

Strategies of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Addressing Student Delinquency in Schools

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Abstract

This study examines the strategies used by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to address student delinquency in junior high schools in Bandar Pasir Mandage District, Asahan Regency. Using a qualitative approach with a multisite case study method, the research identifies delinquency types, causes, and intervention effectiveness. Findings reveal common issues such as truancy, improper mobile phone use, disrespect, avoidance of religious activities, and physical altercations. Contributing factors include weak religious foundations, economic struggles, lack of parental involvement, peer influence, and educational challenges. PAI teachers implement strategies like moral guidance, individualized mentoring, structured religious activities, parental collaboration, and rehabilitation programs. Schools with strong religious reinforcement programs show reduced misconduct, but inconsistent parental support and teacher workload remain obstacles. This study recommends standardized character education policies, enhanced teacher training, and greater parental engagement. The findings contribute to discussions on religious-based character education and student delinquency prevention in junior high schools.

Keywords: Student Delinquency, Character Education, Islamic Religious Education, Teacher Strategies, Parental Engagement.

Received: December 10, 2024.

Revised: January 8, 2025

Accepted: January 27, 2025

Article Identity:

Sari, D., Setiawan, R., & Prasetya, I. (2025). Strategies of Islamic Religious Education Teachers in Addressing Student Delinquency in Schools. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan (JIP) STKIP Kusuma Negara*, 16(2), 318-334.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a central role in shaping students' character and moral development, particularly in response to the challenges posed by an evolving social landscape. In Indonesia, teachers are not only responsible for transferring academic knowledge but are also entrusted with guiding students in internalizing values that shape their identities, ethics, and social interactions. However, one of the most pressing challenges faced by educators today is the increasing prevalence of student delinquency. This issue manifests in various forms, ranging from academic neglect—such as truancy and declining academic performance—to more severe behavioral problems, including bullying, violence, and substance abuse. These disciplinary issues have been further exacerbated by the widespread influence of

digital media, social networks, and shifting societal norms, making it increasingly difficult for schools to regulate student behavior effectively (Ahmad, Asdiana, & Jayatimar, 2019; Utami et.al., 2024).

Recent research highlights the concerning rise in student delinquency across Indonesia. A study by Nawas et al. (2024) found that approximately 35% of junior high school students engage in truancy, while 20% struggle with behavioral challenges that negatively impact their academic progress. Similarly, Gani (2020) reported that the unregulated use of digital platforms, often without parental supervision, has contributed to the deterioration of students' ethical and academic discipline. In addition to these external factors, the weakening of religious values has been identified as a key contributor to moral disengagement among students. Given that moral guidance is crucial for character development, religious education—particularly Islamic Religious Education (PAI)—has been increasingly recognized as a critical tool in addressing these behavioral concerns.

Understanding and addressing student delinquency requires a multidimensional approach that considers both internal and external influences on student behavior. Internal factors such as weak religious foundations and a lack of self-regulation are often shaped by external pressures, including family dynamics, peer influence, and unrestricted access to digital content (Unayah & Sabarisman, 2015). Within this context, PAI teachers are uniquely positioned to play a pivotal role in mitigating delinquency by fostering moral values and ethical awareness. Beyond their roles as educators, they serve as moral guides responsible for instilling religious principles and reinforcing positive behavior among students (Abdurrohman, 2018; Akhyar & Fitri, 2022; Manik., et.al, 2024).

Despite the increasing recognition of PAI teachers' role in character education, there remains a significant research gap regarding the specific strategies they employ to address student delinquency across diverse school environments. While previous studies have broadly examined disciplinary policies and character education programs, they lack detailed insights into the context-specific interventions, challenges, and effectiveness of teacher-led strategies across different educational settings. Furthermore, much of the existing literature has focused on general classroom management rather than the role of religious education in behavior modification. This study seeks to fill this gap by conducting a multisite analysis to explore how PAI teachers implement character-building strategies in various school contexts and to assess the effectiveness of these interventions in reducing delinquency.

