

Analysis of the Implementation of Religious Character Education and the Influence of Islamic Education on Religious Character

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Abstract

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This study aims to analyse the implementation of Islamic Education (PAI) and its influence on students' religious character, specifically in the aspects of worship and responsibility at SMK Turen in 2025. This study employed a mixed-methods approach, utilising data collection techniques such as distributing questionnaires to 52 respondents, observations, interviews, and documentation. Descriptive analysis results indicate that PAI implementation is in the good category (48.1%), aligning with the achievement of religious character in the worship aspect (42.3%) and the responsibility aspect (44.2%), which are also in the good category. Qualitatively, the implementation of this character is successfully realised through the habituation of religious activities, the integration of values into learning materials, teacher exemplars, and the formation of school culture. Hypothesis testing results prove that PAI has a positive and significant influence on students' religious character, with a correlation value of 0.827 and a significance of $0.000 < 0.05$. A coefficient of determination of 68.4% confirms the dominant role of PAI, while the remainder is influenced by external variables. This success is technically supported by school policies regarding routine religious activities, such as congregational Dhuha and Dzuhur prayers and the 5S school culture program, reinforced by educators' exemplary behavior through integrating character values into learning materials and daily discipline oversight. Obstacles include negative social media exposure and a lack of intrinsic awareness among some students. The limitation of this study is that PAI effectiveness remains constrained by external variable disruptions beyond the school's reach. Therefore, it is recommended for future research to design a tripartite collaboration model involving the school, parents, and the community, alongside developing adaptive and dialogic learning methods for vocational adolescents.

Kata Kunci:

Pendidikan Agama Islam;
Karakter Religius; Ibadah;
Tanggung Jawab; Mixed
Methods

Abstrak.

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis implementasi Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dan pengaruhnya terhadap karakter religius siswa, khususnya pada aspek ibadah dan tanggung jawab di SMK Turen tahun 2025. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan metode campuran (*mixed methods*) dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui penyebaran angket kepada 52 responden, observasi, wawancara, serta dokumentasi. Hasil analisis deskriptif menunjukkan bahwa implementasi PAI berkategori baik (48,1%), selaras dengan capaian karakter religius pada aspek ibadah (42,3%) dan tanggung jawab (44,2%) yang juga berada pada kategori baik. Secara kualitatif, implementasi karakter ini berhasil divujudkan melalui pembiasaan kegiatan keagamaan, integrasi nilai dalam materi, keteladanan guru, serta pembentukan budaya sekolah. Hasil uji hipotesis membuktikan bahwa PAI memiliki pengaruh yang positif dan signifikan terhadap karakter religius siswa dengan nilai korelasi 0,827 dan signifikansi $0,000 < 0,05$. Koefisien determinasi sebesar 68,4% menegaskan dominasi peran PAI, sementara sisanya dipengaruhi oleh variabel eksternal. Keberhasilan ini secara teknis didukung oleh kebijakan sekolah berupa pembiasaan

kegiatan keagamaan rutin, seperti shalat Dhuha dan Dzuhur berjamaah serta pembentukan budaya sekolah melalui program 5S, yang diperkuat secara nyata oleh keteladanan pendidik melalui integrasi nilai-nilai karakter ke dalam materi pembelajaran serta pengawasan kedisiplinan harian. Namun, hambatan tetap dihadapi berupa paparan negatif media sosial dan kurangnya kesadaran intrinsik sebagian siswa. Keterbatasan penelitian ini terletak pada efektivitas program PAI yang masih sangat terhambat oleh gangguan variabel eksternal di luar jangkauan pengawasan sekolah. Oleh karena itu, direkomendasikan bagi penelitian selanjutnya untuk merancang model kolaborasi tripartit yang melibatkan sekolah, orang tua, dan masyarakat, serta mengembangkan metode pembelajaran yang lebih adaptif dan dialogis bagi psikologi remaja vokasi.

