

Integrating Islamic and Muhammadiyah Values into Learning to Strengthen Character Development in Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools in Salaman

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Abstract:

The primary challenge facing vocational education in Indonesia today extends beyond the acquisition of technical skills to include the urgent need for character formation, which is increasingly threatened by the forces of globalization and moral decline. This reality underscores the importance of a pedagogical approach that deliberately integrates Islamic and Muhammadiyah values into the educational process. This study aims to describe and analyze an integrated instructional model grounded in these values as a strategic framework for strengthening students' character at Muhammadiyah Vocational School in Salaman. Adopting a qualitative methodology with a case study design, data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis to obtain a holistic understanding. The findings reveal that the integration of Islamic and Muhammadiyah values significantly enhances students' discipline, sense of responsibility, and spiritual awareness. The model is structured around five key components: monotheism (*tauhid*), a thematic-integrative curriculum, reflective-participatory learning methods, a holistic character evaluation system, and strong institutional support. The comprehensive integration of these values proves to be an effective strategy for fostering sustainable character development in vocational education. Future studies are encouraged to examine the long-term impact of this model through longitudinal research and to explore the potential of digital technologies in advancing value-based character education.

Abstrak:

Tantangan utama pendidikan kejuruan di Indonesia saat ini bukan hanya berfokus pada penguasaan keterampilan teknis, tetapi juga pada persoalan pembentukan karakter siswa yang tergerus oleh arus globalisasi dan degradasi moral. Fenomena ini menuntut adanya pendekatan pembelajaran yang mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai keislaman dan keorganisasian secara sistematis dalam proses pendidikan. Studi ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan dan menganalisis model pembelajaran terintegrasi berbasis nilai-nilai Islam dan Kemuhammadiyah sebagai strategi penguatan karakter siswa di Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman. Penelitian dikaji menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus, melalui teknik observasi partisipatif, wawancara mendalam, serta telaah dokumen untuk memperoleh data secara komprehensif. Riset menemukan bahwa penerapan integrasi nilai Islam dan Kemuhammadiyah mampu membentuk sikap disiplin, tanggung jawab, dan memantik kesadaran spiritual siswa. Model integrasi mencakup lima komponen utama yaitu ketauhidan, struktur kurikulum tematik-integratif, metode reflektif-partisipatif, sistem evaluasi karakter holistik, dan dukungan institusional. Integrasi menyeluruh nilai Islam dan Kemuhammadiyah terbukti menjadi pendekatan strategis yang efektif untuk memperkuat karakter

siswa SMK secara berkelanjutan. Penelitian lanjutan disarankan untuk mengevaluasi efektivitas jangka panjang model ini melalui studi longitudinal dan eksplorasi pemanfaatan teknologi digital dalam penguatan pendidikan karakter berbasis nilai Islam.

Keywords:

Integrated Learning, Islamic Values, Character Education

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Introduction

The transformation of vocational secondary education in the contemporary era requires a holistic approach that integrates academic knowledge, technical skills, and character development (Rahmadhani, Ahyanuardi, & Suryati, 2022). The increasing prevalence of moral decline among adolescents – evidenced by rising incidents of inter-school violence, bullying, and a deterioration in respectful communication with educators – reveals fundamental weaknesses in the current character education system. This situation is particularly concerning when considered in light of the objectives of national education as outlined in Law No. 20 of 2003, which mandates the development of individuals who are faithful, devout, noble, physically and mentally healthy, knowledgeable, skilled, independent, creative, democratic, and responsible citizens (Musa, 2023). Vocational high schools, as institutions tasked with preparing skilled and professional human resources, face distinct challenges in balancing the development of technical competencies with the cultivation of strong moral character (Rahmadhani, Ahyanuardi, & Suryati, 2022). These challenges are exacerbated by the forces of globalization and the rapid advancement of information technology, which significantly influence the mindsets and behaviors of youth. In this context, character education grounded in religious values emerges as an urgent necessity that must be systematically embedded into every aspect of learning (Herlina, Arismunandar, & Tolla, 2024; Saili & Taat, 2023).

Muhammadiyah, as the second-largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, articulates a clear educational vision: to develop Muslims with noble character, confidence, competence, and a commitment to active and meaningful participation in society and nation-building. Muhammadiyah values, rooted in progressive Islamic principles, offer a compelling alternative to address the challenges of character education in the modern era.

A learning approach that integrates Islamic and Muhammadiyah values seeks not only to cultivate students' technical skills but also to nurture their spiritual, emotional, and social intelligence – essential capacities for navigating future life challenges (Maharani, Berbyani, & Meilani, 2024). At Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools in Salaman, the integration of Islamic and Muhammadiyah values is not limited to the formal curriculum but is reflected in school culture and daily practices. Activities such as congregational prayer, Qur'anic tadarus, and the habituation of the 5S principles (smile, greeting, politeness, and courtesy) are vital components of character formation. This approach emphasizes that effective character education must be grounded in lived experiences and consistent practice of religious values, rather than confined to theoretical instruction. Astuti, Mustofa, and Nisak (2024) affirm that the integration of religious values in education enhances students' moral awareness, discipline, and sense of responsibility. Teachers, as role models who embody Islamic and Muhammadiyah values, play a critical role in the successful internalization of positive character traits among students (Maharani, Berbyani, & Meilani, 2024). Furthermore, interdisciplinary learning that links spiritual values with vocational competencies has been shown to foster students' emotional and social intelligence (Rahmadhani, Ahyuardi, & Suryati, 2022).

