



Teachers' Strategies in Instilling Religious and Disciplinary Character Values

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ABSTRACT

Character education has become a central concern in the development of quality human resources, particularly in Islamic educational institutions where the integration of religious and disciplinary values is essential. However, the effectiveness of strategies implemented by teachers in cultivating these values often faces challenges related to students' diverse backgrounds, the boarding school environment, and institutional resources. This study aims to analyze the strategies implemented by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in cultivating religious and disciplinary character values of class XI students at MAN Insan Cendekia Bengkulu Tengah, as well as identifying factors that influence the implementation of these strategies. This type of research uses a qualitative approach with the methods of in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies, this research examines the holistic and integrated practice of character education in a boarding school environment. The results showed that PAI teachers implement various strategies that are mutually sustainable. To cultivate religious character, the strategies include scheduling and special attendance of worship practices, utilization of educational rules and sanctions, giving additional practice tasks, intensive coaching in the dormitory, exemplary PAI teachers (*uswatun hasanah*), and utilization of learning media and technology. Meanwhile, to cultivate the character of discipline, PAI teachers implemented the enforcement of school rules and regulations, the provision of sanctions and rewards, supervision and guidance in the dormitory, and the implementation of the parenting program. The implementation of these strategies is influenced by various factors, both supporting and inhibiting. Supporting factors include active support from parents, competence and professionalism of PAI teachers, conducive school environment, availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure, and students' intrinsic motivation and awareness.

Keywords: Character Education, Discipline Character, Islamic Education Teacher, Religious Character.

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan karakter telah menjadi perhatian utama dalam pengembangan sumber daya manusia berkualitas, terutama di lembaga pendidikan Islam di mana integrasi nilai-nilai agama dan disiplin sangat penting. Namun, efektivitas strategi yang diterapkan oleh guru dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai tersebut seringkali menghadapi tantangan terkait latar belakang siswa yang beragam, lingkungan asrama, dan sumber daya institusi. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis strategi yang diterapkan oleh guru Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai karakter keagamaan dan disiplin pada siswa kelas XI di MAN Insan Cendekia Bengkulu Tengah, serta mengidentifikasi faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi implementasi strategi tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode wawancara mendalam, pengamatan partisipatif, dan studi dokumentasi. Penelitian ini mengkaji praktik pendidikan karakter yang holistik dan terintegrasi dalam lingkungan asrama. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru PAI menerapkan berbagai strategi yang saling mendukung. Untuk menumbuhkan karakter keagamaan, strategi tersebut meliputi penjadwalan dan kehadiran khusus dalam praktik ibadah, penerapan aturan pendidikan dan sanksi, pemberian tugas latihan tambahan, bimbingan intensif di

asrama, guru PAI yang menjadi teladan (uswatun hasanah), serta pemanfaatan media dan teknologi pembelajaran. Sementara itu, untuk menumbuhkan karakter disiplin, guru PAI menerapkan penegakan aturan dan regulasi sekolah, pemberian sanksi dan penghargaan, pengawasan dan bimbingan di asrama, serta pelaksanaan program parenting. Pelaksanaan strategi-strategi ini dipengaruhi oleh berbagai faktor, baik yang mendukung maupun menghambat. Faktor pendukung meliputi dukungan aktif dari orang tua, kompetensi dan profesionalisme guru PAI, lingkungan sekolah yang kondusif, ketersediaan fasilitas dan infrastruktur yang memadai, serta motivasi dan kesadaran intrinsik siswa.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Karakter, Disiplin Karakter, Guru Pendidikan Islam, Karakter Religi.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental pillar in building a morally grounded, ethical, cultured, and civilized society. In the Indonesian context, this vision aligns closely with the national ideology of Pancasila, which places strong emphasis on religious values, humanity, unity, democracy, and social justice. As such, education serves not only to impart knowledge but also to instill essential values that reflect national identity and integrity (Indonesia, 2003).

The Indonesian Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System defines education as a conscious and well-planned effort to create a learning environment and learning process so that learners actively develop their potential in religious, moral, spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects (Indonesia, 2003). This definition highlights that the success of education is not limited to academic performance but includes the development of character and ethics as key components of human development.

According to (Lickona, 1991), character education must encompass the development of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. In other words, education must cultivate students who not only understand what is right but also feel compelled to do it and consistently act on their values. In the Indonesian context, this includes developing students who are spiritually aware, socially responsible, and intellectually competent.