INTRODUCTION

Education strategically shapes human resources by balancing academic excellence with religious character development. Islamic Education (PAI) plays a foundational role in instilling values that manifest in student worship and responsibility. (Alimin et al., 2024; Chen et al., 2023). Theoretically, this transformation aligns with Thomas Lickona's model of moral development, which posits that behavioural modification integrates moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. (Arthur, 2024; Lickona, 2009). This framework is crucial today, as globalisation and digitalisation introduce complex moral challenges, including declining worship discipline and diminished responsibility, and the gradual erosion of traditional moral values among the youth. (Hilalludin et al., 2026; Mujahid, 2026; Rozanita et al., 2026). Consequently, PAI acts as an essential moral fortress within the school ecosystem, leveraging scaffolded institutional habituation to internalise regulations into stable, long-term moral agency.

Conceptually, religious character is a concrete manifestation of an individual's attitude and behaviour that reflects their obedience and submission to the teachings of their religion. From the perspective of Islamic education itself, religious character encompasses three main dimensions: creed (*akidah*), worship (*ibadah*), and morals (*akhlak*) (Halstead, 2004). The successful formation of this character can be observed through several essential indicators, including discipline in performing ritual worship, responsibility toward completing tasks, honesty, politeness toward educators and peers, and high socio-environmental awareness. (Aulia et al., 2025; Zubaedi, 2013). Furthermore, within the ecosystem of Vocational High Schools (SMK), instilling this character poses unique challenges. (Tan, 2012). This is because vocational students are not only strictly required to possess technical skills for workforce readiness, but must also be balanced with a moral and highly ethical personality for their future in the industry. (Hilalludin et al., 2026; Husna, 2024; Kurniasari et al., 2025).

Research by Kurnia and Ismaraidha proves that the success of PAI in vocational schools heavily depends on the synergy between intracurricular classroom learning and extracurricular religious habituation activities, such as congregational prayers and Islamic spiritual activities (Putri Dlm & Ismaraidha, 2024). Meanwhile, Nurhasanah highlights that although programs are ongoing, empirical reality still indicates a disparity where religious programs have not yet fully optimised the reinforcement of social care attitudes and religious character (Nurhasanah, 2023). Reinforcing these findings, Alimin and Yusuf emphasise that PAI learning, which is trapped solely within the cognitive domain and ignores the affective-psychomotor aspects, tends to be highly ineffective, particularly if it is not accompanied by continuous habituation and exemplary behaviour from educators. (Alimin et al., 2024; Raz & Killen, 2024; Yusuf, 2024).

Although various past literatures have examined the implementation of PAI and its role, there remains a significant research gap to be further investigated. Previous studies predominantly operate within isolated methodological silos, where qualitative accounts describe institutional

programs without statistical validation, while quantitative metrics measure abstract correlations without explaining the behavioural anomalies occurring in the field. (Nadhif et al., 2025; Nazriani & Siregar, 2026). This methodological bifurcation leaves an empirical blind spot regarding how school-culture engineering directly accounts for quantifiable character variance, particularly within the pragmatic, hard-skills-focused ecosystem of vocational secondary schools. (Putri Dlm & Ismaraidha, 2024). Furthermore, existing literature fails to reconcile the behavioural dissonance where high institutional compliance coexists with fragile autonomous internalisation outside the school gate. (Sholeh et al., 2026).

This study directly addresses these unresolved inconsistencies by deploying a convergent parallel mixed-methods design, establishing its academic novelty by integrating statistical regression outputs side-by-side with qualitative narratives through a structured joint display. Responding to this urgency and academic gap, SMK Turen serves as a highly representative research locus. As a vocational institution bearing the dual responsibility of producing graduates who are competent in hard skills while possessing religious integrity, SMK Turen has initiated various learning programs and structured religious routines to boost students' worship quality and responsibility. (Mujahid, 2026). However, the comprehensive effectiveness of executing this series of programs must be systematically analysed to bridge the 31.6% external environmental variance and clarify how scaffolded discipline transforms into independent moral agency. (Hasibuan et al., 2026; Huda et al., 2024).