A growing body of literature supports the positive impact of integrating religious values into education. Research on edutainment in Islamic religious education, for instance, highlights that creative, interactive, and reflective learning approaches promote deeper internalization of Islamic values and nurture critical and reflective thinking (Firdaus & Prasetya, 2024; Praja, Husniyah, & Harun, 2025). Complementary studies underscore the role of digital technology in enhancing Islamic Religious Education by improving both learning effectiveness and value comprehension (Mintasih, Purnama, & Sukiman, 2024). Research on Islamic education management in pesantren contexts further demonstrates that a holistic management approach – characterized by strategic planning, a competency-based organizational structure, charismatic leadership, and continuous supervision – creates an environment conducive to character development (Wisudaningsih, Ghony, & Sutiah, 2024). Similarly, evaluation of the Ulul Ilmi model shows that a holistic pedagogical framework integrating knowledge, skills, attitudes, and spirituality significantly strengthens students' moral and spiritual development (Budiyanti & Parhan, 2024).

Recent research also highlights the critical role of embedding Islamic values in national education to nurture a morally upright and globally competitive generation (Astuti, Mustofa, & Nisak, 2024). Islamic education rooted in the principles of faith (iman), ethics (akhlak), and knowledge (ilmu) aligns closely with national education goals, aiming to produce pious, ethical, and virtuous individuals. The specific context of Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman offers a unique opportunity to implement a holistic educational model that blends Islamic and Muhammadiyah values. Its strategic position within the Muhammadiyah education network provides a strong ideological foundation for an approach that emphasizes both technical proficiency and character development rooted in Islamic values. This study seeks to analyze and develop an integrated learning

system based on Islamic and Muhammadiyah values to strengthen student character at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman. Specifically, it investigates how these values are implemented in the learning process, identifies supporting and hindering factors, and evaluates their impact on character formation. The study also aims to propose a practical integrated learning model suitable for implementation across Muhammadiyah vocational schools.

This research makes significant theoretical and practical contributions to the development of character education based on religious values, particularly within vocational education. Theoretically, it contributes to the academic literature by presenting a structured model that embeds Islamic and Muhammadiyah values into essential educational dimensions such as curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and institutional culture. Practically, it provides an evidence-based framework for vocational schools – especially Muhammadiyah-affiliated institutions – to design character education programs that foster discipline, accountability, ethical awareness, and spiritual commitment. This model aligns with national education objectives while also addressing industry demands for morally grounded and socially responsible graduates. The research findings are also expected to inform educational policymaking, advocating for the systematic integration of religious values into vocational education to reinforce students' moral foundations.

Furthermore, the study aims to offer actionable guidance to school leaders and educators in implementing effective strategies for character development at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman. It also contributes to the advancement of a progressive Islamic education model that can be adapted by other institutions with similar values and missions. Methodologically, this study employs a qualitative approach to capture the complexity of learning integration based on Islamic and Muhammadiyah values. Through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis, the research will explore the dynamics of value integration within teaching and learning processes at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman. Then, the expected outcome of this study is the formulation of a comprehensive integrated learning model designed to enhance student character formation by embedding Islamic and Muhammadiyah values across all learning dimensions. This model will encompass pedagogical strategies, instructional approaches, evaluation systems, and institutional supports necessary for achieving optimal character education outcomes. In addition, the study will provide policy recommendations to support the development and implementation of value-based character education in Muhammadiyah vocational schools.

Research Method

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the integration of Islamic and Muhammadiyah values into the learning process as a strategy for strengthening student character at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman (Sugiyono, 2017). Participants were selected using purposive sampling – a non-probability sampling technique in which informants are deliberately chosen based on their relevance to the research objectives (Dinihari, Musringudin, & Lutfi, 2023). Key informants were

selected based on the following criteria: (1) active involvement in the educational community at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman; (2) a minimum of two years of experience within the Muhammadiyah educational system; and (3) direct engagement in character education or Islamic religious instruction. To strengthen data validity through source triangulation, two students were also included as secondary informants.

Data were collected using three primary techniques: interviews, observation, and documentation (Hendri, Utami, & Nurlaili, 2022). In-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview guide developed around the themes of Islamic values and character education. Observations were carried out through a participatory approach, with the researcher attending both extracurricular and intracurricular Islamic education activities. The primary informants included the school principal, a guidance and counseling teacher, and an Islamic education teacher. The semi-structured interview format allowed the researcher to maintain a consistent line of inquiry while permitting flexibility to explore emergent insights.

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model and was conducted inductively (Sugiyono, 2017). The analysis began with data reduction, which involved selecting, simplifying, and organizing raw data from the field. The reduced data were then presented in a systematic narrative to identify emerging patterns and themes. The final stages involved drawing conclusions and verifying the findings by identifying key themes related to the integration of Islamic and Muhammadiyah values and their influence on student character development. To ensure the trustworthiness of the data, the study employed source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and member checking. Source triangulation was achieved by comparing information from informants with diverse roles and perspectives. Methodological triangulation involved validating data across interviews, observations, and document analysis. Member checking was conducted by sharing the preliminary findings with key informants to confirm the accuracy and credibility of the researcher's interpretations.

