



Strengthening Religious Character and Social Attitudes Through the Islamic Personal Development Program in Integrated Islamic Junior High Schools

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Islamic Personal Development Program (Bina Pribadi Islam, BPI) in fostering students' religious character and social attitudes in integrated Islamic junior high schools. The research addresses concerns over moral degradation among adolescents and the need for effective character education models grounded in Islamic values. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, utilizing in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis to collect data. Data were analyzed through condensation, display, and conclusion drawing to capture the program's impact comprehensively. The findings indicate that BPI is implemented systematically through mentoring sessions (halaqah), habitual worship practices, and social activities. This approach effectively enhances students' religious character, including discipline in worship, honesty, and responsibility, while also promoting social attitudes such as cooperation, tolerance, and empathy. Program effectiveness is influenced by mentor competence, student participation, and parental involvement. Key supporting factors include institutional commitment, a conducive religious environment, and teacher role modeling, whereas barriers involve limited time, lack of family integration, and an overemphasis on ritual over social development. The study concludes that BPI represents a holistic and effective Islamic character education model, yet its sustainability and impact can be strengthened through enhanced implementation, stakeholder collaboration, and integration of social development components.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental instrument in building sustainable human civilization (Glavič, 2020; Lozano-Pena et al., 2021). In the context of the 21st century, education is no longer limited to knowledge transfer but also emphasizes character formation and social competencies capable of addressing the complexities of modern life. This shift requires an integrated approach encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions within the learning process. Character education has therefore become a strategic agenda, aligning with both national and international educational objectives (Osman, 2026; Sakban & Sundawa, 2023). By fostering moral, spiritual, and social awareness alongside academic achievement, education can produce individuals who not only excel intellectually but are also socially responsible. Evidence from global educational initiatives suggests that students exposed to holistic education demonstrate higher resilience, empathy, and civic engagement, emphasizing the societal importance of character-focused pedagogy. Consequently, the development of educational models that balance knowledge acquisition with moral and social growth is critical for shaping future generations capable of sustaining social cohesion and ethical responsibility.

Globally, adolescents face increasing moral and social challenges due to rapid globalization, digitalization, and evolving cultural norms. Reports indicate rising trends in moral degradation, individualism, low social empathy, and deviant behaviors among youth. These developments highlight a gap between the ideal objectives of education and the realities observed in schools (López-Faicán & Jaen, 2020; Sahin & Yilmaz, 2020). Traditional curricula that focus solely on cognitive development fail to address the social and ethical dimensions necessary for holistic development. The need for integrated education that nurtures both knowledge and values has therefore become urgent, particularly in contexts where ethical awareness and social responsibility are declining. By addressing these gaps, educational systems can equip students not only with intellectual competence but also with the moral and social capacities required to navigate complex societal challenges effectively.

In practice, schools face several challenges in implementing character education. Many educational institutions struggle to integrate value-based learning into daily school activities systematically (Gojny et al., 2024). Observations reveal inconsistent application of moral principles, insufficient role modeling by teachers, and limited parental involvement. Students often demonstrate knowledge of ethical principles in theory but fail to internalize them into daily behavior. This misalignment between classroom instruction and lived experience limits the effectiveness of character education programs. Schools, therefore, require structured frameworks that combine formal instruction, habituation, and mentoring to ensure that moral and social competencies are consistently reinforced. The emerging phenomenon underscores the need for empirical research to explore practical strategies for embedding Islamic values into holistic educational practices that address both religious and social dimensions of student development.

Previous studies have demonstrated the potential of religious-based character programs in shaping students' behavior. For instance, Mudhofar (2023) found that structured and routine religious activities foster sustainable positive habits among students, while Dirgantini et al., (2023) highlighted the significant role of habituation in enhancing moral quality in school contexts. Despite these findings, most studies have focused on single schools or isolated program elements, leaving a gap in multisite empirical research. The existing literature also emphasizes religiosity but often overlooks the social dimension, which is equally critical for holistic character development. By examining multiple schools and integrating both religious and social aspects, the current study aims to contribute a more comprehensive understanding of how Islamic character education can be implemented effectively across diverse educational settings. This approach addresses the research gap by extending empirical evidence beyond limited case studies.

Furthermore, the integration of social attitudes in character education remains underexplored. While religiosity forms the core of Islamic education, social behaviors such as empathy, tolerance, cooperation, and responsibility are essential for fostering well-rounded students capable of engaging in multicultural and pluralistic societies (Vinsensius & Keban, 2023; Badiati, 2021). Previous research rarely examines the interplay between moral and social development in multisite contexts, leaving a critical knowledge gap. Addressing this gap is particularly relevant in contemporary societies, where social cohesion, inclusivity, and intergroup understanding are crucial. The present study builds upon the state of the art by investigating an integrated model—Bina Pribadi Islam (BPI)—that explicitly combines spiritual, moral, and social development, thereby advancing both theory and practice in Islamic character education (Irma et al., 2023).