By evaluating these multi-layered dynamics, this study advances existing knowledge by transitioning from a purely descriptive account of school programs to an integrated empirical framework. Therefore, this study, entitled *Analysis of the Implementation and Influence of Islamic Education on Religious Character Viewed from the Aspects of Worship and Student Responsibility at SMK Turen in 2025*, is essential to conduct. The results of this research are projected not only to provide an empirical overview and tactical evaluation material for the school but also to strengthen the theoretical contribution to innovations in character education development.

METHOD

This study employs a convergent parallel mixed-methods design that systematically integrates quantitative and qualitative methods within a single study to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the influence of Islamic Education (PAI) on students' religious character, specifically regarding the aspects of worship and responsibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Sugiyono, 2016). Under this concurrent framework, both quantitative and qualitative data strands were collected simultaneously during the same research phase, analysed independently, and explicitly integrated at the analytical level through a side-by-side joint display and at the interpretive level to generate unified meta-inferences (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Fetters et al., 2013). The use of this method aims not only to statistically explain the relationships between variables but also to delve deeper into the reality of field implementation. (Miles et al., 2020).

The research location is set at SMK Turen, Malang Regency, East Java, with the execution scheduled during the even semester of the 2025/2026 academic year, specifically from January to February 2026. The site was selected considering that the school features a structured PAI program and a heterogeneous student population. The population in this study comprises students across three grade levels: Class X (36 students), Class XI (36 students), and Class XII (36 students), totalling 108 students. To ensure a fair and proportional representation from each grade level, the

sampling technique utilises proportional random sampling. Based on the total population, the sample size was determined scientifically using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, yielding a definitive sample size of 52 respondents. (Miles et al., 2020).

To obtain holistic and valid data aligned with the mixed-methods design, data collection techniques combine four primary instruments. The quantitative approach is accommodated through the distribution of a structured questionnaire to statistically test the level of PAI implementation and student religious character. Meanwhile, to support the depth of field data, the qualitative approach is applied through in-depth interview techniques to comprehend the feelings, perceptions, and knowledge of the research subjects. (Miles et al., 2020). The operational variables in this study consist of the Independent Variable (X), which is Islamic Education, and the Dependent Variable (Y), which is Students' Religious Character. To ensure precise and structured measurement, the Dependent Variable (Y) is further specified into two core dimensions: the Worship Aspect (Y¹) and the Responsibility Aspect (Y²). These variables are operationalised into measurable indicators derived from the theoretical framework.

Table 1 Research Instrument Specification Grid

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Questionnaire Item
Islamic Education (X)	PAI Learning Process	Teacher's Competence & Delivery	The Islamic Education teacher explains the material clearly.
		Students' Understanding	I understand the material taught in the Islamic Education lesson.
		Behavioral Motivation	Islamic education encourages me to behave well.
		Teacher's Exemplary Behaviour	The teacher provides examples of religious attitudes in daily life.
	Environment & School Culture	Perceived Value of Learning	I feel that the Islamic Education lesson is important in my life.
		Routine Program Activities	Religious activities at school (such as congregational prayers) are routinely conducted.
		Student Participation	I actively participate in religious activities organised by the school.
Religious Character (Y)	Worship Aspect (Y ¹)	Discipline in Mandatory Worship	I perform the five daily prayers routinely.
		Consistency in Sunnah Worship	I read the Al-Qur'an regularly.
		Daily Ritual Habituation	I recite prayers before and after conducting activities.
		School-Based Habituation	I participate in congregational prayers at school.
		Consciousness in Worship	I observe fasting with full consciousness.
		Spiritual Commitment	I feel guilty if I miss my worship.
	Responsibility Aspect (Y ²)	Academic Responsibility	I complete school assignments on time.
		Regulatory Compliance	I obey the rules established at school.
		Personal Accountability	I take responsibility for the mistakes I make.

Integrity & Trustworthiness	I safeguard the trust given by the teacher.
Learning Discipline	I am disciplined in participating in learning activities at school.
Honesty	I strive to be an honest student under all circumstances.