Results and Discussion

Implementation Profile of Islamic and Muhammadiyah Values at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman

Findings from in-depth curriculum document analysis and systematic field observations reveal that Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman has successfully developed an integrated instructional system that holistically combines the national curriculum with foundational Islamic values and Muhammadiyah ideology. An interview with the Islamic Education teacher emphasized this commitment:

"We emphasize moral education here, not just knowledge. What matters most is *adab* (ethics), and that can be instilled through religious teachings."

This integration is operationalized through the development of syllabi that explicitly embed the principles of *tauhid* (monotheism), noble character, and the progressive spirit of Muhammadiyah into all learning activities. Document analysis of instructional modules

shows that the Islamic Religious Education subject is allocated two hours per week – one hour for theoretical instruction and another for practical application – delivered across three weekly sessions. Furthermore, the school offers a distinct subject titled *Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah* (AIK), which encompasses Muhammadiyah Education, Islamic History (*Tarikh*), Theology and Ethics (*Aqidah Akhlak*), Qur’anic Studies (*Al-Qur’an Hadith*), and Practical Worship (*Ibadah Praktis*), with a dedicated one-hour session each week. This commitment to Islamic-based innovation was further emphasized by the school principal:

"As an institution under the auspices of Muhammadiyah, we always prioritize Islamic-based innovation in accordance with the Sunnah and the teachings of the Prophet. Therefore, we emphasize the cultivation of virtuous behavior in learning as a way to shape students who are well-prepared to face today’s challenges."

The study’s findings indicate that this value integration extends beyond the cognitive domain to encompass affective and psychomotor dimensions. Daily structured religious activities – including congregational *duha*, *dhuhr*, and *asr* prayers, recitation of supplications before lessons, daily *tadarus* (Qur’an recitation), and the internalization of the 5S cultural values (*senyum, salam, sapa, sopan, and santun*) – are embedded across the school environment. These practices are further reinforced by a spiritual guidance program involving all school stakeholders, contributing to a religious atmosphere conducive to the sustained formation of Islamic character.

Analysis of lesson plans and instructional modules (*RPP*) shows that Muhammadiyah values are implemented through a systematic pedagogical framework that integrates theological, philosophical, and practical dimensions into classroom instruction. This includes developing instructional content that connects scientific concepts with Islamic values, applying character-oriented pedagogical approaches, and designing assessment mechanisms that evaluate both cognitive performance and character development. The learning environment itself is intentionally structured to support this integration, as evidenced by the presence of Islamic visual elements such as Quranic calligraphy, motivational posters with Islamic messages, and dedicated prayer spaces.

The embodiment of Muhammadiyah values also extends into a range of structured extracurricular programs. These include *Hizbul Wathan* (Islamic scouting), which promotes leadership and independence; *Tapak Suci* (Islamic martial arts), which instills discipline through spiritual practice; and *dakwah* and community outreach activities, which offer real-life opportunities for students to practice Muhammadiyah values in service to society. This focus on experiential learning was echoed by the school’s guidance and counseling teacher:

"Here, we stress the development of students’ potential through character formation. Especially in today’s digital era, students must be prepared to apply their learning in practical ways both within and beyond the school environment."

The study also identified strong collaboration between guidance and counseling teachers and Islamic Education teachers in designing and implementing integrated instructional strategies. This collaboration includes joint lesson planning, co-creation of teaching materials enriched with religious values, and shared evaluation of student character development. Such interdepartmental synergy ensures the consistent delivery of Islamic and Muhammadiyah values across subjects, facilitating a holistic and contextualized understanding of how these values intersect with academic learning and everyday life. Furthermore, school documentation indicates that a systematic monitoring and evaluation framework has been developed to assess the effectiveness of value integration. This framework includes regular behavioral observations, periodic assessments of students' spiritual and social competencies, and feedback mechanisms involving parents and community members to track behavioral changes beyond the school environment. These evaluations are used as the basis for reflective practice and ongoing refinement of character-based instructional strategies.

Kemuhammadiyahan Value-Based Learning Strategy in Character Strengthening

The learning strategy implemented at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman reflects a comprehensive and systematically structured approach that integrates religious values with contemporary pedagogical practices, all framed within the ideological foundation of Muhammadiyah. This approach combines cooperative learning and project-based learning models to reinforce character values aligned with Islamic teachings and Muhammadiyah principles. The cooperative learning model is purposefully designed to cultivate social virtues such as *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), mutual respect, discipline, and shared responsibility – core values within Muhammadiyah's conception of education as a communal and moral enterprise. As highlighted by an Islamic Education teacher:

“We are not just teaching subjects, but cultivating character through interaction. When students work together, they learn about brotherhood, how to respect one another, and how to be responsible in a group. These are Muhammadiyah values in action.”

Concurrently, the project-based learning strategy is applied consistently across various subjects to foster leadership, creativity, collaboration, and problem-solving – competencies that align with Muhammadiyah's spirit of *tajdid* (renewal and reform). This model not only strengthens students' cognitive abilities but also encourages critical engagement with real-world issues through an Islamic ethical lens. As stated by the school principal:

“In Muhammadiyah, we are taught not to be passive. Innovation and social contribution are core values. That is why we encourage students to solve problems and initiate projects that reflect these values, both in and outside the classroom.”

Each learning session begins with a spiritually grounded opening activity, including a collective prayer and brief spiritual reflection led by the teacher or homeroom teacher. This practice serves as both mental and spiritual preparation, fostering a reflective and respectful learning atmosphere. As explained by the Guidance and Counseling teacher:

“Prayer at the beginning of each lesson is not a ritual formality – it prepares the heart and mind of the students to be more receptive and respectful of the knowledge they are about to receive.”

