interviews, and documentation. In this study, researchers

analyzed data using three stages, namely; data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. In the context of this research, data validity uses triangulation techniques that combine various available data collection methods, such as interviews, observation, and document analysis, so that data can be verified with the observed phenomena.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Role of PAI Teachers In Shaping Student Character at SMK Negeri 1 Sambirejo

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SMK Negeri 1 Sambirejo play a very important role in the character building of students. Character education is an effort made by schools to shape students into individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also have good morals. As an Islamic Education teacher, their role in the formation of student character is very strategic, considering that the material taught is not only limited to religious knowledge, but also includes the development of student attitudes and behavior in accordance with Islamic teachings. Based on interviews with Islamic Education teachers at SMK N 1 Sambirejo, the role of Islamic Education teachers is not only responsible for teaching religious material, but also has a dual role as a mentor, evaluator, and motivator for students. In this case, character building becomes a very important part of every learning activity carried out by PAI teachers.

3.1.1 Educators in Character Building

An educator is an individual who has a crucial role in conveying knowledge, honing skills, and instilling values to students. Teachers as educators have the responsibility to teach students in accordance with predetermined materials. The educational process aims to develop three important aspects, namely outlook on life, life attitudes, and life skills in individuals or groups. Related to character building, a teacher must be able to connect the subject matter delivered with character education values. Based on the results of interviews with PAI teachers as educators, educators at SMK N 1 Sambirejo have an important role as role models for students. When educators provide good examples such as courtesy to fellow teachers, praying in congregation on time, and speaking well, then students will tend to follow and imitate them. But on the contrary, if the educator shows bad behavior or does not do good things then students can be affected and imitate it. The attitude and actions of an educator greatly influence the development of character and behavior of students, who learn not only from the subject matter, but also from the examples given by their teachers. So the PAI teacher at SMK N 1 Sambirejo continues to model good and positive things towards students so that they are also accustomed to imitating it in their daily lives.

3.1.2 Mentoring in Character Building

Teachers as mentors can be likened to guides on a journey, who with their knowledge and experience are responsible for ensuring the journey goes smoothly. The journey includes not only physical journeys, but also mental, emotional, creative, moral and spiritual journeys (Anggraini, 2025). Based on the results of the interview, PAI teachers as mentors, namely, PAI teachers at SMK N 1 Sambirejo also act as mentors who help students understand and implement religious values in everyday life. This guidance does not only occur in the classroom, but also in religious activities, such as congregational prayers, other religious activities, and in daily interactions. One of the roles that is highly emphasized by PAI teachers at SMK N 1 Sambirejo is the formation of honesty and discipline characters in students. This character building is easier to implement if students are accustomed to performing worship in an orderly manner, because students who have performed worship properly and orderly will more easily develop with better morals than before. PAI teachers at SMK N 1 Sambirejo realize that changes in student character cannot occur in a short time, but require habituation and a long time.

3.1.3 Evaluation in Character Building

As a teacher, the main task in learning activities is to carry out evaluation carefully (Riefky, 2023). The teacher's role as an evaluator is carried out by assessing the learning process experienced by students, as well as evaluating the learning outcomes achieved by students. Teachers monitor and assess every-step students take during learning, including the extent of their engagement, as well as provide an assessment of students' academic achievements reflected in their learning outcomes. The purpose of this evaluation is to understand students' progress and provide useful feedback for future improvement (Nurkhasanah, 2024). Based on the results of interviews with PAI teachers as evaluators, PAI teachers at

SMK N 1 Sambirejo also act as evaluators in the process of character building. The evaluation conducted by PAI teachers at SMK N 1 Sambirejo is generally personal, namely through direct face-to-face with students after the implementation of congregational prayers or other religious activities. In this evaluation, PAI teachers provide feedback to students regarding their behavior during worship, such as whether they have followed the procedures of worship properly and whether there are things that need to be improved. This evaluation also provides an opportunity for students to approach the teacher directly about the difficulties or obstacles they face in carrying out religious teachings and forming good character. Through this evaluation, students can find out their shortcomings and try to improve them, both in worship and in daily life.