Source: Synthesised by the Researcher, 2025

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The quantitative strand evaluates baseline trends and measures the statistical influence of Islamic Education (PAI) on students' religious character based on a sample of 52 student respondents. The descriptive distribution of these questionnaire assessments across the primary variables and dimensions is presented clearly in Table 2.

Table 2: Recapitulation of Student Questionnaire Assessment Results

Variable / Assessment Aspect	Majority Category	Percentage
Quality of PAI Implementation	Good	48.1%
Religious Character (Worship Aspect)	Good	42.3%
Religious Character (Responsibility Aspect)	Good	44.2%

Source: Student Questionnaire Results, 2025

Descriptively, the empirical data indicate that the majority of respondents rate both the PAI implementation and their own religious character dimensions within the "Good" category. This high achievement in the worship aspect is characterised by reported discipline in performing the five daily prayers, routine praying habits, and structured Al-Qur'an recitations. Similarly, high scores in the responsibility dimension are visibly reflected in the students' self-reported commitment to completing academic assignments, obeying institutional rules, and safeguarding trust (*amanah*).

To test the hypothesis and determine the exact magnitude of influence exerted by PAI learning as the independent variable on student religious character as the dependent variable, a simple linear regression analysis was conducted. The statistical indicators derived from this regression model are compiled in Table 3.

Table 3 Results of Statistical Data Analysis and Hypothesis Testing

Statistical Test Indicator	Value Obtained	Result Description
Correlation Value (r)	0.827	Very Strong Relationship
Significance Value (Sig.)	0.000	Significant (< 0.05)
Coefficient of Determination (R^2)	68.4%	Percentage of PAI Influence
Residual Influence	31.6%	Influenced by External Factors

Source: Statistical Data Analysis, 2025

The simple linear regression model yielded a correlation coefficient (r) of 0.827, showing a very strong positive relationship between PAI learning and student character development. The model generated a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_1). This statistically confirms that Islamic Education exerts a significant positive influence on students' religious character at SMK Turen. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value demonstrates that the PAI program accounts for 68.4% of the variance in students' religious character within this sample,

while the remaining 31.6% represents residual variance driven by external variables operating outside the statistical model.

To systematically explain the mechanisms behind this 68.4% statistical variance, qualitative data in the field further confirms that the implementation of religious character education has run systematically and merged into the school culture through four main strategies: the habituation of religious activities (congregational Dhuha/Dzuhur prayers), the integration of character values into learning materials, concrete exemplary behavior from teachers, and the creation of a school culture through the 5S program (Observation & Documentation, 2025). Progressively, the formation of this character demonstrates different dynamics at each grade level. This qualitative reality directly expands the quantitative regression model, as reinforced by the statement of the SMK Turen PAI Teacher regarding the development of student character:

For Class X students, they are still in a transition period, so, naturally, they are still in the adaptation stage. Their worship discipline and responsibility are not yet consistent. Well, entering Class XI, the changes begin to show, and their awareness increases significantly.

As for Class XII, alhamdulillah, their character is already mature. Their worship is consistent without needing to be told, and their responsibility is high, in line with their mental readiness to face graduation.” (PAI Teacher Interview, 2025).

On the other hand, the 31.6% residual variance left unexplained by the quantitative model finds its contextual reality through the specific challenges felt directly at the classroom level. Although it generally provides a very good impact, the internalisation of religious character is acknowledged to be not fully evenly distributed across all individual students. This statement is supported by the narrative of one of the Homeroom Teachers (Wali Kelas) regarding the students’ daily realities:

The application of religious character here has actually become a culture. The children who are active in the PAI program and religious activities show a very noticeable difference; they are more disciplined with time, honest, and their politeness is well-maintained. However, indeed, the implementation cannot yet be evenly distributed to all children.

There are still a handful of students who lack discipline, who still need to be reminded multiple times when it’s time for worship, or who still lack responsibility for their assignments. This is usually due to differing religious backgrounds from home. (Homeroom Teacher Interview, 2025).