This study is guided by Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which posits that students learn behaviors through observation and imitation of role models, including teachers, parents, and peers. This theory underscores the critical role of PAI teachers in shaping student behavior by demonstrating ethical conduct and reinforcing positive character traits. Additionally, Kohlberg's stages of moral development suggest that students' progress through distinct phases of moral reasoning, transitioning from obedience-driven ethics to the internalization of universal moral principles. Structured religious education, therefore, serves as a mechanism for facilitating this moral progression, helping students develop empathy, respect, and responsibility. Empirical findings by Ali, Wahidin, and Maulida (2022) reinforce this perspective, demonstrating that PAI teachers who

integrate character-building frameworks alongside religious instruction observe significant improvements in student behavior over time.

To address the identified research gap, this study aims to examine the strategies used by PAI teachers to address delinquent behaviors among junior high school students. It seeks to explore the various forms of student delinquency, analyze the underlying causes contributing to these behaviors, and evaluate the effectiveness of PAI teachers' intervention strategies. By conducting a comparative analysis across multiple schools, this research provides a more comprehensive understanding of commonalities and variations in disciplinary approaches, offering deeper, context-specific insights into the challenges and opportunities in character education. Unlike previous studies that primarily focus on general disciplinary policies, this research specifically highlights how religious education can serve as a foundation for behavior modification.

The significance of character education extends beyond individual student development, influencing broader societal harmony and ethical responsibility. Research by Syarif, Hermawan, and Farida (2023) confirms that structured character education programs can significantly reduce delinquent behavior among students. However, limited research exists on how PAI teachers implement character education within school environments and how these strategies translate into measurable behavioral improvements. This study seeks to bridge this gap by offering empirical evidence on the role of PAI teachers in promoting ethical behavior, evaluating the efficacy of current intervention strategies, and identifying areas for improvement.

Ultimately, this research contributes to the academic discourse on student delinquency and character education by emphasizing the critical role of religious education in moral development. By focusing on the lived experiences of PAI teachers and the effectiveness of their strategies, this study provides valuable insights for policymakers, school administrators, and educators seeking to implement more effective character education programs. Furthermore, by addressing the root causes of student delinquency and offering practical intervention models, this research aims to inform the development of national policies and best practices that ensure students not only excel academically but also grow into responsible, morally upright individuals.

In summary, this study aims to examine how PAI teachers' strategies effectively address student delinquency, with a particular emphasis on the importance of character education as a means of fostering ethical behavior among junior high school students. By providing new insights into the practical methods used by PAI teachers and assessing their impact, this research seeks to contribute to the future of education in Indonesia, fostering a more harmonious, tolerant, and ethically responsible society.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Approach and Design

This study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive case study method to explore the strategies adopted by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in addressing student delinquency. A qualitative approach is chosen because it enables

a comprehensive exploration of complex social phenomena related to character education and behavioral management in schools. The descriptive case study method provides an in-depth examination of real-world practices while allowing for a contextualized understanding of the unique challenges faced by educators in different school settings.

Research Setting and Participants

The study is conducted as a multisite study in three junior high schools located in Bandar Pasir Mandoge District, Asahan Regency: Sentosa General Junior High School, Public Junior High School 5, and PTPN IV Junior High School. These schools were selected based on their diverse student demographics and different administrative structures, ensuring a more comprehensive and comparative analysis of delinquency management strategies.

The participants in this study include school principals, PAI teachers, guidance counselors (Guru BK), vice principals responsible for student affairs, local community members, and students. The selection of these key informants is based on their direct involvement in student discipline and character education. A purposive sampling technique is used to ensure that the participants are those most knowledgeable about the issue under investigation. The inclusion criteria for participants are at least three years of teaching or administrative experience and active involvement in student behavior management programs.

Data Collection Methods

To ensure the richness of the collected data, this study utilizes multiple data collection methods, namely observations, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and document analysis (Sugiyono, 2019). Observations are conducted in classrooms and school environments to examine how PAI teachers implement character education and disciplinary measures. The observations also focus on student interactions, behavioral patterns, and classroom management techniques.

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with school principals, PAI teachers, and guidance counselors to gain insights into their strategies for addressing student delinquency. The interviews include open-ended questions to encourage detailed responses about their experiences and challenges. In addition, FGDs are conducted with groups of students to understand their perspectives on school rules, delinquency issues, and the effectiveness of teacher interventions. To complement these qualitative data sources, document analysis is performed on school policies, disciplinary records, and educational materials related to character education to identify formal institutional approaches to student behavior management.

Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data is analyzed using thematic analysis, following Thomas (2023) framework, which includes data familiarization, coding, theme identification, theme refinement, and interpretation. Thematic analysis enables researchers to systematically identify patterns and themes related to student delinquency and intervention strategies.

To further enhance analytical rigor, the study employs constant comparative analysis, where data from different sources (interviews, FGDs, and observations) are compared to identify similarities and differences. This process allows for a deeper exploration of variations in teacher strategies across different school contexts. By using an iterative analysis process, the study ensures that emergent themes accurately reflect the lived experiences of participants and the unique contextual factors influencing student behavior management.

Validity and Reliability Measures

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings, triangulation techniques are applied. Data triangulation is conducted by cross-verifying findings from multiple data sources, including interviews, observations, and document reviews, to ensure consistency and accuracy. Methodological triangulation is implemented by using a combination of qualitative methods (interviews, FGDs, and document analysis) to capture diverse perspectives and strengthen the reliability of findings. Time triangulation is employed by collecting data over an extended period, allowing researchers to observe trends and changes in student behavior over time. Additionally, member checking is performed by presenting preliminary findings to selected participants to verify the accuracy of interpretations and conclusions.

To further minimize bias, peer debriefing sessions are conducted with fellow researchers to enhance analytical objectivity and confirm data interpretations. These measures ensure that the findings remain grounded in empirical data rather than being influenced by subjective assumptions.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval is obtained from the relevant educational authorities before conducting the study. All participants provide informed consent, ensuring that they understand the purpose of the research and their right to withdraw at any stage. Confidentiality and anonymity are strictly maintained by using pseudonyms and securely storing all collected data. Additionally, interviews and FGDs are conducted in a safe and non-intimidating environment to encourage open and honest discussions. Ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects are strictly adhered to, ensuring that participants are treated with respect and their personal information remains protected.

Significance of the Methodology

This research design ensures that the study provides a holistic and contextualized understanding of delinquency management strategies in schools. By integrating multiple data sources and rigorous analytical techniques, the study produces findings that are both reliable and applicable to real-world educational settings. The combination of qualitative depth and comparative multisite analysis ensures that the research contributes valuable insights to policy development, teacher training, and future research on character education in Islamic schools.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study on student delinquency in junior high schools and the strategies employed by Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers to address these issues. The results are based on data collected through observations, interviews, and document analysis from selected schools. The findings are structured into four key areas: (1) forms of student delinquency, (2) contributing factors, (3) intervention strategies implemented by PAI teachers, and (4) the effectiveness of these strategies in managing student behavior.

The study identifies various forms of student delinquency that disrupt school discipline and academic performance. These behaviors range from truancy and inappropriate mobile phone use to disrespectful conduct, avoidance of religious activities, and physical altercations. The analysis also reveals that delinquency is influenced by multiple factors, including weak religious foundations, economic struggles, parental disengagement, peer influence, and structural challenges within the education system.

To address these issues, PAI teachers employ a combination of strategies, including moral role modeling, personalized mentorship, structured religious activities, collaboration with parents and the community, and rehabilitation programs. The effectiveness of these interventions varies, with schools that implement structured religious reinforcement programs demonstrating significant reductions in disciplinary infractions. However, challenges such as inconsistent parental involvement and teacher workload continue to hinder sustained behavioral improvements.

The following sections provide a detailed analysis of each of these aspects, beginning with an examination of the different forms of student delinquency observed in the selected schools.

Forms of Student Delinquency in Schools

The study identifies multiple forms of student delinquency that commonly occur in the selected schools. Through observations, interviews, and document analysis, it is found that truancy, mobile phone misuse, disrespectful behavior, noncompliance with religious activities, and physical altercations are the most frequently reported disciplinary issues.

Truancy is one of the most prevalent forms of delinquency, where students frequently skip school without valid permission. School attendance records indicate that an average of 15% of students in the selected schools have multiple unexcused absences each month. Interviews with school principals reveal that truancy is often linked to lack of parental supervision and peer influence.