Among the most essential character values emphasized in Indonesian schools are religious devotion and discipline. These values are closely intertwined: religion provides a moral foundation, while discipline supports the consistent application of religious and ethical principles in daily life (Nucci, Larry P., 2008). As such, character education must be deliberately integrated into the overall learning environment.

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) teachers play a pivotal role in shaping students' moral and religious character. Their responsibilities go beyond delivering religious knowledge; they must also serve as role models and facilitators of value-based education. Through their actions and strategies, IRE teachers become agents of moral transformation (Berkowitz, Marvin W., 2005).

Several studies highlight these challenges. Research by (D. Wahyuni, 2020) at MA At-Taufiq Singaraja found that students often neglected congregational prayers and displayed low levels of discipline, including absenteeism and disruptive behavior. Similarly, (Rohmatika, 2021) at MAN 1 Tulang Bawang Barat reported that students' internalization of religious values tended to be formalistic, lacking deep personal conviction. In another study, (Kurniawan, 2021) identified that the effectiveness of character education programs in

several Islamic schools was hampered by limited teacher innovation and weak integration between academic and religious activities. Moreover, (Nisa, 2022) observed that while many schools implemented disciplinary rules, they often relied on punitive measures rather than cultivating intrinsic motivation, leading to resistance among students. Complementing this, (Sari, Y., & Hidayat, 2022) noted that successful character education required holistic collaboration among teachers, parents, and the broader school environment, yet such collaboration was often absent. Conversely, (Atmaja, 2023) documented the relative success of Madrasah Aliyah Negeri Insan Cendekia (MAN IC) in Bengkulu Tengah, where structured routines promoted both religious commitment and student discipline.

While these studies provide valuable insights, most focus on either the challenges of character education or general policy frameworks, with fewer exploring the specific strategies used by IRE teachers within the unique context of boarding schools. The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to bridge that gap by examining how PAI teachers at MAN IC Bengkulu Tengah deliberately cultivate religious and disciplinary values through adaptive and integrative strategies. Unlike prior studies that emphasized challenges or formal implementation, this study investigates the interplay of teaching methods, dormitory practices, counseling, and parental involvement as a holistic model of character education. By identifying both supporting and inhibiting factors, this study contributes to refining theoretical and practical approaches to character education in Islamic boarding schools.

Based on preliminary field observations, students at MAN IC Bengkulu Tengah demonstrate strong commitment to religious practices, such as punctual congregational prayers, routine recitation of the Qur'an, and engagement in voluntary worship like Tahajud and Sunnah fasting. These behaviors reflect a deep internalization of religious values rather than mere compliance with school rules (Student Interview 2024). Such outcomes suggest that the school's integrated approach to character education is producing meaningful results.

However, despite its structured system, MAN IC also faces challenges. Some students report feelings of academic pressure, boredom, and emotional fatigue due to the school's rigorous routines. These experiences highlight the importance of balancing discipline with emotional well-being in character education (Student Interview 2024). Without this balance, rigid enforcement may lead to disengagement or burnout.

To address such challenges, IRE teachers at MAN IC have implemented adaptive strategies. These include using varied teaching methods, offering personal counseling, incorporating spiritual reflection, and fostering open communication with students. These efforts aim to make students feel supported and valued, which in turn enhances their motivation and moral development (Sumiati, 2024). This aligns with the view of Lapsley and (Lapsley, Daniel K., 2006) that character education must be sensitive to students' developmental and emotional needs.

Given the apparent success of MAN IC Bengkulu Tengah in embedding religious and disciplinary values within its student body, this study aims to explore the specific strategies employed by IRE teachers to cultivate these character traits among Grade XI students. It further seeks to identify both the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the success of these strategies, contributing to the broader discourse on effective moral education in religious boarding schools.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative descriptive design, chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of the strategies applied by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in cultivating religious values and discipline among Grade XI students. The study was conducted at MAN Insan Cendekia Bengkulu Tengah, a boarding-based madrasah known for integrating academic and religious curricula with strong character-building programs. The location was selected because of its reputation for successfully instilling religious devotion and discipline in students. Data sources consisted of primary and secondary materials. Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews with PAI teachers and dormitory managers, supported by participatory observations of daily student activities such as congregational prayers, Qur'an recitation, and adherence to school routines. Secondary data were obtained from official school documents, including regulations, religious activity programs, student schedules, and reports on character education. Informants were chosen purposively, focusing on PAI teachers directly involved in classroom and dormitory settings, as well as dormitory managers, because of their deep understanding of teaching strategies, student behavior, and character formation. These informants were expected to provide rich insights into both practices and challenges in implementing character education (Sugiyono, 2021).

Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, direct observations of student practices in both academic and dormitory environments, and documentation of written records to corroborate field findings. To ensure validity, triangulation of sources and methods was applied by cross-checking information from teachers, dormitory managers, students, and school documents, as well as comparing results across interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis employed the interactive model of (Miles, Matthew B., A. Michael Huberman, 2020), which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data were categorized into themes such as strategies of PAI teachers, implementation practices, and supporting and inhibiting factors. The findings were presented in descriptive narratives and thematic tables, strengthened with quotations and field evidence. Finally, conclusions were drawn inductively, ensuring they reflected the actual patterns observed and verified against raw data to guarantee credibility and accuracy (Creswell, John W., 2021).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies Implemented by PAI Teachers in Cultivating Religious Values and Discipline in XI Grade Students at MAN Insan Cendekia Bengkulu Tengah

The strategies implemented by PAI teachers in cultivating religious values and discipline in XI-grade students at MAN Insan Cendekia Bengkulu Tengah were identified through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies. Based on the data collected, six primary interconnected strategies have been categorized:

1. Scheduled and Special Attendance for Religious Practices

This strategy involves the establishment of a structured schedule for obligatory and optional worship activities, along with a specialized attendance system to monitor

student participation. The goal is to foster a habit of regular worship through a systematic and measurable approach, while also serving as a form of supervision. As expressed by Mr. Sulhani, S.Pd.I., a PAI teacher and the Deputy Head of the Dormitory:

“So, if you ask about our strategy here in cultivating religious values and discipline, the first thing we have is scheduling that we organize carefully. Secondly, we also have a special attendance system. So, in this attendance, it’s not just about whether they are present or not, but we also record whether they participated in the congregational prayer or not. This is important for us to monitor their religious practices.”

Observations made at the school mosque between May 6-10, 2025, revealed that the Dhuha prayer was held every morning at 07:15 WIB, and the Dzuhur prayer was performed in congregation after the second break. Male students alternated in leading the prayer and conducting a short zikr after the prayer. Each of these activities was accompanied by attendance taken by the duty teacher and the PAI teacher.

2. Utilization of Rules and Educational Sanctions

PAI teachers utilize the existing school rules and regulations, particularly those related to religious values, and implement sanctions that are educational in nature. These sanctions are intended for guidance, rather than punishment, and are accompanied by explanations regarding the wisdom behind the rules. As stated by Mr. Sulhani, S.Pd.I., PAI teacher and Deputy Head of the Dormitory:

“Additionally, we also make use of the rules that have been established, whether from the principal or the Ministry of Religious Affairs. For instance, if there is a violation, we give a sanction in the form of points. This is to instill discipline. In fact, after the rule was established, we also created a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to clarify the mechanism.”

Observations show that PAI teachers often provide verbal reprimands that are advisory in nature to students who fail to observe proper manners or do not participate seriously in religious activities. Documentation from the student counseling journal also recorded cases of students being given educational sanctions by PAI teachers, such as writing verses from the Quran on patience or reading Islamic books on ethics.

3. Provision of Additional Religious Practice Tasks

This strategy involves assigning religious or worship tasks outside of official class hours. The purpose of these tasks is to encourage students to take personal initiative in their worship and deepen their understanding of religious values. As explained by Mr. Sulhani, S.Pd.I., PAI teacher:

“Furthermore, to further cultivate religious character, we also give additional worship tasks to the students. So, it’s not just during school hours, but also outside of it. For example, tasks include prayers, dhikr, memorizing selected surahs, fasting on Mondays and Thursdays, sunnah prayers such as qobliyah, ba’diyah, dhuha, and tabajjud. We also have routine activities such as yasinan and tablilan at school.”

Documentation in the form of students’ daily activity journals shows a column for recording sunnah prayers, dhikr, and independent Qur’an recitation, which must be

filled out by students and verified by the PAI teacher or dorm supervisor. Several students interviewed also mentioned that they regularly submit memorized surahs and selected hadith to their PAI teacher.