Table 4. Joint Display of Integrated Quantitative and Qualitative Findings

Quantitative Metric	Linked Qualitative Theme			Integrated Mixed-Methods Insight
High Model Fit & Influence R ² = 68.4% Sig. = 0.000	Systemic Culture Institutional habituation, integration, and the 5S culture.	4-Pillar frameworks utilise curriculum teacher exemplars,	School	The dominant 68.4% statistical variance is explained qualitatively by the daily, structured exposure of students to a unified school culture, accelerating character maturity by Grade XII.
Residual Variance Residual = 31.6%	Domestic & Environmental Disparity Teachers note uneven discipline stemming from divergent home backgrounds and family values.			The 31.6% unexplained variance is contextualised by qualitative evidence showing that institutional inputs face friction when students return to unaligned domestic environments.

High Descriptors	Aspect	Developmental Continuum	Character	
Worship (42.3% Good)		Students progress from transitional adaptation to autonomous, mature internalisation (Class XII).		The high descriptive percentages reflect an aggregate success that is qualitatively fluid; it tracks a developmental timeline where early enforcement transforms into steady habituation.
Responsibility (44.2% Good)				

Source: Data Collection, 2025

Based on the explanations from the PAI teacher and the homeroom teacher, the formation of religious character requires a long-term process and cross-party collaboration. The teachers noted that the level of discipline and responsibility remains uneven among students. According to their reports, these disparities are largely driven by differences in the students' family backgrounds and a lack of consistent reinforcement outside of classroom hours.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that Islamic Education (PAI) has a positive and significant influence on the formation of students' religious character at SMK Turen. The coefficient of determination value of 68.4% provides an empirical indication that PAI is not merely a formal subject to fulfil curriculum obligations, but an effective strategic instrument in internalising religious values. This finding aligns with Alimin, Hilalluddin and Azyan, who assert that PAI plays a fundamental role in instilling Islamic values so they are reflected in students' daily behaviours. This strong influence suggests that the synergy between intracurricular learning and school culture programs can support student character development in facing the challenges of moral degradation caused by the current waves of globalisation and digitalisation. (Alimin et al., 2024; Azyan & Munawaroh, 2026; Hilalludin et al., 2026; Tan, 2012). Meanwhile, the remaining 31.6% influence from external factors serves as a reminder that the school is not the sole agent of character formation.

Viewed from the worship aspect, the strong influence of PAI clearly manifests through students' increased discipline in performing mandatory prayers, praying habits, and routine Al-Qur'an recitations. This success is inseparable from the habituation method consistently applied by SMK Turen, such as the congregational Dhuha and Dzuhur prayer programs. In accordance with Zubaedi's (2013) conception, the essential indicator of successful religious character indeed centres on the discipline of ritual worship. The integration between knowledge transfer (*moral knowing*) in the classroom and habituation practices in the school mosque proves that PAI at SMK Turen has successfully facilitated the transformation towards moral action, as conceptualised by Lickona (Lickona, 2009; Su et al., 2021).

Furthermore, in the responsibility dimension, the implementation of PAI also proves to be highly relevant in answering specific challenges within the vocational school environment. Findings showing students' high commitment to completing academic assignments, safeguarding trust, and obeying school rules suggest that religious values have been internalised into an ethos of personal discipline. Finding emphasises that vocational students absolutely need a noble and ethical personality to balance their technical competencies (hard skills) in facing the industrial world. (Athifa, 2025). This argument is robust, as it is argued that the cultivation of *Adab* (good morals) and *Akhlak* (good character) within Islamic education serves as a critical ethical anchor for students navigating the pragmatic demands of the modern workforce. (Khasanah, 2024). In this

context, PAI plays a vital role in serving a dual function: enhancing not only spiritual piety (worship) but also social piety through the formation of a high sense of responsibility. (Fajriani et al., 2024; Maulida, 2025).