One vice principal explained:

"Many students who skip school come from homes where parents are not actively monitoring their children's education. In some cases, they are influenced by their friends who encourage them to leave school without permission. This makes it difficult for schools to fully control attendance, as the root cause lies beyond school authority."

Mobile phone misuse during lessons is another frequently observed issue. Despite school regulations prohibiting the use of mobile phones during instructional

hours, many students continue to use them for social media, online gaming, or non-educational purposes. A document review of school discipline logs highlights that 28% of disciplinary infractions involve unauthorized mobile phone usage.

A PAI teacher shared:

"Students often hide their phones under their desks or inside books. Even during religious classes, some are seen texting rather than paying attention to the lessons. The challenge is that they have developed an attachment to digital devices, making it difficult to enforce complete restrictions."

Disrespectful behavior, including rudeness and lack of discipline, is commonly reported by teachers. Instances of students talking back to teachers, failing to follow instructions, and being disruptive in class are documented in student behavior reports.

A guidance counselor emphasized:

"Some students openly challenge authority figures, using inappropriate language or ignoring classroom rules. This behavior not only affects learning but also influences their peers. Teachers often struggle to maintain order when students fail to respect authority, which affects overall classroom management."

Avoidance of Zuhur congregational prayers despite school enforcement is another key issue. Many students find ways to avoid attending prayers by hiding in different areas of the school, such as behind buildings or inside empty classrooms. An analysis of attendance records for Zuhur prayers reveals that approximately 40% of students regularly skip mandatory congregational prayers.

One PAI teacher stated:

"Although prayer is mandatory in our school, students who are not closely monitored tend to avoid it. They pretend to go to the prayer area but disappear before the prayer starts. This reflects a broader issue of declining religious engagement among students."

Physical altercations and fights among students have also been identified as a major concern. School incident reports indicate that 10% of students have been involved in fights in the past academic year.

A principal remarked:

"Most fights happen due to misunderstandings between students or as a result of peer provocation. Social media conflicts often escalate into real-life fights within school premises, showing the influence of digital interactions on physical aggression."

These findings highlight the urgent need for effective intervention strategies to address these delinquency issues. The next section discusses the effectiveness of PAI teachers' strategies in mitigating these challenges.

Contributing Factors to Student Delinquency

The findings reveal several underlying factors contributing to student delinquency. Through data triangulation, the study identifies six primary causes: weak religious

foundations, family economic struggles, parental disengagement, peer influence, exposure to negative social and digital influences, and school system challenges.

Weak Religious Foundations and Lack of Moral Guidance

Many students struggle with moral discipline due to a lack of strong religious foundations and minimal exposure to structured religious education at home. Without sufficient moral guidance, students are more prone to engaging in delinquent behaviors as they lack an internalized sense of ethical responsibility. A PAI teacher explained:

“Many students do not receive adequate religious guidance from their families. As a result, they lack a strong moral compass, making them more susceptible to behavioral problems in school. Schools attempt to fill this gap, but without reinforcement at home, it becomes an uphill battle.”

This statement highlights that the absence of religious reinforcement at home leads to moral inconsistency, where students behave differently in school compared to their home environments. Without continuity in religious values, students often adopt a more permissive attitude toward discipline and ethics.

Family Economic Struggles Leading to Disengagement in Education

Economic instability directly affects a student’s ability to focus on education. Many students from low-income families prioritize survival over academic success, which often leads to absenteeism and academic disengagement. A principal noted:

“Students from low-income families often face difficulties focusing on schoolwork because they are preoccupied with financial struggles at home. Some students even take on part-time work to support their families, leading to chronic absenteeism and disengagement from learning.”

This finding is consistent with prior research that links economic hardship to behavioral issues, as financial stress within families often results in reduced parental supervision and emotional instability in students.

Parental Disengagement and Limited Supervision at Home

A lack of parental engagement is a recurring theme in student delinquency. Without proper guidance, students lack accountability for their behavior both at home and in school. A guidance counselor shared:

“Some parents do not monitor their children’s whereabouts or school performance. They assume the school will take full responsibility for their child’s behavior, but without parental reinforcement, students often act out and ignore school regulations.”