4. Intensive Guidance in the Dormitory

Given that MAN Insan Cendekia is a dormitory-based school, PAI teachers, particularly those who also serve as dormitory supervisors, conduct intensive religious character-building activities within the dormitory environment. This guidance includes structured religious activities, discussions, continuous behavioral monitoring, and the implementation of consequences for violations of dormitory schedules. Mr. Puncak Permata, S.Ag., a PAI teacher and Dormitory Supervisor, described his role:

“From my perspective as a dormitory supervisor, my role is quite central because my task is to monitor the students 24/7. From waking them up in the morning to ensuring they sleep at the designated time. In terms of religious character development, I also have direct responsibility. For example, I guide them to always perform congregational prayers at the mosque, and we also have regular study sessions for religious texts. Usually, if a schedule that we have set is not followed, such as arriving at the mosque before the adhan or sleeping early so they can wake up for Fajr, we give a consequence or ‘punishment,’ as we call it, according to the rules we have agreed upon. This schedule is structured to develop their discipline in worship and daily activities that carry religious values.”

Observations in the male dormitory on the evening of May 19, 2025, revealed a halaqah (small study group) session focused on the interpretation of the Qur'an and Islamic jurisprudence, led by the dormitory supervisor and occasionally attended by PAI teachers. The dormitory environment, which was rich in Islamic atmosphere, such as timely adhan calls and the habit of greeting each other with peace, strongly supports the internalization of religious character. Additionally, Mr. Surya Atmaja, PAI teacher and Deputy Head of Student Affairs, added details about the “visitation learning” method:

“Additionally, we also have a visitation learning system. This is more specific to the dormitory. As supervisors, we periodically visit students' rooms, not only to check discipline but also to have casual discussions about religious issues, provide personal advice, or even help them understand religious material that may not be clear to them. The atmosphere is more informal, but still focused.”

This strategy effectively implements a comprehensive approach to character education, ensuring that religious values and discipline are integrated into every aspect of students' lives.

5. Role Modeling by PAI Teachers

This strategy emphasizes the role of PAI teachers as *uswah hasanah* (good role models) in daily life, both within the school and outside. The behavior, speech, and attitudes of PAI teachers serve as a concrete reflection of the religious values they aim to instill in students. Mr. Heriyanto, S.Pd., a PAI teacher, explained:

“The first and most fundamental strategy is the role model set by the teacher. So, teachers here must be able to be good examples for the students. For example, in terms of worship, we try to always attend the congregational prayer.”

Similarly, Mrs. Tutik Sumiati, S.Pd., a PAI teacher in Aqidah Akhlak, also emphasized:

*“The first and, in my opinion, most fundamental thing is the role modeling from the educators. We strive as much as possible to be *uswah hasanah*, a good example for the students in all aspects, including in performing worship, being honest, polite, and showing other noble characteristics. A concrete example is that we always strive to be on time for the congregational prayer at the school mosque and actively participate in other religious activities.”*

Observations of the interactions between PAI teachers and students, as well as with fellow teachers (May 2025), revealed consistency in maintaining polite language, wearing neat and proper clothing according to religious guidelines, displaying patience when teaching, and performing worship with sincerity. The teachers were also seen consistently starting and ending activities with prayer.

These actions highlight the importance of teachers setting a personal example for students, as it aligns with social learning theory, where individuals learn through observation and imitation of others, especially those in authoritative positions. By consistently demonstrating religious values through their behavior, PAI teachers provide students with tangible examples to follow, reinforcing the internalization of these values.

6. Utilization of Learning Media and Technology

PAI teachers make use of various innovative learning media, including information and communication technology, to present religious material in a more engaging, relevant, and accessible manner for XI grade students. Mr. Heriyanto, S.Pd., highlighted the use of technology:

“In an effort to cultivate religious character in students, we also utilize technology as an innovative learning tool. We integrate various applications like AI websites, Photoshop, and Pinterest to present religious material in a more visually appealing way. Additionally, social media platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram are used as mediums to deliver religious messages that are relevant to students’ daily lives. I also take advantage of current news, especially in teaching Fiqh, to connect religious principles with real-world issues they face, thus deepening their understanding and internalization of religious values.”