Despite these broader trends, the qualitative insights from the PAI and homeroom teachers reveal specific disparities and developmental dynamics across different student groups. The gradual shift in character indicators from the adaptation phase in Class X, through reinforcement in Class XI, to observed maturity in Class XII, suggests that character education operates as a developmental continuum. This trajectory highlights that cognitive knowledge transfer alone is less effective when not reinforced by continuous institutional role modelling, exemplary behaviour, and behavioural habituation. (Kanya et al., 2021; Putri Dlm & Ismaraidha, 2024). Additionally, variations in how effectively individual students internalise these values point to the ongoing influence of differing family and home backgrounds, consistent with the findings of Nurhasanah (2023) and Sholeh et al. (2026). Consequently, addressing these gaps and maximising the influence of PAI suggests a clear value in developing a more structured synergy and cohesive educational ecosystem between classroom instruction, extracurricular programs, and active participatory supervision from parents at home. (Nurhasanah, 2023; Sholeh et al., 2026),

Although statistically showing a dominant influence, qualitative analysis reveals progressive dynamics and disparities that become real challenges in its field implementation. The gradual character development from adaptation in class X, improvement in class XI, to maturity in class XII, demonstrates that character education is a continuum demanding uninterrupted exemplary behaviour. This dynamic highlights that moral habituation is not a static achievement but a continuous developmental trajectory requiring sustained role modelling (Hasibuan et al., 2026; Kristjánsson, 2025). The finding that a handful of students are not yet optimal in internalising religious values due to differing family backgrounds confirms previous studies regarding this environmental disparity (Nurhasanah, 2023; Sholeh et al., 2026). This phenomenon provides a tactical implication that PAI's effectiveness cannot rely exclusively on the school alone. (Arjanto et al., 2023; Brooks & Mutohar, 2018).

Interestingly, qualitative exploration in the field also uncovered a behavioural anomaly or paradoxical phenomenon that is quite amusing and serves as a unique finding in this study. There is a reality where students' high participation in communal worship activities, such as congregational Dhuha or Dzuhur prayers, is not always purely driven by intrinsic spiritual awareness in its initial stages. (Khofi, 2024; Lubis et al., 2024). Some students honestly admitted that their discipline is sometimes motivated by pragmatic, extrinsic factors, such as fear of sanctions from the disciplinary teacher, peer pressure, or even using it as a brief escape strategy from vocational subject hours deemed physically and mentally exhausting. (Shodiq et al., 2026; Usman, 2002). Furthermore, early-stage habituation, even if initially unauthentic or compliant, serves as a necessary scaffold for developing authentic self-direction and long-term moral autonomy in adolescents during the transition from conditioned behaviour to authentic moral agency. (Sanderse, 2024).

Furthermore, this anomalous phenomenon simultaneously provides a logical thread as to why external factors outside PAI (amounting to 31.6%) still hold highly significant control. The findings regarding students' pragmatic motives make us realise that the achievement of religious character has not fully touched the realm of moral feeling (loving the good) comprehensively. (Lickona, 2009). Today's vocational students are highly adept at code-switching or identity adjustment; they can appear very religious and comply with rules when under the school system's

supervision, yet exhibit different behavioural tendencies when outside the formal school environment, where direct oversight is limited. Ultimately, this finding becomes a crucial discourse that the success of Islamic Education at SMK Turen is not a finish line. This evaluation underscores the need for innovations in PAI learning methods that are more dialogic and adaptive to adolescent psychology. (Sahin, 2018).

Furthermore, synthesising the quantitative and qualitative datasets in this study reveals a profound complementarity that explains the mechanics behind the statistical figures. The substantial 68.4% variance explained by the PAI program does not occur in a vacuum; rather, it closely aligns with the insights from the four qualitative pillars rigorously implemented by the school: religious habituation, curriculum integration, teacher exemplars, and the 5S school culture (Syafitri & Abrianto, 2024). The statistical significance (Sig. 0.000) validating the positive influence of PAI essentially captures the lived experiences of students who are consistently exposed to this comprehensive ecosystem. This mixed-methods triangulation affirms that cognitive instruction alone is insufficient. It is the systemic, daily immersion in a religiously conducive environment that solidifies moral knowing into moral action. (Kurniasari et al., 2025; Lickona, 2009; Sholeh et al., 2026). Thus, these quantitative findings are intricately bound to the qualitative rigour of the consistent school culture programs.