Parental neglect in supervision often leads students to seek validation from peers, which in turn makes them more susceptible to delinquent behaviors. These findings underscore the need for a more structured, collaborative approach to student discipline, involving schools, families, and communities to address the root causes of delinquency.

PAI Teachers' Strategies for Managing Delinquency

The findings indicate that PAI teachers employ a combination of strategies to manage student delinquency effectively. These strategies focus on ethical role modeling, personalized mentorship, structured religious activities, collaboration with parents and the community, and rehabilitation programs for students with severe behavioral issues.

Exemplary Leadership by Demonstrating Ethical Behavior

PAI teachers act as role models for students by demonstrating ethical behavior both inside and outside the classroom. Through consistent adherence to moral principles and professionalism, they establish a standard for students to emulate. One teacher explained:

“Students tend to imitate the behavior of their teachers. If we demonstrate honesty, discipline, and respect in our interactions, students are more likely to follow suit. It is essential for us to model the values we expect from them.”

This approach reinforces discipline and character-building through daily interactions, ensuring that students see their teachers as figures of authority and moral guidance.

Personalized Mentorship to Guide Students

Many PAI teachers adopt a mentorship approach, offering one-on-one guidance to students who display behavioral issues. By establishing personal connections, teachers gain deeper insights into students' personal struggles and behavioral triggers. A guidance counselor noted:

“Rather than resorting to strict punishment, we engage in conversations with students to understand their challenges. This allows us to offer tailored advice and support that resonates with their experiences.”

Through individualized support, students feel acknowledged and are more likely to respond positively to correctional measures.

Structured Religious Activities, Including Daily Quran Recitation and Prayer Routines

Schools integrate structured religious activities, such as daily Quran recitations and prayer routines, to instill moral values in students. These activities provide continuous exposure to Islamic teachings and reinforce a sense of discipline. One school administrator stated:

“Morning Quran recitation sessions help students start their day with a sense of spiritual grounding. When religious practices become habitual, students develop a deeper appreciation for ethical behavior.”

By embedding religious principles into daily school routines, educators create an environment conducive to character development.

Collaboration with Parents and Community to Reinforce Discipline

PAI teachers frequently engage with parents and the local community to ensure that disciplinary measures extend beyond the school setting. A vice principal highlighted:

“Parental involvement is crucial in shaping student behavior. When parents reinforce school values at home, students receive consistent moral guidance, which reduces instances of misconduct.”

Regular meetings, workshops, and community involvement initiatives help bridge the gap between school policies and home environments.

Rehabilitation and Counseling for Students with Severe Behavioral Issues

For students exhibiting severe behavioral issues, schools implement rehabilitation programs and counseling services. These interventions are designed to address underlying causes of delinquency and provide emotional and psychological support. A school counselor explained:

“Some students act out due to unresolved personal struggles. Counseling sessions allow us to address these challenges in a constructive manner, helping them redirect their energy toward positive behaviors.”

These findings emphasize that managing delinquency requires a holistic approach that integrates discipline, mentorship, religious reinforcement, and community collaboration.

Effectiveness of the Strategies

The effectiveness of the strategies implemented by PAI teachers in managing student delinquency is evaluated based on document analysis, observational data, and interviews with key stakeholders. The findings indicate varying degrees of success, particularly in schools that integrate structured religious reinforcement programs and proactive teacher engagement.

Document Analysis of Disciplinary Records

A review of school disciplinary records reveals that 30% of students have been involved in minor disciplinary violations, such as truancy, inappropriate mobile phone use, and lack of participation in congregational prayers. Meanwhile, 10% of students have engaged in more severe misconduct, including physical altercations and disrespectful behavior towards teachers. A school administrator commented:

“Despite our best efforts, student delinquency remains a persistent issue. However, we have observed a significant decrease in repeated offenses among students who actively engage in religious activities.”

This suggests that while disciplinary issues persist, structured interventions contribute to behavioral improvement over time.

Impact of Religious Reinforcement Programs

Observations conducted in schools that implement structured religious activities, such as daily Quran recitation and mandatory prayer attendance, indicate a 20% reduction in behavioral infractions. A PAI teacher elaborated:

“Students who consistently participate in structured religious programs tend to exhibit stronger self-discipline. These activities provide moral guidance that helps them navigate daily interactions more responsibly.”

