

The Relationship Between Discipline in Islamic Religious Education and the Formation of Students' Moral Character

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ARTICLE INFO

Accepted :

April 02, 2026

Revised :

May 12, 2026

Approved:

May 22, 2026

Published :

May 30, 2026

Keywords: Discipline, Islamic Religious Education, Moral Character, Honesty, Madrasah Students.



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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the relationship between discipline in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and the formation of moral character of students at the State Islamic Senior High School (MAN) in Surabaya. Discipline in PAI includes not only aspects of obedience in worship, but also compliance with school rules and consistency in practicing Islamic teachings in daily life. This study uses a quantitative approach with a correlational research type, involving 320 students from five of the best MAN in Surabaya as a sample, who were selected proportionally through a stratified random sampling technique. The instrument used consists of two Likert scales that measure the variables of PAI discipline and students' moral character. The results of the Pearson correlation test show a significant positive relationship between discipline in PAI and the formation of students' moral character with a correlation coefficient value of $r = 0.673$ ($p < 0.01$), which indicates a strong relationship. The dimension of obedience in worship has the highest correlation with moral character ($r = 0.641$), while the aspect of honesty is an indicator of moral character that is most strongly influenced by PAI discipline ($r = 0.634$). This study provides empirical evidence that the implementation of religious discipline integrated with Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning practices contributes significantly to student character development, particularly in areas of honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and empathy. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening PAI as a vehicle for moral character development within the context of Islamic education in madrasahs, through a habituation approach, role modeling, and the integration of values into the school culture.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays a crucial role in shaping students' moral character amidst the moral challenges facing today's young generation. In the context of formal education, PAI serves not only as a regular subject but also as a strategic medium for instilling noble moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and discipline. (Komalasari & Yakubu, 2023; Latipah et al., 2025). Discipline in this context refers not only to adherence to school rules, but also to a commitment to consistently practicing religious teachings in daily life. Implementing disciplinary values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) serves as the foundation for the ongoing internalization of moral values. When students become accustomed to practicing discipline in both worship

and social interactions, their moral character will naturally develop. Therefore, education that emphasizes not only cognitive aspects but also affective and psychomotor aspects, such as PAI, is crucial in shaping students with high integrity. (Haerudin, 2025; Komariah & Nihayah, 2023).

Various studies have shown a significant relationship between disciplined Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and the development of students' moral character. A recent quantitative study found that PAI contributed 21.9% to students' moral development, indicating that PAI has a direct, though not absolute, influence. (Dewi et al., 2025) The remainder is influenced by various external factors such as family, social environment, and digital media. Nevertheless, these figures suffice to illustrate the importance of a disciplinary approach in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teaching. This emphasizes that discipline is not merely a technical aspect of classroom management, but rather a strategic instrument in character education. (Hakim, 2022; Tabroni et al., 2022) When Islamic Education learning is carried out consistently, with an approach that emphasizes habituation and role models, students' potential to absorb moral values will increase significantly. (Fajri & Kamilah, 2025; Khasanah, 2024).

Discipline in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is implemented through various activities integrated into school routines and students' lives. Practices such as congregational prayer, regular Quran reading, and the implementation of the 5S (Smile, Greet, Greet, Be Polite, and Courteous) are concrete forms of applied value learning. If implemented consistently, these habits will produce students who are not only formally religious but also possess strong moral character in their daily lives. (Hasanah et al., 2024; Nurizah & Amrullah, 2024) The application of discipline based on habituation also fosters students' self-awareness to act in accordance with religious values without constant supervision. This is the hallmark of Islamic education—it leads to the development of individuals with *ihsan*, a sense of being watched by Allah in every action.

