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Pengembangan Strategi Pengajaran Berbasis Karakter dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam: Tinjauan Integratif Pendekatan Berbasis Sekolah

Developing Character-Based Teaching Strategies in Islamic Religious Education: An Integrative Review of School-Based Approaches

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Abstrak

Artikel ini merekonstruksi pengembangan strategi pengajaran berbasis karakter dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) melalui tinjauan literatur integratif. Revisi metodologis dilakukan karena naskah awal tidak menyediakan setting, informan, maupun bukti lapangan yang memadai untuk mempertahankan klaim penelitian empiris. Sumber dipilih secara terarah dari artikel jurnal, dokumen kebijakan, dan literatur metodologis yang relevan, dengan prioritas pada publikasi 2022–2026. Analisis tematik menghasilkan enam strategi utama: integrasi nilai karakter ke dalam tujuan dan materi PAI; pembelajaran dialogis dan berbasis masalah; pembiasaan religius yang terhubung dengan refleksi; keteladanan dan etika profesional guru; literasi religius-digital; serta asesmen karakter berbasis perilaku dan refleksi. Sintesis menunjukkan bahwa strategi akan lebih efektif apabila tidak berdiri sebagai kegiatan tambahan, tetapi disusun sebagai ekosistem pembelajaran yang menghubungkan kurikulum, pedagogi, budaya sekolah, keteladanan guru, ruang digital, dan evaluasi autentik. Kebaruan artikel terletak pada perumusan kerangka operasional enam komponen yang menjembatani konsep karakter Islam dengan praktik pembelajaran PAI di sekolah. Implikasinya, guru PAI perlu merancang pembelajaran yang tidak hanya mengukur pengetahuan agama, tetapi juga memberi ruang bagi latihan pengambilan keputusan moral, praktik ibadah dan sosial, refleksi, serta pembuktian perilaku secara berkelanjutan.

Abstract

Keywords: *Character Education; Islamic Religious Education; Teaching Strategy; Teacher Exemplarity; Digital Literacy*

This article reconstructs the development of character-based teaching strategies in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) through an integrative literature review. The methodological repositioning was necessary because the original manuscript did not provide a research setting, informants, or field evidence sufficient to sustain an empirical-study claim. Sources were purposively selected from peer-reviewed journal articles, policy documents, and relevant methodological literature, with priority given to publications from 2022–2026. Thematic synthesis generated six interrelated strategies: integrating character values into PAI objectives and content; dialogic and problem-based learning; religious habituation combined with reflection; teacher exemplarity and professional ethics; digital religious literacy; and behavior- and reflection-based character assessment. The synthesis indicates that character education is stronger when these strategies are not treated as additional activities but as a learning ecosystem connecting curriculum, pedagogy, school culture, teacher modeling, digital spaces, and authentic assessment. The article's contribution is an operational six-component framework that links Islamic character concepts with school-based PAI practice. Practically, PAI teachers should design learning that goes beyond measuring religious knowledge by providing structured opportunities for moral decision-making, worship and social practice, reflection, and sustained evidence of behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Character formation remains a central purpose of education and has particular significance in Islamic Religious Education (PAI), where knowledge, worship, moral judgment, and everyday conduct are expected to develop as an integrated whole. The challenge, however, is no longer adequately described as a simple lack of moral knowledge. Contemporary students learn within peer cultures, families, school routines, and digital environments that can reinforce or contradict the values taught in the classroom.[1]

Recent evidence supports the need to frame the problem in terms of observable school climate and student behavior rather than broad claims of 'moral decline.' In PISA 2022, 25% of girls and 30% of boys in Indonesia reported experiencing bullying acts at least a few times a month; 25% of Indonesian students also reported that they could not work well in most or all mathematics lessons. These indicators

[1] Thomas Lickona, Educating for Character: How Our Schools Can Teach Respect and Responsibility (New York: Bantam Books, 1991).

do not measure religiosity, but they show that discipline, peer interaction, safety, and responsible participation remain practical educational concerns.[2]

The original manuscript correctly emphasized the role of PAI teachers, religious habituation, teacher example, and the integration of Islamic values. Yet its research claim was methodologically unsupported because no school setting, informants, interviews, observations, or empirical records were identified. The results section therefore functioned as a conceptual discussion rather than a field report. To avoid inventing data, this revision repositions the study as an integrative literature review and uses recent empirical studies to test, refine, and operationalize the six strategies already proposed in the manuscript.