During the core instructional phase, teachers integrate historical narratives and exemplary figures from Islamic and Muhammadiyah traditions to contextualize academic concepts and provide ethical reference points. This value-based integration is further deepened through reflective discussions and guided questioning that prompt students to engage not only intellectually but also morally with the lesson content. Each class session concludes with a self-evaluation activity in which students are encouraged to articulate the values they have learned and reflect on how these can be applied in daily life. One teacher described this reflective closure:

“At the end of the session, we always ask students: ‘What value did you learn today, and how will you apply it?’ This isn’t just about knowledge; it’s about making the knowledge alive in their daily life.”

Beyond the classroom, character development is reinforced through a range of extracurricular and co-curricular programs that serve as extensions of formal learning. These include leadership training, dakwah (religious outreach), and social service initiatives, which offer students experiential opportunities to practice values such as empathy, responsibility, and integrity – central to both Islamic teachings and Muhammadiyah’s educational mission (Syukri, Amir, Fitriani, & Pane, 2024).

Identification of Student Character Issues and Institutional Responses

The research findings indicate a notable heterogeneity in students’ character development, particularly in the areas of discipline and responsibility. This variability is reflected in differing levels of consistency and adherence to expected behavioral norms. Systematic classroom observations and an analysis of disciplinary records reveal that approximately 10–15% of students experience challenges related to time discipline. These issues commonly manifest in behaviors such as tardiness, unexplained absences, and low engagement during instructional activities. Such patterns suggest a disconnect between the internalization of ideal values – especially those grounded in Islamic and Muhammadiyah teachings – and their actual implementation in students’ everyday conduct. To further explore this discrepancy, interviews were conducted with students who demonstrated both positive and negative behavioral records. One student reflected:

“Sometimes I come late not because I want to, but because I feel too tired and less motivated. I know it’s wrong, but I haven’t found the right way to manage my time better.” (Interview with Student A, Grade XI)

This response reflects an internal conflict: while the student possesses awareness of institutional expectations, a lack of self-regulatory capacity – particularly in time management and motivation – impedes value realization. Conversely, another student shared a more positive transformation:

“At first I was like that too—often skipping or being late. But over time, with advice from my teachers and spiritual sessions, I started to change. Now, I feel

more responsible because I understand that being on time is part of my attitude as a Muslim.” (Interview with Student B, Grade XII)

This statement underscores the transformative potential of character education when it includes consistent reinforcement, reflective practice, and religious grounding. It also illustrates the critical role of teacher mentorship and structured guidance in translating values into sustained behavioral change. While Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman has successfully developed a robust value-based learning model, the findings suggest a continued need for targeted interventions to support students struggling with character formation. Recommended interventions include personalized mentoring, time management workshops, and individual counseling. Moreover, the variation in student responses highlights the importance of adopting a differentiated and adaptive approach to character education – one that accommodates the socio-psychological diversity and varying readiness levels among students.

In-depth interviews with school leaders confirm that character-related issues, though affecting a minority of students, are considered a serious concern due to their potential impact on the broader school climate. These issues are often associated with external factors, including family dynamics, peer influence, and the pressures of adapting to increasingly complex educational demands in the digital era (Hanif, Syarifudin, & Muhtarom, 2025). To address these challenges, the school has developed a multilevel mentoring system involving counseling teachers, homeroom teachers, and religious extracurricular coordinators, all working within a coordinated framework. Key interventions include: 1) individual counseling to identify root causes of behavioral challenges; 2) peer mentoring programs where senior students serve as role models, and 3) a reward and sanction system grounded in Islamic principles of justice and compassion. This holistic strategy reflects the institution’s commitment to addressing character issues through a comprehensive and value-driven approach.

The mentoring system also integrates parental engagement through structured communication channels and collaborative programs. These include regular parent-teacher meetings, detailed student progress reports, and individual consultations designed to align home-based strategies with school-based character education. This school-family partnership is intended to foster consistency in value transmission and behavioral expectations. The school’s reward and sanction system is carefully designed to reflect Islamic values of fairness and moral rehabilitation. Rather than punitive in nature, sanctions are coupled with character-building guidance to help students reflect on their behavior and commit to personal improvement. Interventions range from verbal reminders and one-on-one coaching to more formal responses such as parental notifications and structured development programs. Evaluation results indicate that this intervention framework has been effective, with observed improvements in 70–80% of students involved in the program. This success is attributed to the consistent application of mentoring strategies, effective communication, and collective support from the academic community in fostering an environment conducive to positive behavioral change. Importantly, the program is continuously refined based on stakeholder feedback to ensure ongoing relevance and effectiveness.

Dynamics of Implementation of Religious Values in Cross-Curricular Learning

An analysis of the implementation of Islamic and Muhammadiyah values across various subject areas at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman reveals varying levels of success, shaped by several influencing factors. These include teacher pedagogical competence, the thematic nature of the subject, and the degree of student engagement during the learning process. Subjects that are inherently religious in content – such as *Al-Qur'an Hadith*, *Kemuhammadiyah*, and *Aqidah Akhlak* – demonstrate a higher degree of value integration due to their direct alignment with Islamic character education. Conversely, vocational and technical subjects, which are predominantly skills-based and content-intensive, present greater challenges in embedding religious values, often requiring more innovative and interdisciplinary teaching approaches. As noted by the Islamic Education teacher:

“It is easier to connect religious values in subjects like *Aqidah Akhlak* because the content naturally supports moral reflection. However, in vocational classes, it takes extra effort and collaboration to ensure the values are not lost amid the technical material.”