Furthermore, Mrs. Tutik Sumiati, S.Pd., added:

“In the learning process, I, as a teacher, try to make use of media technologies like PowerPoint and papers displayed through laptops and projectors. Furthermore, in instilling religious character values, we also take advantage of various social media platforms, one of them being YouTube, apps from the Play Store that are relevant to religious materials, trusted Islamic websites, and other online platforms. By utilizing today’s technological advancements, we find that students can more easily access religious learning materials and show greater enthusiasm in studying them, which in turn is expected to strengthen their understanding and internalization of religious values.”

Observations of the PAI learning process show that teachers used projectors to display infographics on the pillars of faith and Ihsan, and played audio of murattal Qur'an as an introduction to lessons. Documentation in the form of screenshots from the class WhatsApp group also showed PAI teachers sharing daily Islamic quotes or links to articles on the importance of good character.

The use of learning media and technology in these strategies goes beyond just adding variety to teaching methods; it acknowledges that technology can serve as a vital bridge between religious teachings and students' daily realities. By integrating platforms that students are familiar with, such as YouTube and social media, PAI teachers effectively make religious content more relatable and engaging, which also facilitates the deepening of students' understanding and appreciation of religious values. These strategies are implemented holistically and are supported by both structured routines and informal guidance.

The study's findings show that the strategies implemented by PAI teachers align with several educational theories, particularly the habituation theory, which emphasizes the development of behaviors through structured repetition. For example, the scheduled and special attendance for religious activities, which includes structured worship schedules and attendance systems, serves as a method to instill positive habits and internalize religious values in students. By implementing routines, students gradually develop spiritual discipline and take responsibility for their religious practices. This approach is supported by research by (Sahaja, 2018), which highlights the importance of structured routines in religious education, helping students internalize values and build spiritual discipline. Similarly, (Abdulrahman, 2017) found that daily rituals, such as prayer and worship schedules, significantly contribute to moral development and religious values among students in Islamic schools. These findings resonate with the work of (Lickona, 1991), who emphasized the role of habit formation in character education. However, (Rosli, 2020) warns that overly rigid structures may diminish students' intrinsic motivation, hindering the true internalization of religious values. Supporting this, (Nucci, Larry P., 2008) argue that character development must balance structured discipline with opportunities for moral reflection. Thus, this research advocates for balancing routine and flexibility to ensure religious values are internalized without becoming burdensome.

The approach is also supported by behaviorist theory, which involves reinforcing positive behavior through consistent routines and feedback, such as the (Deci, E., & Ryan, 2000) use of rules and educational sanctions. Educational sanctions serve not as punishment but as corrective actions, reinforcing the importance of adhering to rules and understanding the underlying religious principles. (Skinner, 2008) explains how behaviorist strategies, such as reinforcement and correction, can promote long-term positive behavior. In education, consistent reinforcement helps improve discipline and adherence to moral values. However, (Brown, 2015) cautions against relying too heavily on punitive measures, arguing that they may create resentment rather than genuine internalization of values. (Berkowitz, Marvin W., 2005) further emphasize that character education is most effective when disciplinary measures are combined with positive reinforcement and teacher role modeling. This study

therefore advocates for a more holistic approach, combining positive reinforcement with opportunities for students to reflect and understand the reasons behind the rules.

Another strategy involves providing additional religious practice tasks, which encourages students to develop personal initiative and responsibility in their religious practices. This aligns with self-determination theory, which emphasizes the importance of autonomy in fostering intrinsic motivation, especially in spiritual practices. found that offering autonomy in learning, such as through self-selected religious tasks, promotes intrinsic motivation and deeper engagement in spiritual practices. Similarly, (Ryan, R. M., & Deci, 2017) argue that when students are given responsibility for their own learning processes, they are more likely to experience meaningful internalization of values.

Strategies Implemented by PAI Teachers in Cultivating Disciplinary Character Values among XI Grade Students at MAN Insan Cendekia Bengkulu Tengah

Disciplinary character is a crucial pillar in transforming values into consistent actions. The second research question explores the specific strategies implemented by PAI teachers to instill disciplinary character values among XI grade students. Based on the findings, the strategies employed can be categorized into four main areas: (a) Enforcement of School Rules and Regulations, (b) Implementation of Sanctions and Rewards, (c) Supervision and Guidance in the Dormitory, and (d) Implementation of the “Guru Asuh” Program.