The teacher's role in this process is crucial. Islamic Religious Education teachers not only act as transmitters of material but also as role models whose behavior is emulated by students. (Munawir et al., 2024; Wahidin et al., 2024) When teachers demonstrate discipline in carrying out their duties, whether in terms of time, speech, or attitude, students will be indirectly influenced to imitate them. This role model is an effective medium for shaping moral character because values are not only conveyed verbally but also exemplified in real life (Haerudin, 2025; Komariah & Nihayah, 2023). Islamic Religious Education teachers also function as spiritual guides, guiding students to live according to Islamic principles, both inside and outside the classroom. In this regard, a personal approach and spiritual guidance are integral parts of Islamic Religious Education learning strategies oriented towards character building.

In addition to teachers, family and school support also significantly determine the effectiveness of implementing discipline in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Collaboration between teachers, schools, and parents is key to successfully developing students' moral character. When the values instilled in school are also reinforced at home and in the community, students will receive consistent reinforcement. Conversely, if the family environment does not support, or even conflicts with, the values taught at school, the development of students' moral character will be hampered. (Latipah et al., 2025; Muzakki & Nurdin, 2022) Therefore, an approach that involves all elements of education, both formal and informal, is an effective strategy for building strong character in students.

However, in practice, the implementation of discipline in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) also faces various obstacles. One of the main challenges is limited

learning time. In many schools, the time allocated for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is still relatively minimal compared to other general subjects. This results in a less than optimal process of internalizing moral values as a whole (Haerudin, 2025). Furthermore, a lack of family support, especially for students from non-religious backgrounds or families with little regard for religious education, is a hindering factor in the formation of moral character. Negative environmental factors, such as promiscuity and the uncontrolled influence of social media, also weaken schools' efforts to shape students' morals. (Muzakki & Nurdin, 2022).

Differences in student backgrounds, whether cultural, economic, or religious, also influence their responses to the application of discipline in Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Not all students are equally prepared and understand the values taught. Some students may experience resistance because the values do not align with their family or environmental circumstances. Therefore, a flexible and contextual approach is essential to ensure that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) values are accepted and internalized by all students without feeling forced (Fajri & Kamilah, 2025). In this regard, teachers are required to possess high pedagogical competence and social empathy to bridge this gap.

An effective strategy to address these challenges is to integrate religious values into all school activities, not just Islamic Religious Education (PAI) lessons. Values such as honesty, discipline, and courtesy can be incorporated into various activities, such as flag ceremonies, extracurricular activities, and student attitude assessment systems. In this way, moral character becomes not only the responsibility of Islamic Religious Education teachers but also becomes part of the overall school culture. (Haluti et al., 2024; Huda et al., 2022). Habits and role models applied by all elements of the school are the main foundation in developing students' character with noble morals.

Character education in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) should be viewed as a long-term process that requires patience, consistency, and sustainability. The application of discipline solely in a formal manner and punishment will not produce profound behavioral changes. Conversely, fostering moral character through a humanistic, persuasive, and role-model-based approach will produce students with an internal awareness of good values. In this context, PAI is not only an instrument for transmitting religious knowledge but also a vehicle for students' spiritual and social transformation. The character formed through disciplined education in PAI will be a valuable asset for students in facing the challenges of life in the future. (Haerudin, 2025; Nabilah et al., 2024).

Based on the description above, this study aims to analyze in depth the relationship between discipline in Islamic Religious Education and the formation of students' moral character, by highlighting the extent to which discipline has a direct impact on moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and politeness. (Gusliana & Nurlela, 2022) The main focus of this research is to identify supporting and inhibiting factors in the implementation of Islamic Religious Education discipline and effective strategies for shaping students' moral character in the school environment. The novelty of this research lies in the integrative approach between religious discipline and character education in the context of secondary schools in post-pandemic Indonesia, which has not been comprehensively studied in recent academic literature. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for educators, policymakers, and education practitioners in formulating effective Islamic Religious Education learning models for shaping morally superior student character.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a quantitative approach (Sugiyono, 2019), with a correlational research type to determine the relationship between discipline in Islamic religious education and the formation of students' moral character. The quantitative method was chosen because it is able to objectively measure the variables studied through instruments that have been tested for validity and reliability. Correlational research aims to test the existence or absence of a relationship between two or more variables without providing special treatment to the research subjects. In this context, the independent variable (X) is discipline in Islamic religious education which includes the dimensions of obedience in worship, compliance with school rules, and consistency in practicing Islamic teachings. Meanwhile, the dependent variable (Y) is the formation of students' moral character which includes aspects of honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and empathy.