This variation in integration is also reflected in observable student behavior. While some students actively engage and display strong moral responsiveness during religious instruction, they may exhibit passivity or disengagement in technical or general academic subjects. According to the school's Guidance and Counseling teacher:

“We've observed that some students are highly enthusiastic during Islamic classes but disengaged in technical subjects. This is not necessarily due to lack of values, but more about interest, emotional maturity, and sometimes even the teaching style of the instructor.”

This behavioral inconsistency is often linked to the psychological characteristics of contemporary adolescents, who tend to exhibit mood-dependent learning engagement and greater receptiveness to subjects or teachers they find personally relatable or engaging. Interviews with students confirm this pattern. One student stated:

“I really like the *Kemuhammadiyah* class because it feels personal and close to my life. But when it comes to vocational subjects, I just follow without much feeling, unless the teacher makes it fun or explains it with examples I can relate to.” (Interview with Student A, Grade XI)

Another student added:

“Sometimes I pay more attention in Islamic subjects because it feels more meaningful. But in other classes, especially when the teacher just lectures, I lose interest quickly—even if I know I should be serious.” (Interview with Student B, Grade XII)

These reflections indicate that the effectiveness of value integration is not solely dependent on curriculum content. Instead, it is significantly shaped by instructional strategies, teacher-student relational dynamics, and the perceived relevance of the subject matter. To address these disparities, Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman has

launched a targeted teacher training program focused on integrative pedagogies. The program aims to empower all teachers – not only those teaching religious subjects – to infuse Islamic and Muhammadiyah values into their respective disciplines through contextually appropriate and engaging methods. This initiative reflects the school’s strategic response to the challenge of attitudinal inconsistency among students, highlighting the necessity of a whole-school approach to character education. By equipping educators with the skills to embed religious and moral values across all subject areas, the institution seeks to ensure continuity in value transmission. The ultimate goal is to support students in internalizing these values not only cognitively but also affectively and behaviorally, irrespective of the academic content being delivered.

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Character Strengthening Program Based on Muhammadiyah Values

The evaluation of the Muhammadiyah values-based character strengthening program at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman employs a multidimensional and holistic assessment framework. This approach utilizes diverse evaluative instruments to provide a comprehensive analysis of the program’s impact on students’ character development. Consistent with the principles of integrated Islamic education, the evaluation extends beyond cognitive assessments to include the transformation of attitudes, behaviors, and internalized values as demonstrated in students’ daily lives. The Islamic Education teacher emphasized the necessity of this multidimensional approach:

“We cannot evaluate character only through written tests. What matters is whether students actually live by these values—in how they treat others, respect time, and uphold discipline. That’s why our evaluation is multidimensional.”

The Guidance and Counseling teacher further supported this view by stressing the role of continuous behavioral observation:

“We use daily observations, student reflections, and feedback from extracurricular mentors. This helps us see which students consistently show good character, and which ones need further mentoring. Academic scores alone are not enough.”

To achieve a holistic understanding of student growth, the school implements a variety of tools, including behavior observation sheets, anecdotal records, self-assessment forms, and logs of participation in religious and community activities. This comprehensive tracking enables both short- and long-term monitoring of character development. One student reflected on this shift in evaluation emphasis:

“I used to think grades were the only thing that mattered. But after joining the program, I realized that how we behave, help others, and show respect is just as important. The teachers really pay attention to that now.” (Interview with Student, Grade XII)

The cognitive domain is evaluated through formative and summative assessments such as written tests, oral presentations, group discussions, and case study analysis. These

instruments are designed to measure not only students' knowledge of Islamic and Muhammadiyah principles but also their ability to interpret and apply these values in real-life contexts. As the Islamic Education teacher explained:

“It’s not enough for students to memorize Qur’anic verses or Muhammadiyah principles—they need to be able to interpret and apply them. That’s why we include case studies and reflective presentations to assess how deeply they understand the values.”

The affective domain is assessed through systematic observation of students' emotional engagement, moral attitudes, empathy, and interpersonal behavior. Teachers, counselors, and extracurricular mentors collectively document daily behavior, social interactions, and participation in religious and civic activities. Feedback from peers and parents also contributes to triangulated insights, enhancing the validity of affective evaluation. As the Head of School noted:

“Character education must be observable, not abstract. That’s why we involve multiple parties in the evaluation process—so we can ensure that values are not only taught but truly lived. It’s part of our commitment as a Muhammadiyah institution.”

The psychomotor domain is evaluated through students' practical demonstrations of religious and moral behavior, including participation in congregational prayer, Qur’an recitation, social service activities, and leadership in student organizations. Observations also focus on students' conflict-resolution skills, empathy, and contributions to a positive school climate. Encouragingly, student leadership capabilities have shown marked improvement, as evidenced by successful student-led programs, peer mentorship, and exemplary moral behavior. The evaluation reveals that students who demonstrate consistent character development also tend to show improved academic performance, suggesting a positive correlation between moral formation and cognitive achievement. This finding aligns with the holistic Islamic education paradigm, which views academic success as a natural consequence of strong spiritual and moral grounding.

