

The Influence of the Interaction Environment of Islamic Education Students at IAIN Kerinci on Their Religious Character

Nagiya^{1*}, Pristian Hadi Putra², Albertos Famni³

Intitut Agama Islam Negeri Kerinci^{*1, 2, 3}

^{*1}email: nagiyamariya@gmail.com

²email: fristianhp87@gmail.com

³email: albertaugust6th@gmail.com

Abstract: This study aims to examine the influence of student interactions on religious character. The social environment plays a crucial role in shaping an individual's character therefore, this research explores the extent to which social interactions impact the development of religious values. The study employs a quantitative method using a cluster random sampling approach, where data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Descriptive Statistical Mean. The findings indicate that peer interactions have a significant influence on religious character, with an average relationship score of 65. These results highlight the importance of the social environment in shaping religious character and provide insights for educational institutions to better manage and facilitate social interactions to effectively support the development of students' religious values.

Keywords: Student Interaction; Religious Character; Peer Environment; Education.

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji pengaruh interaksi siswa terhadap karakter keagamaan. Lingkungan sosial memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk karakter individu oleh karena itu, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi sejauh mana interaksi sosial memengaruhi perkembangan nilai-nilai keagamaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kuantitatif dengan pendekatan sampling acak berkluster, di mana data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner dan dianalisis menggunakan Rata-Rata Statistik Deskriptif. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa interaksi antar teman sebaya memiliki pengaruh yang signifikan terhadap karakter keagamaan, dengan skor hubungan rata-rata sebesar 65. Temuan ini menyoroti

pentingnya lingkungan sosial dalam membentuk karakter keagamaan dan memberikan wawasan bagi lembaga pendidikan untuk mengelola dan memfasilitasi interaksi sosial secara lebih efektif guna mendukung perkembangan nilai-nilai keagamaan siswa.

Kata kunci: Interaksi Siswa; Karakter Keagamaan; Lingkungan Teman Sebaya; Pendidikan

A. Introduction

The environment is a place where living things seek shelter and settle, and it has unique characteristics that are interrelated, especially humans, who have more perfect traits or characteristics and are capable of logical thinking (Andi Ridha, 2016). According to Article 1 paragraph (1) of Law Number 32 of 2009, the environment is a unity of space consisting of objects, forces, conditions, living things, including humans and their behavior, which affect the survival and welfare of humans and other living things. It can be said that the environment is a medium where living things live, seek their livelihood, and have unique characteristics and functions that are interrelated with the existence of the living things that inhabit it, especially humans who have a more complex and real role (Andi Ridha, 2016).

There are many classifications of the human environment. However, in this paper, the author focuses on the social environment of the campus. The social environment is a place where humans adapt to each other's mutual benefit and interact in a reality of mutual need (Handoyo, 2007). The immediate social environment can influence a person's development, such as the family, community, school, and friendship environments (Kiuru, 2008).

Interactions resulting from the social environment are greatly influenced by each person's character. According to the Complete Indonesian Dictionary, character refers to psychological traits, morals, or manners that distinguish one person from another, as well as disposition and temperament. To have character means to have a disposition or personality (Kamisa, 1997) Furthermore, Dorland's Pocket Medical Dictionary (1968:126) states that character is the distinct and observable traits exhibited by an individual. In psychology dictionaries, character is defined as personality viewed from

an ethical or moral standpoint, such as a person's honesty; it is usually associated with relatively stable traits (Gulo, 1982).

The aspects of character or target values that can be integrated into the lecture process according to (Zuchdi, 2009) in the 2012 Guidelines for the Implementation of Character Education in Lectures at Yogyakarta State University, include: (1) obedience in worship, (2) honesty, (3) responsibility, (4) caring, (5) cooperation, (6) respect for other people/parties, and (7) other values in line with religious, humanistic, and Indonesian values (arianti, 2017).

Character in its application is usually directly proportional to a person's religiosity. Religiosity itself is the belief in a religion, specifically Islam, which determines the path of human life that is considered sacred and regulates the path of human life in the form of commands or prohibitions that are written in the Qur'an and the hadith of the Prophet (Muhaimin, 2005).