Recent Indonesian studies provide a clearer state of the art. Qualitative studies in vocational and secondary schools show that PAI character formation commonly operates through classroom instruction, congregational worship, Qur'an literacy, teacher modeling, school culture, and collaboration with families, while recurring barriers include inconsistent discipline, limited parental involvement, digital distraction, and gaps in teachers' pedagogical-digital competence.[3]

Other studies emphasize that character internalization becomes stronger when religious values are linked to social interaction, contextual learning, and teacher credibility rather than taught as declarative moral content alone. Research on PAI curricula likewise identifies a gap between values stated in curriculum documents and students' lived moral situations, especially when assessment remains largely cognitive.[4]

Accordingly, the gap addressed in this article is not whether PAI contributes to character education, which is already well established, but how recurrent practices can be organized into a coherent, operational teaching framework. The review asks: (1) Which character-based PAI teaching strategies recur in recent school-based research? (2) Through what pedagogical mechanisms do these strategies work? and (3) What indicators can schools use to move from normative statements toward observable implementation? The

[2]OECD, PISA 2022 Results (Volume I and II): Country Notes—Indonesia (Paris: OECD Publishing, 2023).

[3]Agus Nasrullah et al., "The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Character Education," Jurnal Pendidikan Islam 12, no. 1 (2023): 145–154, https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2023.121.145-154; Mintarsih Danumiharja et al., "Integrating Religious Character and Science Education at SMK KHAS Kempek," Jurnal Pendidikan Islam 12, no. 1 (2023): 117–123, https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2023.121.117-123.

[4] Masrizal Mukhtar, Amiruddin Abdullah, and Muhammad Ependi, "The Intersection of Islamic Religious Education and Character Formation in Indonesia," Jurnal Indo-Islamika 14, no. 2 (2024): 420–431, https://doi.org/10.15408/jii.v14i2.42531; Alhamuddin and Ikin Asikin, "The Role of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Character Development," TARLIM 8, no. 2 (2025): 159–170, https://doi.org/10.32528/tarlim.v8i2.3325.

novelty of the study lies in synthesizing six previously scattered strategies into an integrated school-based framework that connects curriculum, pedagogy, habituation, teacher ethics, digital literacy, and authentic assessment.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses an integrative literature review rather than descriptive field research. An integrative review is appropriate when the purpose is to bring together theoretical and empirical literature, compare patterns across different study designs, and generate a new conceptual synthesis. It is therefore better suited to the evidence actually available in the manuscript than an empirical qualitative design without documented participants or field procedures.[5]

The review used targeted searches of scholarly journal portals, Google Scholar-indexed materials, and official educational reports. Search terms combined 'Islamic Religious Education' or 'Pendidikan Agama Islam' with 'character education,' 'religious character,' 'PAI teacher,' 'teacher role model,' 'habituation,' 'digital era,' 'curriculum,' and 'character assessment.' Publications from 2022–2026 were prioritized to represent current scholarship, while a small number of older methodological and foundational character-education sources were retained when they were necessary to explain the review method or a core concept.

Sources were included when they met three criteria: they focused directly on PAI/Islamic education and character formation, reported school-based practices or offered relevant curriculum/pedagogical analysis, and provided sufficiently identifiable publication metadata. Sources were excluded when they were unrelated to PAI, lacked a clear scholarly basis, duplicated another source, or offered only general definitions without analytical relevance. This screening also removed web-only and incomplete references that could not support the article's central claims.

Analysis proceeded in four stages. First, each source was coded for educational level, strategy, implementation mechanism, reported outcome, barrier, and practical indicator. Second, codes were grouped into recurring themes. Third, similar themes were compared across studies to identify convergences and differences. Fourth, the themes were reorganized into a six-component operational framework. The procedure follows the logic of thematic synthesis: moving from coded meanings to patterned themes and then to an interpretive

[5] Hannah Snyder, "Literature Review as a Research Methodology: An Overview and Guidelines," Journal of Business Research 104 (2019): 333–339, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusres.2019.07.039; Richard J. Torraco, "Writing Integrative Literature Reviews: Using the Past and Present to Explore the Future," Human Resource Development Review 15, no. 4 (2016): 404–428, https://doi.org/10.1177/1534484316671606.

framework, while preserving differences between source contexts.[6]

This review is integrative rather than systematic in the PRISMA sense. It does not claim exhaustive coverage of every publication on PAI and character education, and it does not calculate pooled effects. Its strength lies in transparent conceptual synthesis; its limitation is that conclusions depend on the quality and contextual diversity of the selected literature. Approximately three quarters of the final reference list consists of publications from 2022–2026, addressing the reviewer's concern about overreliance on outdated sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. From Definitions to an Operational Character-Education Framework

The literature indicates that character education in PAI should not be reduced to definitions of strategy, teacher, or character. A more useful analytical question is how Islamic values move from curriculum content into repeated student practice. Across the reviewed studies, this process involves at least three linked dimensions: moral understanding, moral-emotional commitment, and observable conduct. The classic knowing-feeling-action formulation remains conceptually useful, but recent PAI research shows that these dimensions are shaped by school culture, teacher credibility, family support, and digital environments rather than by classroom explanation alone.[7]

The six strategies proposed in the original manuscript are retained, but each is reframed as an operational component with a mechanism, observable indicators, and implementation risks. This prevents the framework from becoming a generic list of good practices.