The program’s impact is further affirmed by stakeholder feedback. Satisfaction surveys conducted among students, parents, teachers, and community members report high levels of approval for the character education initiatives. This is reflected in increased community trust, higher student enrollment, and expanded support for school programs. However, the evaluation also identifies challenges that require attention. One concern is the inconsistency in value application outside the school environment, indicating the need for stronger collaboration with families and local communities. Students from families with less religious engagement tend to show slower character development compared to those from religiously active households, underscoring the importance of background-sensitive implementation strategies.

In response, the school integrates family involvement through regular meetings, consultations, and home-based character support activities. Furthermore, differentiation strategies are being developed to tailor interventions to the diverse backgrounds and needs of students, ensuring equitable support across the student body. The program's

monitoring and evaluation system has proven effective in providing data-driven insights for continuous improvement. Evaluation results are used to refine teaching methods, develop character-focused instructional materials, and enhance mentoring strategies. This feedback loop ensures the program remains adaptive and responsive to emerging challenges and student development trends. The comprehensive evaluation demonstrates that the Muhammadiyah values-based character strengthening program at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman is effective in achieving its objectives. The program has succeeded in fostering students who are intellectually capable, spiritually grounded, and morally responsible. Its integrative and adaptive design makes it a strong model for replication in similar educational settings. Moreover, its alignment with national educational goals and Muhammadiyah's ideological mission positions it as a vital contributor to character education reform in Indonesia.

Learning Integration Model and Development Recommendations

Based on a comprehensive analysis of research findings at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman, a learning integration model grounded in Islamic and Muhammadiyah values has been successfully developed. This model comprises five interrelated components that collectively contribute to the establishment of a holistic and sustainable character education system. The model is the result of an in-depth examination of effective practices, a critical evaluation of encountered challenges, and a synthesis of various strategies proven to foster character formation aligned with Muhammadiyah values.

The first component of the model is its philosophical foundation, which is anchored in the principle of tawhid as the core of Islamic epistemology and Muhammadiyah's vision of religious and social renewal. This foundation provides an ideological and spiritual orientation for the entire character education program. In this context, tawhid is not merely interpreted as a theological doctrine but as a comprehensive paradigm that integrates students' spiritual, intellectual, and social development into a coherent whole. It ensures that all educational activities are consistently aligned with authentic Islamic principles.

The second component concerns the curriculum structure, which is designed to integrate academic content with spiritual and moral dimensions through a cross-disciplinary approach. This curriculum addresses the dual needs of vocational students by balancing technical competencies with the cultivation of character. Islamic and Muhammadiyah values are not confined to religious subjects but are embedded contextually in all areas of learning. This integration is achieved by connecting subject matter with religious principles in a natural and meaningful manner, thus enabling students to relate their studies to their faith and daily lives.

The third component relates to the instructional methodology, which emphasizes participatory and reflective learning. Students are treated as active participants in the construction of knowledge and the internalization of values. A variety of pedagogical strategies – such as cooperative learning, project-based learning, and experiential learning – are employed to enable students to apply values in real-world settings. The inclusion of

reflective practices further allows students to assess their personal growth and make meaningful commitments to self-improvement in accordance with Islamic and Muhammadiyah teachings.

The fourth component is the evaluation system, which is both comprehensive and multidimensional. It assesses not only cognitive understanding but also students' affective and behavioral development. Recognizing that character cannot be evaluated through standardized tests alone, the school employs tools such as behavioral observations, reflection portfolios, and records of participation in religious and civic activities. These instruments offer a holistic view of each student's moral and spiritual development and facilitate targeted interventions where needed.

The fifth and final component involves institutional support. The successful implementation of the integration model relies on the active engagement of all educational stakeholders, including school leaders, teachers, parents, and the broader community. Transformational leadership by school principals, teacher commitment to value integration, parental involvement in character reinforcement at home, and community participation in providing a conducive moral environment are all essential to ensuring consistency and continuity in character development across various contexts.

The implementation of this model has shown tangible success in addressing student character issues, particularly with respect to discipline and responsibility. Evidence from interviews and school records indicates that the number of students exhibiting behavioral challenges has declined. This suggests that the model is effective in delivering sustained and individualized character-building interventions. Notably, the emphasis on development over punishment has created a nurturing environment conducive to positive student transformation.

To further improve the model's implementation and replicability, several key areas warrant attention. Continued professional development for teachers is essential to maintain pedagogical quality and strengthen value integration across all subjects. Enhanced collaboration between schools and families is also critical, as students' moral development benefits significantly from consistency between home and school environments. Additionally, the integration of digital tools can provide innovative pathways for embedding values, particularly in a context where students are increasingly immersed in digital learning. It is also important to adapt the model to suit the diverse socio-cultural backgrounds of students, ensuring that its application remains responsive and inclusive. Finally, formalizing a robust system of monitoring and evaluation will enable the school to continually refine the model based on empirical evidence and stakeholder feedback.

The model has also proven effective in addressing the inconsistency of student attitudes, particularly among Generation Z learners, whose behaviors often vary across subjects and are influenced by mood-based tendencies. As revealed in the research findings, these inconsistencies are a notable challenge in value internalization. By implementing a consistent, integrated approach across disciplines and supported by a holistic evaluation system, the model contributes to the development of more stable and

consistent student character across diverse learning contexts. Based on the successful implementation of this model, several key development recommendations are proposed. One critical recommendation is the establishment of a sustainable teacher training program focused on integrating religious values into subject-specific pedagogy. This program should be systematically designed with a comprehensive curriculum, delivered by experienced practitioners, and implemented continuously to enhance teachers' pedagogical competence and capacity to embed Islamic values effectively in various disciplines.