In line with this, Harun Nasution says that religion comes from the word al-din, which means religion and faith, and in its writing emphasizes the conclusion that religion means gathering and reading in relation to faith, where according to him, religion comes from the words (a = no and gama = go) (H. Nasution, 2019). Therefore, the value of religion in relation to religion can be concluded that after a person reads or knows the truth from a source, whether it be the Qur'an or the hadith, it must be carried out or practiced and must be passed down from generation to generation. Religiousness in its application can include religious knowledge, religious practice, religious experience, and religious social attitudes.

The application of religious values applies to all people, from children, teenagers, and students to adults. In its application, students are required to be more idealistic in applying religious knowledge, especially students majoring in Islamic Education at IAIN Kerinci, because they are academics who are engaged in this field. The application of their religious values must be able to set the best example and serve the surrounding community. In their lectures, they must be able to understand and apply the knowledge taught by lecturers so that this knowledge has meaning and significance in life in this world and the hereafter (Tafsir, 2000).

The student's social environment greatly influences their religious character (Beny Prasetya, 2021). An environment that has a strong, consistent (Istiqomah) or conducive religious character will have a positive impact on students, and vice versa (Cerah et al., 2025). In addition, religious character has an impact on learning outcomes (Belajar & Didik, 2024), they will support each other, remind and provide direction or even become examples and motivation in lecture activities (N. C. Nasution, 2018). However, in reality, there are still many students whose environment or study friends have implemented good religious character but have not had any impact on them. Sometimes these students remain lazy in applying the character values prescribed by religion.

So far, there have been many studies discussing the issue of learning environments, but the focus of the studies varies, such as the studies conducted by Soraya & Alizza, (2023) and (Hermawan et al., 2020) which focus on how it affects or correlates with student learning outcomes, the study by Andi Ridha, (2016), which focuses on student behavior, research conducted by Saragih, (2020), which focuses on the influence of the environment on student independence. The research discusses the influence of the environment on student learning motivation, and research from Utami & Jelita, (2021), which focuses on the influence of the environment on character education.

Previous studies have been very good. However, no previous study has focused on the influence of the environment on the religious character of students, especially IAIN Kerinci students. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the influence of the student interaction environment on the religious character of students and to see how much influence the environment has on the religious character of PAI students at IAIN Kerinci.

B. Research Methods

The quantitative method was used in this study because methods are very important in research in order to focus the results of the study. The method referred to here is the scientific approach, steps, or stages carried out in a study to achieve a goal and obtain valid data regarding the predetermined goal (Sugiyono, 2014).

The population of this study was all 512 PAI IAIN Kerinci students. The population itself is the scope of a particular object which essentially serves as a limitation of a study marked by certain characteristics, so that the research conducted can be easier (Sugiyono, 2014). Cluster random sampling is the technique used in this study because at IAIN Kerinci, PAI is the most popular major, resulting in a large number of PAI students from semesters 1 to 10. Therefore, the cluster random sampling technique is the most suitable to use. Cluster random sampling itself is a technique used in a study where the number of objects being studied is very large, and then the author takes several samples from these objects (Sugiyono, 2014).

The research sample consisted of 125 people, or about 15% of all PAI students at IAIN Kerinci, which numbered 512. Research data was collected using questionnaires. In this case (Sugiyono, 2014) explains the definition of a questionnaire as an activity in which a researcher provides questions or statements, either in the form of factual data or data related to opinions, to respondents, who then fill them in according to the existing reality. The questionnaire distributed in this study was a psychological questionnaire, containing 12 items with 8 positive questions and 4 negative statements related to the influence of friendship circles on religious character.

The data analysis used to obtain the results of this study was descriptive statistics mean. Descriptive statistics is data analysis in which data is collected, processed, and organized to provide an overview of an event, situation, or condition from the data being studied so that the objectives of the study can be achieved (Martias & Prodi, 2021). In other words, descriptive statistics are a way of presenting or explaining data by providing an overview of the research results, so that conclusions can be drawn from the data obtained. The mean is the average value of the available data. The mean is obtained by dividing the sum of the data by the number of data points.