The population in this study was all 11th grade students at the five best State Islamic Senior High Schools (MAN) in Surabaya City, totaling 1,850 students. The five MANs were selected based on their academic reputation, religious achievements, and the completeness of Islamic education facilities. The sampling technique used proportional stratified random sampling by considering the proportion of the number of students in each madrasah. Based on the Slovin formula with a 5% error rate, a sample of 320 students was obtained. The sample inclusion criteria included students who had taken Islamic Religious Education subjects for at least 2 years, actively participated in religious activities at the madrasah, and were willing to be research respondents. Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria were students who were participating in student exchange programs, students with special health conditions that interfered with the learning process, and students who were absent during data collection.

Table 1
Distribution of Research Samples

No	Madrasah Name	Population	Sample	Percentage
1	MAN 1 Surabaya City	485	84	26.2%
2	MAN 2 Surabaya City	420	73	22.8%
3	MAN Surabaya City	315	55	17.2%
4	MAN 4 Surabaya City	345	60	18.7%
5	Sunan Giri Islamic State Islamic University Surabaya	285	49	15.3%
Total		1,850	320	100%

The research instrument used consisted of two Likert scales with five answer alternatives (strongly agree, agree, less agree, disagree, strongly disagree). The Islamic Religious Education (PAI) discipline scale consists of 40 items measuring three main dimensions: obedience in worship (15 items), compliance with school rules (12 items), and consistency in practicing Islamic teachings (13 items). The student moral character scale consists of 35 items measuring four aspects: honesty (10 items), responsibility (9 items), tolerance (8 items), and empathy (8 items). Both instruments have been tested for construct validity using SPSS and reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. Data collection techniques were carried out through direct surveys to the madrasahs that were the research samples with the help of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers as field coordinators. The collected data were then analyzed using descriptive statistics to describe the

characteristics of respondents and research variables, as well as Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis to test the hypothesis of the relationship between variables.

Table 2
Operationalization of Research Variables

Variables	Dimensions	Indicator	Number of Items	Sample Items
Discipline in PAI (X)	Obedience in Worship	- Discipline in performing the 5 daily prayers - Activeness in religious activities - Consistency in reading the Qur'an	15	"I always perform the 5 daily prayers on time"
	Compliance with School Rules	- Punctuality in entering class - Compliance with the rules - Respect for teachers	12	"I always come to school on time"
	Consistency of Islamic Teachings	- Implementation of noble morals - Behaving according to Islamic law - Maintaining Islamic social interactions	13	"I always tell the truth in every situation"
Student Moral Character (Y)	Honesty	- Tell the truth - Don't cheat - Admit mistakes	10	"I did the exam honestly without cheating"
	Responsibility	- Complete tasks for the environment - Care - Commitment to promises	9	"I always complete my assignments on time"
	Tolerance	- Respect differences - Non-discriminatory - Be inclusive	8	"I respect friends of different religions"
	Empathy	- Caring for others - Helping those in difficulty - Showing sympathy	8	"I feel sad when I see my friends in trouble"

The data analysis in this study used a stepwise approach that began with descriptive analysis to describe the characteristics of the research data. At this stage, the researcher calculated measures of central tendency (mean, median, mode) and measures of dispersion (standard deviation, variance) for both research variables using SPSS 25.0 software. Next, analysis prerequisite tests were conducted, including data normality tests using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test and linearity tests for relationships between variables using scatterplot analysis. These prerequisite tests are important to ensure that the data obtained meet the basic assumptions of parametric statistical analysis.