Another essential recommendation is the development of a practical and context-sensitive implementation guide to support the wider adoption of the integration model by other educational institutions. This guide should include detailed operational procedures, practical examples of value integration across subject areas, and evaluation tools for measuring implementation outcomes. Adaptability should be a core feature of the guide, enabling institutions to tailor the model to their specific contexts without compromising its foundational principles or effectiveness. Additionally, the development of an information technology-based monitoring and evaluation system is recommended as a strategic measure to enhance the efficiency and accuracy of tracking student character development. This system should integrate data from behavior observations, academic performance, and extracurricular involvement into a unified platform, allowing for comprehensive analysis. Furthermore, such a system can facilitate communication between schools, parents, and stakeholders through timely reporting, thereby strengthening collaborative support for student growth.

Strengthening partnerships with parents and the community is also crucial, given the need for consistency in value application across different spheres of student life. This collaboration can be realized through initiatives such as parent education programs, joint social service activities, and continuous communication regarding student character progress. Community engagement may also take the form of internships and work-based learning programs that provide students with opportunities to apply Islamic values in real-world social and professional contexts. Overall, the implementation of this integrated learning model based on Islamic and Muhammadiyah values is expected to significantly enhance the effectiveness of character education not only at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman but also at similar institutions that share a vision of religiously grounded character development. This model offers a holistic, systematic, and sustainable alternative to conventional character education, contributing to the formation of a morally upright, competent younger generation capable of navigating future challenges with a strong foundation in Islamic and Muhammadiyah values.

Analysis

The research findings demonstrate the successful implementation of an integrated learning model grounded in Islamic and Muhammadiyah values at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman, particularly in strengthening student character. A comprehensive analysis reveals a significant transformation in students' behaviors and attitudes, as evidenced by increased discipline, heightened responsibility, and more active

participation in both religious and social activities. These achievements underscore the effectiveness of a holistic educational approach – one that integrates cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions – in fostering meaningful and sustainable character development.

The alignment between the research findings and the initial objectives indicates a strong consistency in addressing the central issue of integrating religious values within the context of vocational education. The learning model developed through this study successfully demonstrates that the integration of Islamic and Muhammadiyah values is not only compatible with vocational technical competence, but mutually reinforcing. Graduates of this model emerge with dual strengths: professional expertise and a solid moral foundation. These findings resonate with previous studies advocating for the integration of prophetic values into education through the "science mosque" model, which emphasizes the synergy between academic advancement and character formation rooted in Islamic teachings (Ardiwansyah, Mawangir, & Abdurrahmansyah, 2025). The scientific interpretation of the program's success can be contextualized through social learning theory, which highlights the role of the environment in shaping individual behavior. Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman has succeeded in fostering a conducive educational ecosystem – characterized by structured religious routines, an integrated curriculum, and a comprehensive character-based evaluation system. This systemic approach enables students to internalize religious values not only through cognitive instruction but also through lived experiences embedded in daily school practices (Andini, Purnama, & Putri, 2024).

One clear indicator of behavioral change is the increase in student participation in congregational prayer, which rose from seventy percent to ninety percent. This shift reflects a deepening commitment to religious practice and aligns with the theory of habituation in Islamic education, which posits that character development results from the consistent repetition of virtuous actions until they become intrinsic to the individual. Supporting evidence shows that structured Islamic education programs can foster students' Islamic character while nurturing their talents and interests through value-based extracurricular activities (Ginancar, Rahman, Hidayat, & Aimul, 2025). Furthermore, the recorded sixty percent reduction in disciplinary violations over one academic year signals a substantial improvement in student behavior. This outcome can be attributed to a character education model that emphasizes preventive guidance and value internalization over punitive measures. Instructional strategies incorporating narratives from Islamic history and exemplary Muhammadiyah figures have proven effective in inspiring students to cultivate moral excellence. This approach aligns with existing research emphasizing the importance of literary and biographical media in reinforcing character values such as religiosity, nationalism, cooperation, independence, and integrity (Istiqomah & Marzuki, 2024).

The success of cross-subject integration affirms that character education cannot be separated from the regular academic learning process. Intensive collaboration between general subject teachers and Islamic Education teachers in developing integrated

instructional materials has fostered pedagogical synergy that enhances the consistency and coherence of religious value transmission. This finding aligns with prior research on the integration of Islamic values in developing lecturer competencies, where principles such as honesty, trustworthiness, and responsibility have been shown to improve both teaching quality and student learning outcomes (Orgianus, Oemar, Praseytaningsih, & Amalia, 2024). The study's holistic evaluation approach represents a notable innovation in character education assessment by incorporating behavioral observation, spiritual reflection portfolios, and assessments of participation in social and community activities. This multidimensional evaluation framework offers a comprehensive understanding of students' character development – capturing facets that cannot be measured through conventional written tests alone. This approach is consistent with the findings of scholars who emphasize the importance of internalizing character values in Arabic language education through the use of value-rich teaching materials, integrative learning models, and authentic assessment instruments that capture cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains (Syukran, Sutaman, Arifa, & Nurmala, 2024).