C. Results and Discussion

Results

This study began with distributing questionnaires to PAI IAIN Kerinci students with a total of 125 respondents or around 15%. From the questionnaire results analyzed

using descriptive statistics mean, based on the SPSS test results, the following data was obtained:

Table 1. SPSS mean test

Statistics													
		P1	p2	P3	p4	p5	p6	p7	p8	p9	p10	p11	P12
N	Valid	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125
	Missing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean		3,06	3,18	2,70	3,54	2,96	3,44	3,30	2,68	3,09	3,11	2,35	3,50
Median		3,00	3,00	3,00	4,00	3,00	4,00	3,00	3,00	4,00	3,00	2,00	4,00
Mode		4	4	3	4	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	4
Sum		382	398	338	442	370	430	413	335	386	389	294	438

Describes the results of this study that friendship interactions have a very large influence on the improvement of the religious character of PAI IAIN Kerinci students. The data also provides an overview that friendships that occur in the IAIN Kerinci environment have a positive impact. The pressure or influence of friendships is an important factor in shaping each other's behavior and character, as illustrated in the circle diagram obtained from the questionnaire that was distributed:

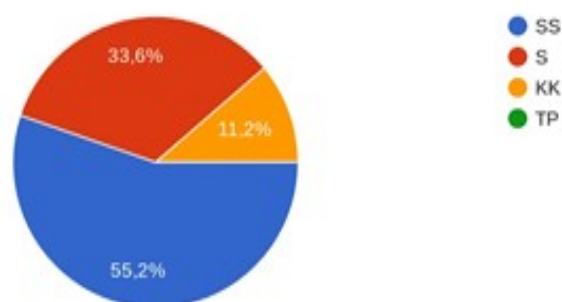


Figure 1. Image of the Positive Relationship between Friendship Interaction and Religious Character

The diagram above illustrates an interaction that has a positive impact on the religious character of PAI IAIN Kerinci students. In addition to having a positive impact, friendship interaction at IAIN Kerinci also influences the

religious character of students, as can be seen in the following diagram:

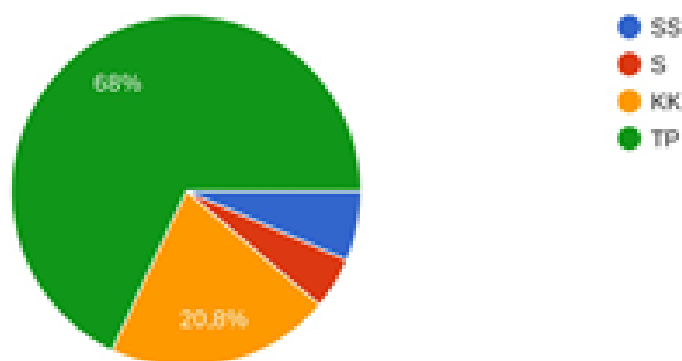


Figure 2. The Influence of Environment on Students' Religious Character

The diagram above illustrates that a person's character is greatly determined by their environment, especially their peer environment (Zahroh & Na'imah, 2020). The results of the questionnaire distributed by the author also show that many women chose very often (SS) and (S), while most men chose sometimes (KK) and never (TP). Although there were some differences, these results can be interpreted to mean that women are more easily influenced by their environment than men, especially by their peers. This has also been studied in social psychology.

Friendships can be a means for students to learn and practice religious values. Religious values are the obedience and compliance of a servant in carrying out all of Allah's commands and prohibitions, whether they originate from the Qur'an or the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (Kuliyatun, 2020). The application of religious values is very important and fundamental in character building. Good character will be reflected in good learning outcomes.

Discussion

In friendships, students can share experiences and knowledge, remind and motivate each other to do good and useful things, and provide a means for students to socialize and interact with others from various backgrounds (Kurniawan & Sudrajat,

2018). This can help students to better understand and appreciate differences.

1. The influence of the environment on religious character

Religious character is an important aspect of human life. Religious character can be defined as personality traits that reflect a person's belief and devotion to God Almighty. A person with a high religious character usually has a fairly satisfactory level of intellectual ability (Mulya & Sulaiman, 2022) Amirulloh Syarbini quotes M. Jamil Zainu on the aspects of human religiosity, which include

- 1) Believing in one God
- 2) Performing obligations, namely worship
- 3) Reading, understanding, and practicing the Qur'an, Hadith, and dhikr
- 4) Having noble character
- 5) Carrying out all commands and avoiding everything that is prohibited by Allah SWT (Syarbini, M dan Heri, 2014).