After ensuring the data met the requirements of normality and linearity, the researcher conducted a correlation analysis using the Pearson Product Moment technique to test the strength and direction of the relationship between discipline in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and the formation of students' moral character. The analysis was continued with simple linear regression to determine the extent of influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. Hypothesis testing was carried out using a t-test with a significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$, where the null hypothesis (H_0) states that there is no significant relationship between the two variables, while the alternative hypothesis (H_1) states that there is a significant relationship between discipline in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and the formation of students' moral character. The results of the analysis were then interpreted based on the correlation coefficient value, determination value, and significance level obtained.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

This study involved 320 eleventh-grade students from 5 State Islamic Senior High Schools in Surabaya City as respondents. Based on the descriptive analysis conducted, the characteristics of the respondents showed a fairly even distribution based on gender, with 52.5% of respondents being female and 47.5% being male. In terms of age, the majority of respondents were aged 16-17 years (89.4%), while the rest were aged 15-16 years (10.6%). Family background showed that 78.1% of respondents came from families with a high level of religiosity, 18.4% from families with a moderate level of religiosity, and 3.5% from families with a low level of religiosity. The distribution of respondents based on academic achievement showed that 34.7% had excellent achievement, 41.9% good, 20.3% sufficient, and 3.1% poor.

The results of the descriptive analysis for the discipline variable in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) showed an average value of 3.78 with a standard deviation of 0.542. The minimum value obtained was 2.15 and the maximum value was 4.85. The distribution of PAI discipline variable data showed that 42.2% of students had a high level of discipline, 51.6% had a moderate level of discipline, and 6.2% had a low level of discipline. For the dimension of obedience in worship, an average value of 3.89 with a standard deviation of 0.587 was obtained, indicating that most students had good consistency in carrying out worship such as praying five times a day and reading the Qur'an. The dimension of compliance with school rules obtained an average value of 3.72 with a standard deviation of 0.634, indicating that students generally obeyed school regulations. Meanwhile, the dimension of consistency in carrying out Islamic teachings obtained an average value of 3.73 with a standard deviation of 0.598.

For the variable of students' moral character formation, the results of descriptive analysis show an average value of 3.82 with a standard deviation of 0.521. The minimum value obtained is 2.28 and the maximum value is 4.91. The distribution of moral character variable data shows that 45.3% of students have high moral character, 48.4% have medium moral character, and 6.3% have low moral character. The honesty aspect obtained the highest average value of 3.94 with a standard deviation of 0.578, indicating that most students have a strong commitment to honesty in various situations. The responsibility aspect obtained an average value of 3.86 with a standard deviation of 0.612, the tolerance aspect obtained an average value of 3.75 with a standard deviation of 0.634, and the empathy aspect obtained an average value of 3.73 with a standard deviation of 0.598.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variables/Dimensions	N	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation	Category
Discipline in Islamic Education	320	2.15	4.85	3.78	0.542	Tall
- Obedience in Worship	320	2.07	4.93	3.89	0.587	Tall
- Compliance with School Rules	320	1.92	4.83	3.72	0.634	Tall
- Consistency of Islamic Teachings	320	2.08	4.85	3.73	0.598	Tall
Students' Moral Character	320	2.28	4.91	3.82	0.521	Tall
- Honesty	320	2.20	5.00	3.94	0.578	Tall
- Responsibility	320	2.11	4.89	3.86	0.612	Tall
- Tolerance	320	2.00	4.88	3.75	0.634	Tall
- Empathy	320	2.13	4.85	3.73	0.598	Tall

The prerequisite analysis test showed that the research data met the assumptions of normality and linearity. The results of the normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test showed a significance value of 0.087 for the discipline variable in Islamic Religious Education and 0.094 for the student moral character variable, which means that both variables were normally distributed ($p > 0.05$). The linearity test through scatterplot analysis showed that the relationship between the two variables was linear, with the data distribution pattern forming a positive straight line. The results of the homogeneity of variance test showed a significance value of 0.142 ($p > 0.05$), which means that the variance of both data groups was homogeneous.