3.1.4 Motivation in Character Building

A teacher who acts as a motivator should be able to encourage students to learn with passion and engagement. As the encourager, educators can try to find out the reasons behind students' lack of motivation and the factors that influence their low academic performance. Paying attention to the needs of individual students is the most effective way to motivate them (Aghnina, 2023). Based on the results of the interview, PAI teachers as motivators, namely, PAI teachers at SMK N 1 Sambirejo also provide a very important role in motivating students. PAI teachers encourage students to carry out acts of worship, especially compulsory worship such as prayer, fasting, and zakat. This motivation is given in various forms, for example by giving appreciation to students who have performed worship well, or reminding students of the importance of worship in their lives. This motivation also includes providing exemplary examples from PAI teachers, which are expected to influence students to follow good behavior. With appreciation and motivation, students are expected to be more enthusiastic in practicing worship and other religious values, which in turn can strengthen their character building (Haryanti, 2017).

3.2 Supporting Factors in Shaping Student Character at SMK N 1 Sambirejo

3.2.1 Internal Supporting Factors

Character building carried out at school aims to increase self- awareness. Self-awareness is the process by which information received is internalized and eventually becomes values that are believed to be true, which are reflected in daily behavior. Although self-awareness is more related to attitude, this process requires skills to convert information into values and then apply them in daily actions. Based on the results of interviews with PAI Teachers at SMK N 1 Sambirejo also stated that one of the main factors supporting student character building is the willingness and self-awareness of the students themselves. Students who have a high awareness of the importance of good character, will be easier to invite to follow the character-building process. This awareness can arise when students feel that character education is not only for the benefit of the school, but for their future good. For example, when students understand that discipline and honesty will have a positive impact on their lives, they will be more eager to carry it out. This awareness factor often arises in students when they get learning that touches the heart aspect and not just the intellectual aspect.

3.2.2 External Supporting Factors

The Islamic Religious Education curriculum is designed to assist the understanding and application of Islamic teachings in formal education. This curriculum includes aspects of aqidah, sharia, morals, worship, Islamic history, interpretation of the Koran, hadith, and character education, with the aim of forming individuals who have faith, piety, noble character, and practice Islamic teachings in everyday life. Based on the results of interviews with PAI teachers at SMK N 1 Sambirejo, the curriculum is also one of the supporting factors for character building at SMK N 1 Sambirejo. The curriculum at SMK N 1 Sambirejo has been well designed to provide adequate religious education, such as providing materials on kindness, discipline, and in- depth worship ethics for students. This provides a strong foundation for students to understand the importance of worshipping well as part of their character building. Character building in schools requires the active role of all parties, including the curriculum, learning process, assessment system, school management, curricular activities, optimization of infrastructure, financing management, as well as strengthening the work ethic for all school members and the environment.¹⁸ The role of teachers is also very important in shaping students' character, because teachers have a strong influence on their personality development. Teachers must also be an example in terms of morals and ethics. In this case, teachers also need to develop character values in themselves, so that they can be good role models and help students form positive characters (Nurhidaya, 2021).

3.3 Inhibiting Factors in Shaping Student Character at SMK N 1 Sambirejo

3.3.1 Internal Barrier Factors

1) Lack of Self-Discipline

Discipline is a condition formed through a series of behaviors that reflect values such as obedience, compliance, loyalty, order, and order. With discipline, a person will understand and be able to distinguish between what should be done, what must be done, what is allowed, and what should not be done (because it is prohibited). Based on the results of interviews with PAI teachers at SMK N 1 Sambirejo, it was found that one of the main problems often faced in this school is the lack of self-discipline among students. This is reflected in various behaviors that do not reflect discipline, such as often coming late to class, not completing assignments on time, and non-compliance with the rules set by the school. This problem is a considerable challenge because it can affect the quality of learning and the development of student character. The indiscipline can also have an impact on the classroom atmosphere that is not conducive and affects the interaction between students and teachers. Efforts made by PAI teachers are more intensive in overcoming this discipline problem through a more personal approach to students as well as strengthening the rules and consequences more firmly (Fawaiid, 2017).