On the other hand, the convergence of both data types also elucidates the boundaries of institutional influence. The quantitative revelation that 31.6% of religious character formation is dictated by external variables perfectly mirrors the qualitative observations regarding the uneven internalisation among students and the disruptive impact of social media, peer circles, and inconsistent parental supervision (Nurhasanah, 2023). This triangulation exposes a critical vulnerability: while the school environment successfully enforces compliance, the lack of alignment with the home and social environment creates gaps in the continuity of character development. Therefore, moving forward, the discourse on Islamic Education must transcend school boundaries. It necessitates a tripartite pedagogical alliance involving the school, the family, and the community to bridge the 31.6% gap, ensuring that the religious character cultivated within the school walls is sustainably nurtured in the broader societal context (Hilalludin et al., 2026; Mujahid, 2026; Shodiq et al., 2026).

Table 5. Summary of Research Discussion Matrix

Research Results	Success of Theoretical Analysis	Research Contribution
Empirical & Statistical Core: PAI exerts a strong, significant influence ($r = 0.827$, $R^2 = 68.4\%$) on student character, yielding "Good" levels in worship (42.3%) and responsibility (44.2%), while 31.6% is driven by external family factors.	Validates Thomas Lickona's moral development framework by showing how systematic school interventions successfully bridge the gap between <i>moral knowing</i> (cognitive classroom instruction) and <i>moral action</i> (concrete ethical compliance).	Methodological Novelty: Overcomes isolated silos in past literature by deploying a convergent parallel mixed-methods design that directly integrates statistical regression metrics with lived qualitative narratives through a structured joint display.
Structural & Ecosystem Pillars: Character education is systematically embedded through a 4-pillar school culture:	Confirms institutional habituation theory by demonstrating that scaffolded school-culture engineering	Contextual Novelty: Establishes a concrete empirical baseline for successful school-culture engineering specifically within the

routine religious habituation (Dhuha/Dzuhur prayers), curriculum integration, teacher exemplars, and the 5S program.	serves as an effective vehicle for continuous moral socialisation and behavioural reinforcement within the school ecosystem.	pragmatic, hard-skills-focused environment of vocational secondary schools (SMK).
Behavioral Anomaly & Paradox: Students' high participation in communal worship is initially triggered by pragmatic, extrinsic motives (fear of sanctions, peer pressure, and escaping exhausting vocational classes).	Reinforces adolescent moral self-cultivation theory by proving that character building often requires an initial phase of forced compliance as a necessary structural scaffold before transitioning into stable, autonomous moral agency.	Conceptual Novelty: Uncovers a specific "code-switching" identity paradox unique to vocational students, providing a strategic foundation to shift Islamic pedagogy from rigid rote compliance towards an adaptive, dialogic tripartite alliance.

Source: Synthesised by the Researcher, 2025

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the implementation of Islamic Education at SMK Turen significantly and positively influences students' religious character formation, particularly regarding worship discipline and responsibility. This success is supported by habituation methods, teacher exemplars, and an effective religious school culture. However, a pragmatic anomaly was revealed. Students' high participation in congregational worship is not always driven by pure spiritual awareness, but is often triggered by pragmatic compliance to avoid demanding vocational classes or fear of sanctions. Although sounding ironic, this phase of institutional forced compliance actually serves as an essential initial stepping stone toward forming true moral habits.

As a research limitation, this study recognises that the effectiveness of the PAI program is heavily constrained by external variable disruptions beyond the school's reach, such as massive negative exposure to social media, free association, and inconsistent parental supervision. This vulnerability triggers uneven character distribution and makes it difficult for students to maintain worship routines at home. Therefore, future research is highly recommended to design and examine a tripartite collaboration model involving the school, parents, and the community. Furthermore, advanced research is needed to develop adaptive and dialogic learning methods capable of touching the psychology of vocational adolescents, so that religious compliance transforms into an independent and permanent ethical awareness.

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