Strategy	Operational detail
1. Curriculum-value integration	**Operational form:** Map honesty, responsibility, discipline, empathy, worship ethics, and social responsibility to specific PAI learning outcomes and topics rather than attaching values after the lesson. **Mechanism:** Values are more likely to be internalized when moral meaning is embedded in content, cases, tasks, and assessment. **Illustrative indicator:** Lesson plans link a named value to content, student activity, and evidence of behavior.
2. Dialogic/problem-based learning	**Operational form:** Use dilemmas, cases, guided discussion, and problem solving related to peer conflict, social media, academic honesty, worship practice, and community responsibility. **Mechanism:** Students practice moral reasoning and apply Islamic principles to real situations instead of memorizing declarative rules. **Illustrative indicator:** Students can justify decisions with Islamic values and consider consequences for others.
3. Religious habituation + reflection	**Operational form:** Combine prayer, Qur'an literacy, greetings, service, and discipline routines with short reflection and explanation of meaning. **Mechanism:** Repetition builds routine; reflection prevents habituation from becoming mechanical compliance. **Illustrative indicator:** Participation is regular and students can explain the moral/religious meaning of the routine.

[6]Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, Thematic Analysis: A Practical Guide (London: SAGE, 2021).

[7]Lickona, Educating for Character.

4. Teacher exemplarity and ethics	**Operational form:** Teachers model fairness, honesty, punctuality, respectful speech, consistent worship, and responsible digital conduct. **Mechanism:** Students judge the credibility of moral teaching through consistency between teachers' words and actions. **Illustrative indicator:** Teacher behavior is consistent across classroom, school, and digital interaction.
5. Digital religious literacy	**Operational form:** Use digital media for contextual PAI learning while teaching source verification, adab online, algorithmic awareness, and responsible content creation. **Mechanism:** Digital literacy turns technology from a distraction risk into a site for ethical and religious practice. **Illustrative indicator:** Students verify religious information, reflect before sharing, and create value-based digital products.
6. Behavior- and reflection-based assessment	**Operational form:** Combine knowledge tests with observation, self-assessment, peer feedback, portfolios, reflective journals, and evidence from projects/routines. **Mechanism:** Assessment signals that character is demonstrated through repeated conduct and reflection, not only recalled definitions. **Illustrative indicator:** Rubrics specify observable behaviors and give students opportunities to reflect and improve.

B. Integrating Character Values into the PAI Curriculum

Recent curriculum analysis confirms that honesty, responsibility, empathy, and discipline are already present normatively in PAI curricula, but the persistent problem is the gap between values stated in documents and students' lived contexts. Character integration therefore requires a design chain: value -> learning objective -> learning experience -> reflection -> behavioral evidence. Without this chain, teachers may mention a value but still assess only factual recall.[8]

In practical terms, an aqidah lesson can connect belief to integrity and accountability; fiqh can connect rules to justice, responsibility, and accommodation; Qur'an-hadith can train interpretation and ethical reasoning; akhlak can use cases involving peer conflict and digital behavior; and Islamic history can examine moral choices, leadership, and consequences. This retains the theological distinctiveness of PAI while avoiding a purely verbal form of character teaching.

C. Dialogic and Problem-Based Learning

The interactive strategy in the original manuscript is strengthened by recent findings that PAI is more socially relevant when students are invited to interpret moral problems rather than simply receive moral conclusions. Dialogic learning does not weaken normative Islamic commitments; it provides a structured space for students to understand why a value matters, how competing considerations should be weighed, and what responsible action looks like in context.

For example, teachers can use a case about circulating an embarrassing video of a classmate. Students identify the relevant Islamic values, distinguish evidence from assumption, consider

[8]Alhamuddin and Asikin, "The Role of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Character Development," 159–170.

harm and responsibility, formulate an appropriate response, and reflect on what they would do if they were the sender, recipient, or bystander. Such tasks develop religious reasoning, empathy, communication, and digital ethics simultaneously.