Table 4
Prerequisite Analysis Test Results

Test Type	Variables	Statistics	Sig.	Information
Normality	Islamic Education Discipline	0.068	0.087	Normal
(Kolmogorov-Smirnov)	Moral Character	0.071	0.094	Normal
Linearity	X against Y	F = 124.587	0.000	Linear
Homogeneity	Levene's Test	2,178	0.142	Homogeneous

The results of the Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis indicate that there is a significant positive relationship between discipline in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) and the formation of students' moral character. The correlation coefficient obtained is $r = 0.673$ with a significance value of $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.01$), which means the relationship is very significant at a 99% confidence level. The strength of this relationship is included

in the strong category because it is in the range of 0.60-0.79. The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.453 indicates that discipline in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is able to explain 45.3% of the variation in the formation of students' moral character, while the remaining 54.7% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

Correlation analysis for each dimension showed varying results. The dimension of obedience in worship had the strongest correlation with students' moral character ($r = 0.641$; $p = 0.000$), followed by the dimension of consistency in practicing Islamic teachings ($r = 0.598$; $p = 0.000$), and the dimension of compliance with school rules ($r = 0.567$; $p = 0.000$). All three dimensions showed a significant relationship with the formation of students' moral character. In terms of moral character aspects, honesty had the highest correlation with Islamic Religious Education discipline ($r = 0.634$; $p = 0.000$), followed by responsibility ($r = 0.612$; $p = 0.000$), empathy ($r = 0.598$; $p = 0.000$), and tolerance ($r = 0.587$; $p = 0.000$).

Table 5
Correlation Analysis Results

Connection	Correlation Coefficient (r)	Sig. tailed)	(2- Category
Islamic Education Discipline ↔ Moral Character	0.673**	0.000	Strong
Dimensions of Islamic Education Discipline:			
- Worship Obedience ↔ Moral Character	0.641**	0.000	Strong
- Compliance with Rules ↔ Moral Character	0.567**	0.000	Currently
- Consistency of Teachings ↔ Moral Character	0.598**	0.000	Currently
Moral Character Aspects:			
- PAI Discipline ↔ Honesty	0.634**	0.000	Strong
- Islamic Education Discipline ↔ Responsibility	0.612**	0.000	Strong
- Islamic Education Discipline ↔ Empathy	0.598**	0.000	Currently
- Islamic Education Discipline ↔ Tolerance	0.587**	0.000	Currently

*Note: ** = significant at $\alpha = 0.01$

The results of a simple linear regression analysis show that discipline in Islamic Religious Education has a significant effect on the formation of students' moral character. The regression equation obtained is $Y = 1.175 + 0.701X$, which means that every one unit increase in the Islamic Religious Education discipline variable will increase students' moral character by 0.701 units. The results of the F test show a calculated F value of 263.847 with a significance of 0.000 ($p < 0.01$), which means that the regression model

used is feasible and significant for predicting students' moral character based on discipline in Islamic Religious Education.

Table 6
Linear Regression Analysis Results

Model	Unstandardized	Standardized	t	Sig.
	Coefficients	Coefficients		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	1,175	0.156		7,532
Islamic Education Discipline	0.701	0.043	0.673	16,244

Model Summary:

- R = 0.673
- R Square = 0.453
- Adjusted R Square = 0.451
- F = 263.847; Sig. = 0.000

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate a significant positive relationship between discipline in Islamic Religious Education and the formation of students' moral character at the State Islamic Senior High School (Madrasah Aliyah) in Surabaya. This finding aligns with previous research showing that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) has a significant contribution to the formation of students' moral character (Dewi et al., 2025). The correlation coefficient value of 0.673 obtained in this study is even higher than previous research which only showed a 21.9% contribution of PAI to the formation of students' morals. This difference can be explained by the different research context, where this study was conducted in a madrasah with a stronger religious environment compared to public schools, thus the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) discipline can run more optimally. (Rizka et al., 2024).