The novelty of this research lies in its holistic and multisite examination of the BPI program. Unlike previous studies that often focus on a single institution or measure religiosity in isolation, this study investigates the simultaneous development of religious character and social attitudes across two integrated Islamic junior high schools. The approach incorporates mentoring (halaqah), habituation, and social activities into a structured framework, providing insights into factors that support or hinder effective implementation. By linking spiritual formation with social competence, the research offers a state-of-the-art understanding of how Islamic character education can be operationalized in modern educational contexts while maintaining fidelity to religious principles.

Based on the identified gaps and emerging challenges, the research problem focuses on understanding how the Bina Pribadi Islam (BPI) program is implemented to foster both religious character and social attitudes among

students. The study argues that character formation in Islamic education requires intentional design, systematic mentoring, and collaboration among schools, families, and communities. Through multisite empirical analysis, this study contributes to both theory and practice by demonstrating the conditions under which BPI programs achieve sustainable impact. The findings are expected to provide actionable recommendations for enhancing Islamic character education, informing policy, and guiding future educational interventions that balance religiosity, social competence, and holistic student development.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research design with a multi-site case study approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of the Bina Pribadi Islam (BPI) program in shaping students' religious character and social attitudes. The qualitative approach was selected because it allows the exploration of social phenomena in a holistic, contextual, and interpretive manner, drawing on the experiences and perspectives of participants (Martikainen, 2023). The multi-site design was chosen to compare and analyze patterns of program implementation across two integrated Islamic junior high schools, enabling a broader and more valid understanding of the program's effectiveness. By examining multiple sites with similar programmatic frameworks but differing social and environmental contexts, the study aims to generate findings that are both comprehensive and transferable (Lovita et al., 2022).

The research was conducted at two integrated Islamic junior high schools, chosen because of their consistent implementation of the BPI program as part of their character development system. These schools share a similar vision of value-based Islamic education but differ in their socio-cultural context, allowing for comparative analysis (Deif & Cochrane, 2022). Participants were selected through purposive sampling, including school principals, Islamic education teachers, BPI mentors, and students actively participating in the program. Informants were chosen based on their involvement in the planning, execution, and evaluation of BPI activities to ensure that the collected data accurately reflects program realities (Alifah et al., 2020).

Data were collected through three primary methods: participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations focused on the interaction between mentors and students, teaching methods, and the overall program environment. In-depth interviews explored participants' experiences, perceptions, and evaluations of program effectiveness, while documentation included official schedules, program reports, student journals, and activity photos. Data analysis followed an interactive model involving data

condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Condensation involved selecting and focusing on relevant data, while display was performed through descriptive narrative for systematic interpretation. Triangulation of sources and methods, as well as member checking, ensured data validity, while ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality maintained the integrity of the research (Swedan et al., 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Bina Pribadi Islam (BPI) Program as a Character Development Model

The study findings indicate that the Bina Pribadi Islam (BPI) program at the integrated Islamic junior high schools is implemented systematically using a small-group mentoring approach (halaqah). Each group, guided by a mentor such as a teacher or ustadz/ustadzah, engages in structured activities including Qur'an recitation, worship evaluation through mutaba'ah books, lesson delivery, and reflective discussions. This mentoring model demonstrates the integration of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor approaches. Cognitively, students gain systematic Islamic knowledge; affectively, they internalize values through social interaction; and psychomotor-wise, they practice religious rituals and moral behaviors in daily life. These findings align with the view that Islamic religious education functions not only as knowledge transfer but also as a means to cultivate character through experiential learning (Firmansyah et al., 2023).

Mentoring as the core of BPI proves the effectiveness of interpersonal-based learning. Small groups provide students space to dialogue, ask questions, and reflect on their religious experiences, strengthening value internalization as students actively construct meaning through social interactions. This supports prior studies highlighting halaqah as an effective method for fostering character through participatory approaches (Irma et al., 2023). Moreover, habituation is emphasized as a key strategy for character formation. Repeated routines such as congregational prayer, daily Qur'an recitation, and dhikr foster consistent behavioral patterns, reflecting behaviorist theory that repeated practice shapes enduring habits.

From an educational management perspective, BPI implementation involves structured planning, execution, and evaluation. Schools design program curricula, monitor student progress via mutaba'ah books and activity reports, and integrate BPI as part of the broader character education system. This illustrates that BPI is not merely an extracurricular activity but a formalized, managed component of student development. The integration of management practices ensures consistency, accountability, and sustainability in cultivating students' moral and religious values.

Formation of Religious Character through Internalization of Islamic Values

The findings reveal that BPI significantly enhances students' religious character, evidenced by increased discipline in worship, consistent Qur'an recitation, and attentiveness to ethical behavior. Religious character is conceptualized as the embodiment of Islamic values in daily life, including faith, piety, honesty, patience, and responsibility. BPI provides students not only with theoretical understanding but also opportunities to practice these values, fostering genuine internalization (Natsir & Laelah, 2023; Firmansyah et al., 2023).