The first strategy, Enforcement of School Rules and Regulations, involves creating a structured schedule and enforcing established school rules. PAI teachers actively ensure that students understand and follow the rules, explaining the importance of discipline from an Islamic perspective. For instance, clear activity schedules and posted regulations in strategic areas help reinforce discipline, with teachers actively reminding students of the importance of punctuality and neatness.

The second strategy, Implementation of Sanctions and Rewards, aims to encourage self-awareness and external motivation. Educational sanctions are applied to students who break the rules, while rewards are given to those who demonstrate good discipline. These actions are designed to promote behavior change by providing corrective consequences, with rewards serving as motivation for positive behavior. Teachers also publicly praise students who show consistency in their disciplined actions.

The third strategy, Supervision and Guidance in the Dormitory, is critical at MAN Insan Cendekia as a boarding school. PAI teachers, who also serve as dormitory supervisors, maintain a strict daily schedule for students and follow up on any violations. The 24-hour supervision ensures that students adhere to routines, such as prayer times and sleep schedules, helping them internalize discipline both spiritually and in daily activities.

The final strategy, Implementation of the “Guru Asuh” Program, involves personalized guidance where teachers mentor a small group of students. This program provides ongoing motivation and personal support, helping students address challenges both in school and at home. Through this approach, teachers emphasize the importance of discipline in various aspects of life, such as time management, adherence to rules, and personal responsibility.

The strategies employed by PAI teachers at MAN Insan Cendekia Bengkulu Tengah create a supportive and disciplined environment. By combining structured schedules,

sanctions and rewards, dormitory supervision, and personal mentoring through the Guru Asuh program, these strategies consistently contribute to the development of disciplined character in students, preparing them for future challenges. This comprehensive approach fosters not only obedience to rules but also a deep sense of responsibility and integrity in students' lives.

The enforcement of school rules and regulations strategy illustrates the successful application of habituation theory in creating a disciplined environment. By ensuring students adhere to structured routines, such as prayer times and class schedules, discipline gradually becomes internalized. This is consistent with the findings of (Rosenberg, M., Wilson, R., Maheady, L., & Sindelar, 2013), who demonstrated that clear rules and consistent routines promote discipline and help students internalize positive behavior over time. Similarly, (Lickona, 1991) argues that discipline is most effective when practiced through repeated routines that become part of students' character. The provision of sanctions and rewards strategy, rooted in behaviorism, relies on both positive and negative reinforcement to strengthen good behavior and deter undesirable actions. (Albert, 2012) emphasized that sanctions and rewards are essential for maintaining discipline and encouraging desirable behaviors, while (Skinner, 2008) highlighted the long-term effectiveness of reinforcement in shaping behavior. Moreover, (Berkowitz, Marvin W., 2005) assert that combining rule enforcement with moral modeling enhances students' ability to internalize discipline beyond mere compliance.

However, several scholars caution against excessive rigidity. (Young, 2019) suggests that overly strict enforcement of rules may lead to rebellion and disengagement among students. Likewise, (Brown, 2015) warns that reliance on punitive measures can foster resentment rather than genuine acceptance of values. Complementing this, (Nucci, Larry P., 2008) emphasize the need to balance rule enforcement with opportunities for moral reasoning, ensuring that discipline supports personal growth. Taken together, these perspectives suggest that enforcement strategies should be applied flexibly, adapting to students' developmental needs while still maintaining structured expectations. This study therefore advocates for a balanced approach in which consistent routines, sanctions, and rewards are combined with flexibility and reflection to support both discipline and moral development.

Supporting and Hindering Factors in the Implementation of Strategies

1. Supporting Factors

The successful implementation of the PAI teacher strategies is facilitated by several key supporting factors: The success of character education strategies at MAN Insan Cendekia Bengkulu Tengah is supported by several key factors. First, parental support plays a vital role, as active involvement from parents and regular communication with the school help ensure consistency in instilling religious and disciplinary values both at school and at home. Second, the competence and professionalism of teachers are crucial, since their deep understanding of character education and their exemplary behavior serve as powerful models for students. Third, a supportive school environment, characterized by routine religious practices and discipline, further strengthens the effectiveness of these strategies through collective participation in enforcing rules and

creating a conducive atmosphere. Fourth, adequate facilities and infrastructure, such as a well-maintained mosque, organized dormitories, and access to technological tools, facilitate both religious activities and innovative teaching approaches. Fifth, student motivation and awareness significantly influence outcomes, as highly motivated and conscious students are more likely to internalize the values being taught. Finally, the curriculum and learning approaches contribute by integrating character-building values into lessons and employing diverse, relevant teaching methods that enable students not only to understand these values but also to embody them in daily life.

