THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN EFFORTS TO SHAPE ISLAMIC CHARACTER AND DEVELOP STUDENTS' TALENTS AND INTERESTS

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Keywords:	ABSTRACTS
Islamic Religious Education (PAI), Islamic Character Formation, Student Talent Development	**Background:** The increasing importance of character education, especially in an Islamic context, has prompted a closer look at Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in shaping students' moral values. **Purpose:** This study examines the implementation of PAI at PESAT High School in Bogor, focusing on its role in shaping students' Islamic character and nurturing their talents and interests. **Method:** Using a qualitative case study approach, data was collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis. **Result:** The findings reveal that PAI integrates Islamic values into character formation, promotes ethical conduct, and nurtures students' talents through Islamic-based extracurricular activities. Additionally, PAI influences students' behavior, fostering a stronger commitment to Islamic principles. **Conclusion:** This research underscores the critical role of structured Islamic education in fostering holistic student development, offering valuable insights for enhancing PAI programs to achieve both religious and academic excellence.

A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Education (PAI) plays a vital role in shaping students' character and personality. At the high school level, PAI serves not only to teach religious subjects but also as a medium to cultivate Islamic values that guide students in addressing life challenges, whether spiritual, social, or academic (Taulabi 2017). The Islamic values-based approach in PAI aims to provide religious knowledge and strengthen students' moral and ethical character while supporting the development of their talents and interests across various domains (Ayu 2021).

Islamic character education at SMA PESAT in Bogor is an essential context for this study, as the school applies an integrative approach that combines theoretical teachings with practical applications in students' daily lives. Effective implementation of PAI learning can instill Islamic values such as honesty, discipline, hard work, and responsibility, which are critical to shaping students' overall character (Miftah 2021). According to Wahyuni (2023), religious-based character education, particularly Islamic Education, plays a crucial role in shaping students' moral character by instilling values such as honesty, patience, fairness, and compassion, which are essential for developing ethical and responsible individuals in their daily lives.

Furthermore, Islamic character education is also expected to encourage students to explore their potential while supporting their interests and talents. Islamic-based extracurricular activities at PESAT High School in Bogor serve as a platform for students to hone their skills and interests through arts, sports, and religious competitions. Research by Fitriani and Setiawan (2021) indicates that character education integrated with extracurricular activities can enhance students' self-confidence and help them develop their talents and interests in non-academic fields.

Through the implementation of Islamic Education (PAI), Islamic character is cultivated through knowledge and practical experiences in daily life, both inside and outside the school environment. Islamic character education at PESAT High School in Bogor is systematically integrated into learning activities, including teaching moral values, organizing religious events, and providing exemplary conduct by teachers (Setiadi and Indrawadi 2020; Shabran and Putra 2021). According to Rosyad (2020), the success of Islamic character education relies heavily on its consistent application in schools, where religious values are taught and integrated into students' daily practices, fostering a holistic development of their moral character.

Additionally, the development of students' talents and interests is significantly influenced by an educational environment that accommodates diverse potentials. Through PAI learning, students are encouraged to recognize and nurture their God-given talents and interests as tools to achieve success in this world and the hereafter. For instance, Wibowo (2022) highlights that students who receive strong character education tend to focus more on developing their abilities in academic or non-academic fields. In line with this, research by Ardha Zahro Nareswari (2023) underscores the importance of Islamic-based character education in motivating students to excel academically and in developing interests and talents oriented toward Islamic values. Their findings show that integrating Islamic character into PAI learning effectively improves students' performance in various aspects of life, including talent and interest development.

This study explores the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at PESAT High School in Bogor, focusing on its contribution to shaping students' Islamic

character and fostering their talents and interests. It examines how PAI is integrated into both classroom learning and extracurricular activities to promote not only religious knowledge but also moral character, spiritual values, and non-academic skills. The study aims to highlight how these practices foster holistic development. The findings will provide insights into the crucial role of PAI in shaping well-rounded students with strong Islamic values and diverse talents.

B. METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to collect data that underpins the findings presented in this article (Nasir et al., 2023). The phenomenological approach is often used to explore subjective experiences and the meanings individuals ascribe to phenomena they encounter (Creswell 2013).

The researcher ensured the validity of the study, accurate data collection, and appropriate selection of sources to support the research while conducting meticulous data measurements. The study focuses on specific sources and locations that meet the predetermined criteria outlined in the research plan. The selected location, SMA PESAT in Bogor City, was chosen to ensure continuity and compliance with the applicable standards. Data collection methods included observation, documentation, and interviews (Gunawan 2017). In analyzing the data, the researcher derived conclusions about the research questions by evaluating various data relevant to the research objectives (Sugiyono 2019). The qualitative approach was chosen because the primary goal of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of students' and educators' experiences and perceptions regarding the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI). Phenomenology, as a specific method within qualitative research, was employed because it focuses on the meaning of experiences as perceived by individuals in an educational environment, allowing for a more authentic depiction of social reality.