The development of a religious school culture supports character formation. A conducive environment, including regular prayers, use of Islamic language, and teacher role modeling, reinforces value internalization. Teacher behavior serves as a critical factor in shaping students' religious character, as students tend to emulate observed actions (Rahmah, 2023; Zainudin, 2023). Teachers act as both instructors and role models, exemplifying consistency between taught values and lived behavior.

In sum, the holistic approach of BPI, which integrates knowledge acquisition, habituation, and mentorship, effectively strengthens students' religious identity. This approach highlights the importance of school culture and educator exemplars in promoting enduring character traits. The program's structured framework allows for systematic development and monitoring of religious behavior, aligning with contemporary educational management principles.

Development of Social Attitudes through Interaction and Habituation

The study demonstrates that BPI contributes significantly to students' social attitudes, fostering skills such as empathy, cooperation, tolerance, responsibility, and care for others. Social attitude formation occurs through continuous interaction in mentoring sessions and habitual engagement in collaborative activities. Small-group mentoring facilitates direct interaction among students and between students and mentors, allowing for personalized guidance and active participation in value formation (Kurniasih et al., 2023).

Habitual social practices, such as group projects, community service, and collective activities, serve as mechanisms for value internalization. Repeated engagement in prosocial behavior encourages the formation of lasting social character. Tolerance is integrated as a core component, teaching students to respect diversity and promote inclusive attitudes, even within a religious school context (Vinsensius Florianus Dalu Sogen & Yosep Belen Keban, 2023).

Community-based activities further reinforce social character by exposing students to real-world challenges. Participation in social service enables students to develop empathy and social responsibility, providing practical experience in applying moral principles. The combination of interpersonal mentoring and experiential learning ensures that social attitudes are internalized effectively, complementing cognitive and religious character development.

Strategic Role of Teachers and School Environment

Teachers and the school environment play a strategic role in the success of BPI implementation. Educators function not only as instructors but also as facilitators, motivators, and role models, shaping students' character through multidimensional engagement. Positive interpersonal relationships and a humanistic teaching approach create an environment where students feel comfortable expressing themselves and reflecting on experiences (Sugianto, 2023).

Teacher exemplars remain critical, as consistent demonstration of Islamic values facilitates value internalization. The school environment supports this process by promoting religious culture through structured routines, symbols, and activities. The combination of teacher guidance and an enabling environment establishes a social ecosystem conducive to character formation (Amir et al., 2022).

The synergy between teacher leadership and a supportive school ecosystem ensures that BPI achieves its objectives. Without both, character formation may be inconsistent or superficial. The management of the program, including planning, execution, and monitoring, demonstrates the importance of organizational and educational management in sustaining student development initiatives.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in BPI Implementation

Implementation of BPI is influenced by internal and external factors. Key enablers include institutional commitment, adequate resource allocation, and active teacher involvement, which ensure structured planning, consistent execution, and continuous evaluation. Teachers' pedagogical and spiritual competencies enhance program effectiveness by fostering strong mentor-student relationships. A supportive school environment further reinforces value internalization.

Challenges include limited parental involvement, time constraints, and monotonous teaching methods. Parental disengagement reduces the reinforcement of values outside school, while heavy academic schedules limit time for mentoring activities. Monotonous approaches reduce student motivation and hinder the internalization of values (Sabran et al., 2023; Susanto, 2021).

Strategic measures are needed to address these challenges, including enhanced parental engagement, innovative pedagogical approaches, and optimized time management. Strengthening program management, fostering collaboration between school and family, and improving teacher capacity are essential for maximizing the impact of BPI on both religious character and social attitudes.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

This study highlights that character formation must adopt a holistic approach integrating cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains. BPI demonstrates that combining instruction, habituation, and mentorship is effective for sustainable character development. The program's mentorship-based halaqah model represents a practical application of constructivist Islamic pedagogy, emphasizing active learning and social interaction.

Practically, the findings offer recommendations for educational institutions to develop more contextualized and innovative character education programs. Schools are encouraged to utilize digital tools, project-based learning, and experiential learning to enhance student engagement. Collaboration with parents and community stakeholders, as well as teacher capacity building, are essential to achieve a comprehensive and sustainable model of Islamic character education. Overall, BPI presents a scalable and adaptable framework for addressing moral and social challenges in modern education.

CONCLUSION

The study highlights that the Islamic Personal Development Program (BPI) effectively fosters both religious character and social attitudes among students, demonstrating that character education grounded in Islamic values can holistically integrate spiritual and social dimensions. Its strength lies in providing empirical evidence that a mentoring-based approach, consistent worship practices, and value internalization through exemplary role models not only nurture students' religiosity but also enhance empathy, cooperation, and social responsibility, contributing significantly to the academic discourse on character education. However, the research also identifies limitations, such as time constraints, limited instructional diversity, and low parental involvement, suggesting that future studies should explore more innovative, contextually adaptive, and collaborative models to optimize the implementation and sustainability of Islamic-based character development programs.

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