The implementation of Muhammadiyah value-based extracurricular programs – such as Hizbul Wathan (Islamic scouting) and Tapak Suci (Islamic martial arts) – underscores the importance of experiential learning in character formation. These programs offer students real-world opportunities to apply internalized values, while simultaneously cultivating leadership skills, discipline, and personal independence. This finding is further supported by research on the integration of Islamic values with environmental ethics in pesantren, which demonstrates how a holistic approach to Islamic education can develop individuals with both spiritual consciousness and a strong sense of social and environmental responsibility (Mintasih, Purnama, & Sukiman, 2024). The psychological dimension of the integrated learning model reveals a significant influence on the spiritual identity development of vocational students. The internalization of religious values occurs not only at the cognitive level through conceptual understanding, but also through a deeper psychological transformation that reshapes students' self-concepts and worldviews. Increases in participation in religious activities, coupled with a decline in disciplinary infractions, reflect a shift in value orientation – from extrinsic compliance to intrinsic motivation – where students begin to embody Islamic values as part of their personal identity. This transformation is reinforced by a school environment that consistently provides positive reinforcement for behaviors aligned with Islamic and Muhammadiyah teachings, thereby fostering the psychological conditions necessary for sustained character development (Syafii & Azhari, 2025).

Moreover, the integrated model has demonstrated a positive impact on the development of students' emotional and spiritual intelligence, as evidenced by their improved ability to regulate emotions, demonstrate empathy, and cultivate harmonious interpersonal relationships. The inclusion of spiritual reflection activities within the curriculum creates space for students to develop self-awareness and engage in meaningful introspection, enabling them to recognize personal strengths and weaknesses and commit to ongoing moral self-improvement. Emotional and spiritual intelligence are particularly

critical for vocational students preparing to enter the workforce, where adaptability, collaboration, and leadership are essential. The integration of Muhammadiyah values – promoting moderation, progressiveness, and reform-mindedness – also plays a key role in shaping students with mental agility and openness to innovation, without compromising foundational Islamic principles (Taupik, 2025).

The sociological dimension of the integrated learning model reveals a significant transformation in the social dynamics of the school environment, leading to the establishment of an organizational culture conducive to collective character development. The formation of a learning community grounded in Islamic and Muhammadiyah values has facilitated the emergence of peer support networks that encourage the internalization of positive values. This communal dynamic effectively mitigates the adverse effects of negative peer pressure, a common challenge in character education. The social learning mechanisms that emerge through interactions among students, teachers, and other school stakeholders provide a more effective channel for value transmission than top-down indoctrination approaches. This phenomenon underscores that successful character education requires a communal and participatory approach, wherein the entire school community collaboratively cultivates a consistent and sustainable value ecosystem (Assoratgoon & Kantabutra, 2023).

The projected sustainability and scalability of this integration model indicate its strong potential to serve as a replicable framework for character education in diverse educational contexts. The successful implementation at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman offers an evidence-based model that could inform national character education strategies, particularly in addressing the moral challenges confronting youth in the digital era (Roviana, Masduki, Yusutria, & Long, 2023). The creation of an educational ecosystem – anchored in partnerships among schools, families, communities, and the professional sector – reflects a collaborative governance model that enhances the efficacy of holistic character development. To ensure long-term sustainability, this model requires sustained stakeholder commitment and the establishment of a robust quality assurance system that can uphold the consistency of religious value integration across varying contexts and generational cohorts (Rahmadhani, Ahyanuardi, & Suryati, 2022).

Future research should prioritize longitudinal studies to evaluate the long-term impact of Islamic and Muhammadiyah value integration on students' post-graduation behavior, civic engagement, and professional integrity. Comparative studies across Muhammadiyah vocational schools in different regions are also necessary to explore the role of socio-cultural variables in shaping program effectiveness. Furthermore, the development of digital platforms for Islamic character education – leveraging e-learning tools and social media – represents a timely and relevant area of inquiry aligned with advancements in educational technology. Research into differentiated character education approaches based on student socio-economic and religious backgrounds, alongside the refinement of valid and reliable character assessment instruments, is also essential to further solidify the scientific foundation of Islamic values-based character education.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the integration of Islamic and Muhammadiyah values in the learning process at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman has proven to be an effective strategy in strengthening students' character across cognitive, affective, and psychomotor dimensions through a holistic, structured, and collaborative educational approach. However, this study is limited by its focus on a single school context and the absence of longitudinal data to measure the long-term sustainability of character transformation beyond the school environment. Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct longitudinal studies involving a broader range of Muhammadiyah vocational schools and explore the role of digital-based character education innovations to enhance value internalization in diverse socio-cultural settings.

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Ethical Statement

This research was conducted in accordance with established ethical standards in educational research. Prior to data collection, informed consent was obtained from all participants, including school administrators, teachers, students, and staff. Participants were informed of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their involvement, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence. Anonymity and confidentiality were ensured through the use of pseudonyms and secure data handling procedures. The study involved no physical or psychological risks to participants and adhered to principles of respect, beneficence, and justice. Permission to conduct the research was formally granted by the school authorities at Muhammadiyah Vocational Schools Salaman. All data collected were used solely for academic purposes and have been stored securely. The study did not involve any manipulation of participants and did not require ethics board clearance, as it was conducted within the scope of routine educational practices and involved minimal risk.

CRedit Author Statement

- **Author 1:** Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing – Original draft preparation.
- **Author 2:** Conceptualization, Writing – Reviewing and Editing.
- **Author 3:** Methodology, Formal analysis.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there are no competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this article.

Data Availability

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available upon reasonable request.

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