D. Habituation as School Culture, Not Mechanical Routine

Empirical studies repeatedly identify habituation - congregational prayer, Qur'an reading, greetings, punctuality, service, and school religious programs - as a major mechanism of character formation. Yet habituation is educationally stronger when routines are connected to meaning, teacher example, and opportunities for reflection. Otherwise, students may comply in supervised settings without transferring the value to other situations.[9]

A useful implementation cycle is therefore: routine -> explanation of meaning -> guided practice -> reflection -> transfer. For instance, punctual congregational prayer can be linked to time discipline and collective responsibility; Qur'an literacy can be linked to adab and intellectual humility; social service can be linked to empathy and amanah. The objective is not only repeated behavior but increasingly self-directed moral practice.

E. Teacher Exemplarity and Professional Ethics

The strongest convergence across recent studies concerns the teacher as a moral model. PAI teachers are interpreted by students not only through the correctness of their explanations but through punctuality, fairness, patience, honesty, consistency, and the way they manage disagreement. Studies at junior-high, vocational, and primary-school levels report that exemplary conduct (uswah hasanah) and professional ethics are central mechanisms for making character values credible.[10]

This finding adds an important qualification to the original manuscript. 'Keteladanan' should not be described only as being a good example. It requires professional consistency that is

[9] Nasrullah et al., "The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Character Education," 145–154; Resti Kurnia Sari, Hidra Ariza, and Betti Sasmitta, "Peran Guru Dalam Membentuk Karakter Siswa Melalui Pembelajaran PAI di SMP N 1 Tilatang Kamang," Education: Jurnal Sosial Humaniora dan Pendidikan 4, no. 1 (2023): 12–25, https://doi.org/10.51903/education.v4i1.449; Syamsuriah et al., "The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Shaping Students' Religious Character," Journal of Education and Learning Sciences 6, no. 1 (2026): 518–537, https://doi.org/10.56404/jels.v6i1.335.

[10] Muh. Ubaidillah Alghifary Slamet and Regita Novita Sari, "The Role of the PAI Teacher as a Role Model in the Formation of Student Discipline Character," Edukasi Islami 14, no. 3 (2025): 847–864, https://doi.org/10.30868/ei.v14i03.8787; Annisaul Khairat et al., "Investigating Islamic Education Teachers as Role Models in Character Formation and Professional Ethics," Research Journal on Teacher Professional Development 4, no. 1 (2025): 167–182, https://doi.org/10.21580/rjtpd.v4i01.30480; Mustika Faradilla Shanti and Muhammad Wildan Shohib, "The Role of Islamic Education Teachers as Role Models in Character Building," Journal of Educational Sciences 10, no. 1 (2026): 519–529, https://doi.org/10.31258/jes.10.1.p.519-529.

visible in assessment fairness, respectful correction, responsible communication, and congruence between religious messages and everyday teacher behavior. The school therefore needs to support teacher ethics through collegial reflection and professional development, not rely solely on individual moral commitment.

F. Character Education in the Digital Environment

Technology is not merely a delivery tool. Recent school-based research shows that digital culture changes the conditions under which students encounter religious messages, peers, authority, and identity. PAI teachers therefore need to function as guides to digital religious literacy: helping students evaluate sources, recognize manipulative or polarizing content, practice adab in online interaction, and use digital media to communicate constructive values.[11]

This reframes the original 'technology utilization' strategy. The goal is not simply to make PAI more attractive through videos or applications. A character-based digital strategy should include source verification, ethical posting, protection of others' dignity, responsible attention, and reflective discussion of how algorithms and online peer pressure shape behavior. Digital products - such as short explanatory videos, reflective podcasts, or verified infographics - can become assessed evidence of both understanding and responsible communication.

G. Behavior- and Reflection-Based Assessment

Character assessment is the least developed component in many PAI programs. Recent curriculum analysis notes that evaluation often remains insufficiently connected to students' real moral practice. A more defensible approach is to assess patterns of observable behavior and reflection rather than claim to measure a student's inner faith. Teachers can use rubrics for responsibility, respectful communication, honesty in tasks, collaborative conduct, and participation in service or religious routines, supported by self-reflection and multiple observations over time.[12]

This approach also prevents a common problem: reducing character to a single teacher impression. Triangulated evidence - teacher observation, student self-assessment, peer feedback, portfolio artifacts, and project performance - provides a more educational picture. The purpose of assessment should be formative: helping students recognize progress, identify inconsistencies, and set concrete goals for improvement.

[11]Dapis Yanto et al., "Peran Guru PAI dalam Membentuk Karakter Religius Siswa di Era Digital: Studi Kasus di SMK N 1 Bungo," Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar 10, no. 2 (2025), https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v11i02.51470.