The data analysis process in this study followed several steps, beginning with data reduction and continuing with a qualitative analysis approach to obtain categorized and accurate results, leading to valid conclusions. The data analysis technique employed involved systematically examining and organizing interview transcripts, field notes, and other collected materials. This approach aims to enhance the researcher's understanding of the data and present the findings clearly to others involved in the study (Ghony and Almanshur 2012).

The researcher conducted the analysis through several stages, including:

Data Reduction: Data obtained from observations, interviews, and documentation were categorized based on the main themes: (a) the integration of Islamic values into students' character, (b) the role of Islamic-based extracurricular activities in developing students' talents and interests, and (c) the influence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) on students' daily attitudes and behaviour

Data Presentation: The categorized data were presented in the form of a descriptive narrative that systematically illustrates the patterns of findings. This data presentation aims to facilitate analysis and ensure that relationships between findings can be clearly understood.

Conclusion Drawing: After the data were analyzed, conclusions were drawn by linking the research findings to relevant theories. The validity of the findings was tested

through data triangulation, comparing the results of observations, interviews, and documentation to ensure consistency of information.

Through this approach, the researcher aims to provide a comprehensive depiction of the role of PAI in shaping Islamic character and supporting the systematic development of students' talents and interests, based on the direct experiences of the participants.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Implementation of Islamic Education Learning in Shaping Students' Islamic Character

The Islamic Education (PAI) learning process at SMA PESAT Kota Bogor has significantly shaped students' Islamic character. Research findings indicate that PAI learning teaches students theoretical aspects of Islamic teachings and integrates Islamic values into their daily lives. This learning process encompasses various aspects, including teaching noble character, worship practices, and developing positive attitudes aligned with Islamic teachings, such as honesty, trustworthiness, discipline, and empathy.

The PAI learning at SMA PESAT focuses heavily on forming students' noble character and Islamic ethics. It is not limited to understanding religious theory but also emphasizes the application of moral values inherent in Islamic teachings. Students are guided to internalize Islamic moral principles through exemplary stories from the Qur'an and Hadith and direct experiences within the school environment. This approach aligns with the Character Education theory proposed by Lickona (1992), which emphasizes the role of value-based moral Education in shaping ethical individuals, focusing on key virtues like honesty, respect, and responsibility. Recent studies, including Character Education for Teenagers in the Era of Society 5.0: Thomas Lickona's Perspective (2023) and Analyzing Thomas Lickona's Ideas in Character Education (Suroso and Husin 2024), highlight the ongoing relevance of these principles in modern Education, particularly in fostering responsible, morally-conscious students in the digital age. The crucial role of PAI in shaping students' character is emphasized by its application of moral values in daily life. They explain that religious-based character education, as taught in PAI, includes teaching moral principles inherent in Islamic teachings, such as honesty, peace, simplicity, and hard work (Hidayat and Mulyani, 2022).

PAI learning also plays a role in fostering students' independence and sense of responsibility. Through lessons on individual responsibilities in worship, tasks, and social obligations, students are taught to carry out their responsibilities effectively within school, family, and community environments (Abdullah 2019). The PAI curriculum highlights the importance of discipline in fulfilling religious duties, such as performing prayers on time and fasting with a sense of responsibility. Miftah (2021) argues that Education based on spiritual values can shape students' character to be more responsible, particularly in religious contexts.

A key finding is strengthening students' spiritual aspects through PAI learning. At SMA PESAT, students are taught religious theory and guided to enhance their worship practices and faith. PAI learning is integrated with spiritual activities such as Quran recitation, congregational prayers, and Islamic studies. Consequently, Islamic

Education deepens students' devotion and faith, which becomes the foundation for shaping their Islamic character (Astuti 2020).

This approach aligns with the Transformational Leadership theory in Education proposed by Bass and Riggio (2022), which highlights that inspirational leadership in religious Education can cultivate students' spiritual values. Additionally, Haris and Fauziyah (2022) state that religious Education incorporating Islamic social values can enhance students' social awareness and foster their sense of care for the surrounding environment.

The Role of Islamic Education (PAI) Learning in Developing Students' Talents and Interests

Islamic Education (PAI) learning at PESAT High School in Bogor is pivotal in nurturing students' talents and interests, encompassing not only academic aspects but also non-academic potentials such as arts, sports, and social activities. In this context, PAI functions as a vital medium for instilling Islamic values, providing students with the moral and intellectual foundation to navigate spiritual, social, and academic challenges while nurturing their talents and interests in accordance with their potential (Aziz 2021).