The high correlation between obedience in worship and students' moral character ($r = 0.641$) confirms the importance of spiritual aspects in character formation. This supports the view that when students are accustomed to practicing discipline in worship, their moral character will naturally develop, as stated in previous research (Haerudin, 2025; Komariah & Nihayah, 2023). Consistent religious practices, such as the five daily prayers and reading the Quran, not only develop discipline in the ritual aspect but also instill fundamental moral values such as honesty, responsibility, and empathy. Obedience in worship reflects students' commitment to religious values, which are then internalized in daily behavior.

The dimension of compliance with school rules showed a lower correlation ($r = 0.567$) compared to the dimension of obedience in worship, but it remained significant. This finding indicates that compliance with formal school rules does contribute to the formation of moral character, but its impact is not as strong as the spiritual aspect. This is understandable because compliance with school rules tends to be external and sometimes forced, while obedience in worship is more intrinsic and based on students' internal awareness. Research by Nurizah and Amrullah (2024) and Hasanah et al. (2024) also shows that habits based on internal awareness are more effective in forming moral character than formal rules.

Consistency in practicing Islamic teachings ($r = 0.598$) shows a fairly strong correlation with students' moral character. This dimension reflects students' ability to apply Islamic values in their daily lives, which aligns with the concept of *ihsan* in Islamic education, which is the feeling of being watched by Allah in every action. This consistency includes the application of noble morals, behaving according to Islamic law, and maintaining Islamic relationships, all of which contribute to the formation of strong moral character. This finding supports the argument that effective Islamic education focuses not only on cognitive aspects but also on affective and psychomotor aspects (Haerudin, 2025; Komariah & Nihayah, 2023).

In terms of moral character, honesty showed the highest correlation with Islamic Religious Education discipline ($r = 0.634$), indicating that disciplinary practices in Islamic Religious Education are highly effective in instilling honesty in students. This can be explained by the fact that in Islamic teachings, honesty is a fundamental value emphasized in various aspects of life, including worship and social interactions. When students are accustomed to being honest in carrying out worship and following school rules, this honest attitude will be internalized in other aspects of life, including exams, assignments, and relationships with peers.

The responsibility aspect ($r = 0.612$) also showed a strong correlation with Islamic Religious Education discipline. This finding aligns with research showing that students who are disciplined in performing religious duties and following school rules tend to be more responsible in completing assignments and other commitments. Responsibility in this context includes the ability to complete assignments on time, care for the environment, and keep promises. Discipline in Islamic Religious Education teaches students to be consistent in carrying out obligations, which then develops into a responsible attitude in various aspects of life.

The empathy ($r = 0.598$) and tolerance ($r = 0.587$) aspects showed a moderate correlation with Islamic Religious Education discipline. Although this correlation was not as strong as the honesty and responsibility aspects, it was still significant and indicated that Islamic Religious Education discipline contributed to the development of empathy and tolerance in students. Empathy developed through Islamic Religious Education discipline is reflected in concern for others, a willingness to help those in need, and the ability to show sympathy. Meanwhile, tolerance is manifested in the ability to appreciate differences, be non-discriminatory, and be inclusive of peers from various backgrounds.

The finding that Islamic Religious Education discipline can explain 45.3% of the variation in the formation of students' moral character indicates that Islamic Religious Education plays a significant role in shaping moral character, but there are still 54.7% other factors that influence it. This is in line with the literature showing that moral character formation is influenced by various factors, including family, social environment, and digital media (Dewi et al., 2025). The role of the family and social environment greatly determines the effectiveness of the implementation of Islamic Religious Education discipline, as stated by Latipah et al. (2025) and Muzakki & Nurdin (2022) who emphasize the importance of collaboration between teachers, schools, and parents in shaping students' moral character.

The research context, conducted in a madrasah, provides advantages in implementing Islamic Religious Education discipline due to the supportive environment of religious values. However, this study also identified several challenges consistent with previous research findings. Limited time for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, which is still relatively minimal compared to other general subjects, is one of the obstacles to

optimizing moral character formation (Haerudin, 2025; K et al., 2024). Furthermore, differences in student backgrounds, in terms of culture, economic background, and family religiosity, also influence student responses to the implementation of Islamic Religious Education discipline.