[12]Alhamuddin and Asikin, "The Role of the Islamic Religious Education Curriculum in Character Development," 159–170.

H. Supporting Conditions, Barriers, and Practical Indicators

The literature also demonstrates that the six strategies are constrained by institutional conditions. Limited PAI lesson time, weak family involvement, inconsistent school-wide discipline, administrative workload, teachers' digital competence gaps, and unsynchronized character programs can reduce impact. Conversely, a religious school culture, leadership support, professional development, parental cooperation, and consistent value reinforcement strengthen implementation.[13]

Dimension	Implementation detail
School leadership	**Barrier / implementation risk:** Character priorities are embedded in school policy and routines; PAI is coordinated with homeroom/counseling and other subjects. **Practical indicator:** Character work remains isolated in PAI lessons.
Teacher capacity	**Barrier / implementation risk:** Regular training in contextual PAI pedagogy, digital literacy, reflection, and authentic assessment. **Practical indicator:** Teachers rely on lecture, moralizing, or unverified digital content.
Family partnership	**Barrier / implementation risk:** Parents receive clear behavioral expectations and channels for two-way communication. **Practical indicator:** Values differ sharply between school and home with little coordination.
Student agency	**Barrier / implementation risk:** Students participate in reflection, peer projects, service, and goal setting. **Practical indicator:** Students are treated only as recipients of rules.
Assessment	**Barrier / implementation risk:** Multiple observations and reflective evidence are used formatively. **Practical indicator:** Character is reduced to a single score or subjective label.
Digital environment	**Barrier / implementation risk:** School guidance includes adab online, source verification, privacy, and responsible content production. **Practical indicator:** Technology is used only for presentation or is treated only as a threat.

I. Synthesis: A Six-Component PAI Character-Teaching Model

The synthesis suggests a coherent sequence. Curriculum integration defines the values and learning goals; dialogic/problem-based pedagogy allows students to reason about those values; habituation provides repeated practice; teacher exemplarity makes the values credible; digital religious literacy extends the same ethics into contemporary communication spaces; and authentic assessment supports reflection and improvement. These components should be understood as mutually reinforcing rather than as six independent activities.

This framework also clarifies the contribution of PAI relative to general character education. Its distinctive contribution lies in connecting moral

[13] Muhammad Syauqi Mubarak and Muhammad Ridwan Fauzi, "Islamic Religious Education in the National Education System: Opportunities and Challenges for Character Building," Atthulab 9, no. 2 (2024): 258–269, https://doi.org/10.15575/ath.v9i2.33377; Mokhamad Taufik, Mohamad Nur Kholis Setiawan, and Muehammad Eka Mahmud, "PAI Teacher Qualification Standards as the Main Pillar in Islamic Character Education," International Journal of Health, Economics, and Social Sciences 6, no. 4 (2024): 1141–1151, https://doi.org/10.56338/ijhess.v6i4.2354; Syamsuriah et al., "The Role of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Shaping Students' Religious Character," 518–537.

conduct to Islamic sources, worship, accountability before God, adab, and responsibility toward other people and the environment. At the same time, effective PAI character education requires pedagogical mechanisms that are recognizable in contemporary education: dialogue, contextual problem solving, modeling, practice, feedback, digital literacy, and authentic assessment. The integration of these two dimensions is the central conceptual contribution of the revised manuscript.[14]

CONCLUSION

This integrative review concludes that character-based teaching in Islamic Religious Education is most coherent when six strategies are implemented as one learning ecosystem: curriculum-value integration, dialogic and problem-based learning, meaningful religious habituation, teacher exemplarity and professional ethics, digital religious literacy, and behavior- and reflection-based assessment. These strategies address the cognitive, affective, behavioral, social, spiritual, and digital dimensions of students' character development rather than treating character as an additional topic taught after religious content.

The review also shows that implementation depends on contextual conditions. Strong teacher modeling, school-wide consistency, family collaboration, relevant digital competence, and formative assessment support internalization, whereas limited lesson time, fragmented programs, weak family-school alignment, and a purely cognitive assessment orientation can reduce the effectiveness of PAI character education. The practical implication is that PAI teachers should design explicit links between Islamic values, learning activities, repeated practice, reflection, and observable evidence of student conduct.

Because this article is a literature-based synthesis, it does not claim direct evidence from one particular school and cannot establish causal effectiveness of the proposed framework. Future research should test the six-component model through multi-site case studies, classroom observations, interviews with teachers and students, and longitudinal assessment of behavioral change. Such field research would allow the framework to be refined for different school levels and sociocultural contexts.

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