2. Hindering Factors

However, several challenges hinder the full implementation of these strategies: Despite these strengths, several inhibiting factors also challenge the implementation of character education strategies. One major issue is the negative influence of technology and social media, where rapid access to information—sometimes faster than what teachers can provide—can undermine academic integrity, distract students, and weaken discipline. Another challenge arises from concerns over human rights (HR) in disciplinary practices, as teachers often hesitate to enforce strict measures out of fear that their actions could be misinterpreted as verbal or physical abuse. This has led to a preference for more persuasive rather than firm enforcement approaches, which sometimes limits effectiveness. In addition, the potential for student fatigue caused by rigid routines poses a significant obstacle. The highly structured and intensive daily schedule, while designed to instill discipline, can also create emotional and physical exhaustion. This may reduce students' intrinsic motivation and risk turning religious practices and disciplinary activities into mere formalities rather than genuine commitments.

Supporting factors, such as parental involvement, teacher professionalism, and a supportive school environment, align with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which emphasizes the role of multiple environmental systems in a child's development (Ayu. Wahyuni, 2020). Consistency between the home and school environments helps students internalize religious and disciplinary values effectively. The importance of family and school collaboration in shaping children's values and behavior. Similarly, (Fagan, 2010) highlighted that strong cooperation between home and school leads to improved moral and behavioral outcomes for students. However, Parental involvement is crucial, over-reliance on it may lead to dependency, limiting students' capacity to develop self-regulation and autonomy. These findings suggest that character education must strike a balance between external support and the cultivation of students' internal motivation.

Conversely, hindering factors, particularly the challenges posed by technology and social media, highlight the tension between traditional educational methods and the rapidly evolving digital landscape. This aligns with uses and gratifications theory, which explains how individuals actively seek media to fulfill personal needs (Katz, E., Blumler, J., & Gurevitch, 1973). excessive digital media consumption can distract students, reducing their engagement in both religious and academic activities (Ong, J., & Chan, 2019). However, when technology is integrated effectively, it can enhance learning by providing interactive platforms for students to engage with religious content and values in dynamic ways (Hassan, 2020).

Technology, therefore, can both hinder and support character development depending on its use.

The findings suggest that strategies integrating both structure and flexibility such as the utilization of learning media and technology are essential for adapting to the digital age while maintaining religious and disciplinary integrity. Nevertheless, challenges such as student fatigue from rigid routines and the influence of technology indicate the need for ongoing adaptation and innovation (Adnan et al., 2025; Khalid & Ibrahim, 2025; Rokiyah et al., 2025). A key limitation of this study is the reliance on interviews and observations conducted within a single institution, which may limit generalizability. Future research should include multiple schools or adopt mixed-method approaches to provide broader and more measurable insights. Overall, the strategies implemented by PAI teachers at MAN Insan Cendekia Bengkulu Tengah reflect a holistic model of character education, combining structured routines, educational sanctions, personal guidance, and technological innovation. While obstacles remain, particularly in balancing digital engagement and sustaining intrinsic motivation, the integrated approach provides a strong foundation for cultivating religious and disciplinary character in students.

CONCLUSION

PAI teachers at MAN Insan Cendekia Bengkulu Tengah apply integrated strategies to cultivate religious and disciplinary character values in XI grade students. These strategies are grounded in habituation theory and value internalization, supported by *uswatun hasanah* in Islamic education. Key strategies include scheduling religious practices, enforcing rules and educational sanctions, offering additional religious tasks, providing intensive dormitory guidance, role modeling by teachers, and using innovative technology. These methods aim to encourage spiritual discipline, personal initiative, and deeper internalization of religious values through structured routines and personal mentorship.

For disciplinary character development, the strategies align with habituation theory, behaviorism, and social learning theory. Consistent rule enforcement, the application of sanctions and rewards, and supervision in the dormitory help shape disciplined behavior. The “Guru Asuh” program offers personalized guidance, fostering internal motivation and self-awareness. Supporting factors include parental involvement, teacher professionalism, and a conducive school environment, while hindering factors such as the impact of technology and rigid routines challenge the process. The study emphasizes the need for a collaborative, adaptive approach to address modern challenges in character education.

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