One of the key findings of this study is that PAI learning at PESAT significantly contributes to fostering students' interests, especially in areas aligned with Islamic values (Yusrizal, Fajriani, and Prayoga 2023). For instance, many students are keen to participate in extracurricular activities such as Dhuha prayers, religious lectures, congregational Dzuhur and Asr prayers, Friday sermons with storytelling approaches, and *mabit* (overnight faith and piety sessions) held twice per semester. This aligns with the intrinsic motivation theory proposed by Ryan and Deci, which states that motivation, driven from within and fostered through religious education, enhances students' interest in various activities, including developing their talents (Deci, Vallerand, and Ryan 2021). Peacock and Guest (2023) argue that religious Education involving real-life activities, such as worship, is more effective in engaging students than purely theoretical learning. Similarly, Gess-Newsome and Lederman's (2019) Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) theory underscores integrating academic knowledge with real-life teaching practices. Their work highlights how the development of PCK is closely tied to student achievement, suggesting that effective teaching requires a combination of content knowledge and pedagogical strategies tailored to the practical demands of the classroom. By incorporating this approach, teachers can enhance student learning outcomes, as it facilitates the application of theoretical knowledge within the dynamic context of teaching practice.

An interesting approach is the use of storytelling in Friday sermons. This method employs narratives embedded with Islamic values to convey moral and religious messages to students. This approach has proven effective in capturing students' attention and aiding them in understanding and internalizing religious values. Bruner highlights that storytelling is a powerful educational tool that connects abstract concepts to real experiences and motivates students to be more actively involved in learning (Bruner 2023). Similarly, Narvaez and Lapsley (2009) argue that storytelling as a teaching method deepens students' moral and spiritual understanding in a more engaging and emotionally resonant way.

Extracurricular activities such as congregational prayers, religious lectures, and mabit sessions are essential for instilling Islamic character in students. These activities provide worship experiences and instill discipline, cooperation, and a sense of responsibility. Lickona (2019) highlights that extracurricular activities are vital in strengthening students' character development, as they provide opportunities to practice values such as responsibility, integrity, and respect. Likewise, The Role of Extracurricular Activities in Developing Character asserts that extracurricular activities focusing on moral and religious values help students develop positive character traits (Rahayu and Dong, 2023).

In addition to fostering interest in worship, PAI learning at PESAT High School enhances students' social awareness, particularly within the context of religious life in the community. Activities such as congregational prayers and Friday sermons teach students to care for others and build social responsibility through religious practice. *The influence of religious education on social responsibility and community engagement explains that religious education emphasizes social activities and worship, which* contributes to building students' social character (Peterson 2012). Meanwhile, Durkheim, in *The Sociology of Education*, states that religious Education plays a crucial role in fostering social awareness and solidarity among students. PAI learning that incorporates social values through worship and other religious activities builds stronger social relationships among students (Durkheim, 2023).

PAI learning at PESAT also serves as a means to help students discover and develop their talents in various fields. For example, religious speech competitions, Islamic art painting, and Quranic interpretation contests are regularly held at the school, fostering students' talents in Islamic arts and culture while helping them deepen their understanding of religious teachings through practice. Character education implemented through religious learning can enhance students' ability to identify and develop their talents, especially when combined with supportive extracurricular activities (Cardinalia, Daryanto, and Kurniawan 2021).

A significant finding is that integrating PAI learning highly influences the development of student's talents and interests and religious-based extracurricular activities. At PESAT High School, students learn religious theories and actively engage in extracurricular activities such as Islamic poetry competitions, Quran recitation, and religious debates. These activities allow students to deepen their understanding of Islam while honing their skills in areas of interest. Integrating Islamic character education into relevant extracurricular activities enhances students' moral development and provides meaningful opportunities to deepen their understanding of Islamic values while exploring their interests (Amri and Nugraheni 2021).

Implementation of Islamic Character Education at SMA PESAT

SMA PESAT in Bogor has implemented a structured and systematic approach to Islamic character development, involving various school stakeholders through curricular and extracurricular activities. The character-building program adopts a comprehensive strategy, encompassing classroom-based religious teachings and extracurricular activities that enhance students' social, moral, and spiritual attitudes. The aim of Islamic character development at SMA PESAT extends beyond improving religious knowledge to shaping students into individuals with noble character, responsibility, and discipline.

Various activities are organized to reinforce students' Islamic character, including congregational prayers, morning lectures, Friday sermons, and *mabit* (overnight faith and piety-strengthening activities). Additionally, the Character Improvement System (CIS) is an effective mechanism for monitoring and evaluating students' character development by awarding points for positive behaviors and deducting points for violations. This program encompasses multiple aspects, such as morality, faith, worship, discipline, social interactions, and talent development.