2) Low Self-Motivation

Motivation is usually understood as the push factors or support that a person receives in his or her efforts to achieve life goals. This support can come from within the individual, such as an inner drive arising from personal beliefs, desires, or ideals, as well as from external factors, namely the social environment around the individual, such as family, friends, or society that provides encouragement and inspiration to continue trying to achieve goals. Based on the results of interviews with PAI teachers at SMK N 1 Sambirejo, one of the challenges faces is the low motivation of students to take part in Islamic Religious Education lessons in character building. Many students are less interested or do not realize the importance of religious education in their lives. Students who do not see a direct link between religious values and their lives outside of school, will tend to be less active in following lessons and applying religious teachings in their daily lives. This lack of motivation often stems from a lack of understanding of how important character education is, as well as a lack of awareness of how it will affect their lives in the future.

3.3.2 External Barrier Factors

Education is a shared responsibility between family, school, community and government. Schools act as a continuation of the education provided in the family, because the first and main education children receive comes from the family environment. Families form the basis of children's values and personality, while schools develop knowledge and skills. Cooperation between the two is very important so that education can run effectively. Based on the results of interviews with PAI teachers at SMK N 1 Sambirejo, he also said that family is an external factor that is very influential in shaping children's character. However, not all families can provide maximum support in terms of religious and moral education. Some parents who are too busy with work or personal affairs, may pay less attention to the moral and religious development of their children. As a result, students feel that they do not get enough attention or learning about religious values at home. Without good examples from parents and families, students will find it difficult to understand and apply.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers have a very important role in shaping the character of students at SMK Negeri 1 Sambirejo. PAI teachers not only function as educators who deliver Islamic teaching materials, but also as mentors, evaluators, and motivators in shaping student character. Through a comprehensive approach, such as worship habituation, exemplary modeling, and continuous evaluation, PAI teachers can help students internalize moral and ethical values in daily life. However, in its implementation, student character building faces various challenges, both from internal and external factors. Internal factors include lack of self-discipline and low student motivation in understanding the importance of character education. Meanwhile, external factors include a less supportive social environment and the lack of attention from families to students' moral development. Despite the obstacles, this study confirms that the active role of PAI teachers supported by school policies, a structured curriculum, and consistent coaching can be a solution in shaping better student character. With a sustainable approach, it is expected that the character of students at SMK Negeri 1 Sambirejo can continue to develop in a more positive direction.

REFERENCES

- Anggraini, SV, & Zuliana, Z. (2025). Peran Guru PAI dalam Membentuk Karakter Islami Anak Autisme di TK Mysarah Padang Serai Malaysia. *Al-Ulum: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* , 6 (1), 248-260.
- Aghnina, D., & Lukman, S. (2023). Peran guru pai dalam membentuk karakter religius siswa di SDIT Mutiara Rahmah. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 1(1), 73-82.
- Ariefky, MM, & Inayati, NL (2023). Peran Guru PAI dalam Pelaksanaan Evaluasi Pembelajaran Sumatif Siswa di SMK Negeri 6 Sukoharjo. *Edukasia: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran* , 4 (2), 2343-2350.
- Fawaid, M. M. (2017). Implementasi tata tertib sekolah dalam meningkatkan karakter kedisiplinan siswa. *Jurnal Civic Hukum*, 2(1), 9.
- Gunawan, H. (2012). Character education concept and implementation. *Bandung: Alfabeta*.
- Haryati, S. (2017). Pendidikan karakter dalam kurikulum 2013. *Tersedia secara online di: <http://lib.membongkar.ac.id/wp-content/uploads> [diakses di Bandung, Indonesia: 17 Maret 2017]* .
- Ngalim, P. (2011). Evaluasi hasil belajar. *Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar*, 2(1).
- Niam, M. F. (2024). Pendidikan Agama Islam dalam Kurikulum Nasional.
- Nurhasanah, E., Aisah, S., & Yusnarti, M. (2024). Peran Guru Sekolah Dasar dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa. *Jurnal Evaluasi Dan Kajian Strategis Pendidikan Dasar*, 1(1), 21-26.
- Nurhidaya, N., Lundeto, A., & Luma, M. (2021). Peran Guru Kelas dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa Kelas III di Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. *Journal of Elementary Educational Research*, 1(2), 56-67.
- Rizal, A. S. (2014). Filsafat Pendidikan Islam Sebagai Landasan Membangun Sistem Pendidikan Islami. *Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Islam-Ta'lim*, 12(1), 1-18.
- Sukmadinata, N. S. (2007). Psychological foundations of the educational process. *Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya*.
- Wulandari¹, D., & Lestari, T. (2021). Pengaruh gadget terhadap perkembangan emosi anak.