This finding aligns with previous studies highlighting the role of religious education in character development and behavioral regulation.

Observational Data on Student Self-Regulation

In schools where PAI teachers actively engage with students through personalized mentorship, significant improvements in self-regulation and peer interactions are observed. A guidance counselor noted:

“We have seen students become more reflective about their actions when teachers consistently guide them through mentorship and discussions. There’s a visible shift in how they manage conflicts and make decisions.”

The combination of mentorship and structured activities fosters a positive learning environment, reducing instances of misconduct and enhancing student accountability.

These findings underscore the effectiveness of holistic strategies, particularly when schools integrate religious education, personalized teacher engagement, and parental collaboration to reinforce positive behavioral norms among students.

Discussion

The findings of this study provide valuable insights into the patterns of student delinquency, the factors contributing to these behaviors, and the effectiveness of intervention strategies implemented by PAI teachers. By examining these aspects through qualitative data analysis, this discussion contextualizes the results in relation to previous research and theoretical frameworks.

This section explores the impact of student delinquency on academic performance and school discipline, highlighting its implications for students' moral and social development. Additionally, it evaluates the role of parental engagement, peer influence, and school-based interventions in shaping student behavior. The discussion further assesses the significance of religious education in character formation, comparing schools that implement structured religious activities with those that do not. Finally, the limitations of current intervention strategies and potential policy improvements are addressed to ensure a more effective approach to student behavioral management.

The following subsections provide an in-depth analysis of these key areas, beginning with an examination of the different forms of student delinquency and their educational impact.

Patterns of Student Delinquency and Their Educational Impact

The findings of this study align with previous research by Gularso and Indrianawati (2022), confirming that student delinquency manifests in both minor and severe forms. Minor infractions, such as truancy and mobile phone misuse, negatively affect students' academic engagement, leading to declining performance and disengagement in the classroom (Slavin, 2018). Mobile phone misuse, in particular, has been identified as a major distraction in learning environments, with students often using their devices for non-educational purposes instead of focusing on lessons (Ali, Wahidin, & Maulida, 2022). More severe delinquent behaviors, including fights and bullying, contribute to increased school conflicts and a deteriorating moral environment (Ramdani, 2023). This aligns with findings by

Rinaldi (2021), who observed that the COVID-19 pandemic intensified instances of student altercations due to prolonged social isolation and changes in learning environments. The prevalence of these issues underscores the urgent need for structured intervention strategies to mitigate delinquent tendencies and foster a more conducive learning atmosphere.

Parental Disengagement as a More Significant Factor Than Peer Influence

While previous studies have emphasized peer pressure as a dominant factor influencing student behavior, this research suggests that parental disengagement plays a more significant role. Interviews with teachers and administrators reveal that students lacking parental supervision exhibit higher rates of absenteeism and misconduct (Unayah & Sabarisman, 2015). Parental involvement is a critical component in shaping students' moral values, yet findings indicate that many parents, due to work commitments or lack of awareness, do not actively monitor their children's behavior or academic performance (Bird et.al., 2024). The absence of parental engagement creates a gap in character education, making students more susceptible to external negative influences (Wilder, 2023). Furthermore, Ayenalem et al. (2022) highlight that students from households with low parental engagement often exhibit behavioral problems at school, as they seek validation from peer groups. This study suggests that schools should prioritize initiatives that enhance parental engagement in student character development. Effective programs may include parent-teacher workshops, counseling initiatives, and structured communication channels between schools and families.

The Role of PAI Teachers in Character Formation

The study supports Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which posits that students learn behaviors through observation and imitation of role models (Bandura, 1977). The role of PAI teachers in character formation is evident in their efforts to instill ethical values through mentorship and religious reinforcement (Masgorgor, 2020). PAI teachers actively engage in role modeling, mentoring, and structured religious activities to foster discipline among students. This finding is consistent with Ahmad, Asdiana, and Jayatimar (2019), who emphasized that students tend to emulate their teachers' moral behaviors when ethical guidance is provided consistently. However, institutional challenges, such as large class sizes and limited resources, pose barriers to maximizing the effectiveness of these interventions (Fahrurrozi & Sutrisno, 2018). Additionally, Chen et.al (2024) highlight that high teacher workloads contribute to burnout, further limiting their ability to engage in individualized character formation efforts. Addressing these constraints through structured training programs, resource allocation, and reducing administrative burdens can enhance the impact of PAI teachers in promoting positive student behavior.