One striking finding is the integrative application of Islamic character education at SMA PESAT within the classroom (curricular) and through extracurricular activities. Character education in the school is led by all teachers, including Islamic Education (PAI) teachers, who teach religious theories and instill character values in students' daily lives. Meanwhile, extracurricular activities focusing on religion, such as congregational prayers, morning lectures, and storytelling-based Friday sermons, deepen religious understanding and foster Islamic character. Perry (2021) explains that religion-based Education, whether formal or informal, plays a significant role in shaping students' moral character. Similarly, Vygotsky (2022) highlights the importance of social interactions within various contexts, both inside and outside the classroom, in students' moral and character development.

The CIS at SMA PESAT is a tool for monitoring and evaluating students' character growth. Points are assigned to each student or class which are maintained monthly. Positive behaviors, such as discipline, honesty, and adherence to school rules, increase these points, while violations reduce them. This system incentivizes good behavior and encourages students to rectify mistakes. Intrinsic motivation grows when students are given autonomy and responsibility for their choices (Ryan and Vansteenkiste, 2023). The CIS, which enables students to monitor and adjust their behavior, supports character development through internalized motivation. Reinforcement and punishment are practical tools for shaping students' behavior under the operant conditioning framework (Skinner, E. A., 2020).

Islamic character education at SMA PESAT also emphasizes fostering good social attitudes like tolerance, cooperation, and empathy. Activities like congregational prayers, Friday sermons, and mabit strengthen bonds of brotherhood and mutual respect among students. Discipline is a critical component of character education, taught through active participation in religious activities, maintaining cleanliness, and complying with school rules. Kohlberg (2022) posits that character education integrating moral values like honesty, compliance, and responsibility helps students achieve higher levels of moral development. Education focusing on empathy and social care enhances interpersonal relationships (Gilligan 2021).

Another vital aspect of character education at SMA PESAT is the development of students' talents and interests. The school provides opportunities for self-expression through various extracurricular activities, such as sports, arts, and religious events. Islamic character building is integrated with worship practices, such as congregational prayers, fostering discipline and faith while supporting talent development. These findings align with Gardner's (2020) theory that recognizing and developing multiple intelligences enables students to maximize their potential. Noddings (2023) adds that character education emphasizing spiritual and social dimensions creates individuals who are not only skilled but also socially conscious.

SMA PESAT adopts a holistic approach to developing students' talents and interests by emphasizing spiritual and social dimensions. The combination of extracurricular activities and spiritual enrichment fosters a strong moral foundation for students while helping them unlock and develop their potential. This integrated model aligns with the school's mission to shape students into individuals of Islamic character and unique talents.

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, analysis, and discussion regarding the implementation of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) at PESAT High School in Bogor City, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, the PAI learning process at PESAT High School plays a central role in shaping students' Islamic character and fostering their talents and interests. PAI is not limited to delivering religious knowledge but also serves as a medium for intrinsic motivation, structured moral guidance, and talent cultivation. Through various religion-based extracurricular activities, students develop their potential while strengthening their Islamic identity and ethical consciousness. This aligns with theories of character education and multiple intelligences, where structured moral and intellectual engagement fosters holistic student development.

Second, PAI significantly contributes to character development by integrating Islamic moral values, spiritual enrichment, and social ethics into the learning process. The research highlights that students not only acquire religious knowledge but also demonstrate moral integrity, independence, responsibility, and compassion in their daily lives. The structured approach at PESAT ensures that Islamic character education is systematically implemented through both academic instruction and social interaction, reinforcing key aspects of moral development theory.

Third, the implementation of PAI at PESAT demonstrates the effectiveness of an integrated approach in nurturing character, talent, and social responsibility. The school successfully integrates intra-curricular and extracurricular activities to provide a comprehensive educational experience, ensuring that students engage in character-building programs both inside and outside the classroom. This finding is consistent with previous studies on Islamic character education in contemporary school settings.

Finally, the Character Improvement System (CIS) implemented at PESAT serves as an effective framework for character monitoring and reinforcement. This system facilitates regular assessment and guidance for students, ensuring that moral education is measurable and continuous. The CIS framework not only strengthens moral behavior, discipline, and social ethics but also supports talent development through structured mentorship and peer engagement. This reinforces existing research on structured character assessment models in Islamic education.

In conclusion, PAI at PESAT High School provides a structured, integrated, and holistic educational approach that enhances students' moral, intellectual, and social growth. The combination of classroom learning, extracurricular participation, and systematic character assessment fosters well-rounded individuals who embody Islamic values while excelling in their unique talents and interests.

E. SUGGESTIONS AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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