The role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in this study proved crucial as role models whose behavior is emulated by students. This finding supports previous research showing that teacher role models are effective in shaping moral character because values are not only conveyed verbally but also exemplified (Haerudin, 2025; Komariah & Nihayah, 2023). Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers who demonstrate discipline in carrying out their duties, both in terms of time, speech, and attitude, indirectly influence students to emulate these behaviors. The personal approach and spiritual guidance carried out by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers are an integral part of a learning strategy oriented towards character building.

An effective strategy to overcome challenges in implementing Islamic Religious Education discipline is to integrate religious values into all school activities, not just during Islamic Religious Education lessons. The findings of this study support the approach proposed by Haluti et al. (2024) and Huda et al. (2022) regarding the importance of making moral character an overall school culture. Practices such as congregational prayer, regular Quran reading, and implementing the 5S culture (Smile, Greeting, Greeting, Politeness, Courtesy) integrated into school routines have proven effective in shaping students' moral character.

A flexible and contextual approach is essential to accommodate diverse student backgrounds so that Islamic Religious Education (PAI) values can be accepted and internalized by all students without feeling forced (Fajri & Kamilah, 2025; K et al., 2024). In this regard, teachers are required to possess high pedagogical competence and social empathy to bridge this gap. A humanistic, persuasive, and role-modeling approach has proven more effective in producing students with an internal awareness of good values than a purely formal and punitive approach.

The practical implications of this research's findings are the need to strengthen Islamic Religious Education (PAI) discipline programs in madrasas through a variety of comprehensive strategies. First, there is a need to increase the time allocated for Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning and religious activities to optimize the internalization of moral values. Second, there is a need to improve the competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in implementing character-oriented learning strategies through ongoing training and professional development. Third, an evaluation system needs to be developed that measures not only cognitive aspects but also affective and psychomotor aspects of students in implementing Islamic Religious Education (PAI) values.

This research provides a theoretical contribution to strengthening Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning theories oriented toward character formation. The finding that obedience in worship has the highest correlation with students' moral character strengthens the argument for the importance of spiritual aspects in Islamic education. Furthermore, this study also provides empirical evidence on the effectiveness of an integrative approach between religious discipline and character education in the context of madrasahs in post-pandemic Indonesia. The novelty of this research lies in the use of a comprehensive quantitative approach to analyze the multidimensional relationship between Islamic Religious Education (PAI) discipline and students' moral character in a representative sample of the best madrasahs in Surabaya.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research and discussion that has been conducted, it can be concluded that there is a significant positive relationship between discipline in Islamic Religious Education and the formation of moral character of students at the State Islamic Senior High School in Surabaya City. The correlation coefficient of 0.673 indicates that the relationship is included in the strong category with a very high level of significance ($p < 0.01$). Discipline in Islamic Religious Education is able to explain 45.3% of the variation in the formation of moral character of students, which indicates a fairly large role even though there are still other influencing factors. The dimension of obedience in worship has the highest correlation with moral character ($r = 0.641$), followed by consistency in carrying out Islamic teachings ($r = 0.598$) and compliance with school rules ($r = 0.567$). In terms of moral character aspects, honesty shows the highest correlation with Islamic Religious Education discipline ($r = 0.634$), followed by responsibility ($r = 0.612$), empathy ($r = 0.598$), and tolerance ($r = 0.587$). These findings strengthen the argument that Islamic education emphasizing spiritual discipline and consistent religious practice is an effective strategy in shaping students' moral character. Implementing Islamic Religious Education discipline through devotion to worship, adherence to school rules, and consistency in practicing Islamic teachings has been shown to contribute significantly to the development of moral values such as honesty, responsibility, tolerance, and empathy. This research provides a strong empirical basis for developing an Islamic Religious Education learning model oriented toward character formation in madrasas, emphasizing the importance of an integrative approach involving spiritual, social, and personal aspects in the educational process.

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