Comparative Analysis of Schools with and Without Religious Habit Formation

A comparative analysis of schools implementing structured religious activities versus those with minimal religious engagement reveals a stark difference in student behavior (Nurizka & Rahim, 2020). Schools with daily Quran recitations and mandatory congregational prayers report fewer disciplinary violations, suggesting that religious reinforcement fosters a stronger moral foundation (Ahmad et al., 2019). This study finds that religious habit formation contributes to self-

discipline, social responsibility, and improved classroom behavior, reinforcing previous findings by Syarif, Hermawan, and Farida (2023). Structured religious programs are also linked to increased student respect for teachers and peers, further reducing instances of conflicts and bullying. These findings emphasize the need for preventive approaches rather than reactive disciplinary measures to promote sustained character development. Schools should consider integrating religious education as a daily structured routine rather than an occasional activity to maximize its influence on student behavior.

Limitations of Current Intervention Strategies

Despite the effectiveness of PAI teacher interventions, several limitations in the implementation of current strategies remain. One of the most pressing concerns is inconsistent parental involvement, which weakens long-term behavior modification efforts. Studies have shown that students benefit most from consistent moral reinforcement at home and school, yet many parents do not actively support school-led character development initiatives (Azizah et al., 2021). Furthermore, implementation of discipline policies varies across schools, creating gaps in effectiveness. Some schools enforce strict disciplinary actions for misconduct, while others adopt a more lenient approach, leading to inconsistencies in student behavioral expectations (McCrorry, Coffey, & Lavery, 2023). This discrepancy affects students' understanding of consequences and may encourage delinquent behaviors in environments where enforcement is weak. Additionally, teacher workload remains a significant challenge, limiting the sustainability of personalized mentoring approaches (Kulsum, 2023). Without adequate support, teachers may struggle to implement character-building strategies effectively.

Policy and Practical Implications

This study underscores the need for structured teacher training programs to equip PAI teachers with advanced behavior management skills (Akhyar & Fitri, 2022). Schools should implement standardized character education policies with measurable impacts to ensure consistency in behavioral interventions (Effendi, 2021). Additionally, integrating parental engagement initiatives into school programs can bridge the gap between home and school environments, fostering a more cohesive approach to character formation. Research by Hou et al. (2021) suggests that strengthening communication between parents and teachers enhances student motivation and discipline, reinforcing the importance of collaborative educational efforts. Future research should explore longitudinal impacts of these interventions to further assess their long-term effectiveness. Moreover, the development of a national framework for character education could provide schools with clear guidelines on best practices, ensuring uniformity in disciplinary approaches across different educational institutions.

These findings contribute to the broader discourse on student delinquency and character education, emphasizing the necessity of holistic, multi-stakeholder interventions that integrate teachers, parents, and policymakers in fostering student discipline and ethical growth. Ensuring sustained efforts in these areas will not only reduce instances of student misconduct but also create a more positive and academically productive school environment.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights the crucial role of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers in addressing student delinquency in junior high schools. The findings indicate that common forms of delinquency include truancy, mobile phone misuse, disrespectful behavior, avoidance of religious activities, and physical altercations. These issues stem from multiple contributing factors, such as weak religious foundations, family economic struggles, parental disengagement, peer influence, and challenges within the education system. PAI teachers employ various strategies to mitigate delinquency, including moral role modeling, personalized mentorship, structured religious activities, collaboration with parents and the community, and rehabilitation programs. Schools that integrate structured religious reinforcement programs show a significant reduction in disciplinary infractions, though challenges persist due to inconsistent parental involvement and high teacher workloads. This study confirms that a holistic, collaborative approach involving schools, families, and communities is essential for effective character education. Strengthening parental engagement, providing teacher training in behavior management, and implementing standardized character education policies are necessary steps to improve student discipline. By fostering ethical values and responsible behavior, schools can contribute to the development of a more morally grounded and academically productive student body.

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