Strengthening religious character can be done in various ways and is influenced by various factors, namely psychological factors in the form of obedience and devotion to God, which originate from within oneself. This factor is referred to as an internal factor. External factors include the desire to emulate the behavior of good people, customs and traditions in society, technological developments, and a good social environment (Muhaimin, 2001).

Good religious character can make students behave well and politely. Good and polite behavior can help students adapt to the educational environment and achieve good results (Nuzulia, 1967). The PAI department at IAIN Kerinci requires its students to achieve learning outcomes in three areas, namely psychomotor skills related to student intellect, affective skills related to student attitudes, and psychomotor skills related to the application and acquisition or results that can be obtained by a student after participating in learning (Mahmudi1, et al, 2022). The success of a learning process is when there is a change in a person as a whole (Nidaur Rohmah, 2017). If the three domains above have been achieved by students, it means that the learning objectives have been achieved.

Religious values and good academic performance are the goals of every institution, and good learning motivation is necessary to achieve these goals. Learning motivation is influenced by two things, namely internal and external factors. Internal factors can include talent, interest, and willingness, while external factors can include parental support, facilities and infrastructure, and support from peers (Marleni, 2016).

The data from this study also provides a very clear picture that the peer environment greatly influences and motivates the religious character of students. At first glance, religious character does not seem to influence a person's learning outcomes, but upon closer inspection, this is not the case. When a person has good religious character, they will apply it in their daily life, such as in their discipline, politeness, cooperation, determination, confidence, good manners, and honesty in learning (Ekawati et al., 2018). In practice, these are the values that every student needs in order to improve their learning outcomes.

Improving the religious character of students is a task for IAIN Kerinci, because if a student's religious values are good, their academic grades will also have a greater chance of reaching a good level. This can be explained by the fact that religious character can encourage students to excel in education (Amin, 2020). Here are some ways to instill religious character and improve learning outcomes:

- a. Lecturers and campus officials need to provide guidance and motivation to PAI students to improve their religious character.

Lecturers and the university have a central role in guiding and motivating Islamic Education students so that their religious character develops comprehensively. Lecturers not only deliver academic material, but also serve as role models in attitude, behavior, and the implementation of religious values on campus. In higher education, learning strategies that integrate religious values and motivation on a continuous basis have proven effective in shaping students' religious character (Murdianto, 2024) Furthermore, PAI tutorial

programs initiated by campuses with strengthened guidance, mentoring, and motivation have been proven to increase the internalization of religious values and student character (Nasrudin & Fakhruddin, 2023). Systematic efforts by lecturers and campuses through value guidance, spiritual motivation, and a supportive campus environment are an important foundation in the process of shaping the religious character of PAI students.

b. PAI students need to be active in religious activities on and off campus.

Religious activities actively participated in by students are an important factor in strengthening their religious character. Research conducted at the Indonesia University of Education (UPI) found that various campus religious activities such as PAI/SPAI tutorials and BBQ/BTQ programs significantly contribute to the formation of students' religious character. The results of the study show that students who regularly participate in these activities demonstrate habits of righteous deeds, both ritual and social and environmental indicating that they have good religious character and praiseworthy morals (Nurjannah et al., 2023). Additionally, research by E. Nasrudin entitled Strengthening Students' Religious Character Education through Religious Tutorial Programs at UPI shows that structured religious tutorial programs on campus have succeeded in strengthening religious character traits such as faith, piety, tolerance, trustworthiness, and hard work (Nasrudin & Fakhruddin, 2023).

Thus, it can be implied that when Islamic Education students actively participate in religious activities—whether organized by the campus (such as study groups, recitation groups, campus missionary activities) or by communities outside the campus—they not only gain religious knowledge but also the opportunity to internalize religious values through practice, habit formation, and religious social interaction. These activities provide a space for students to build religious routines (e.g., congregational prayers, recitation of the Quran, religion-based social service), strengthen their religious identity, and form a consistent character that in turn can support their motivation,

discipline, and learning outcomes.

- c. PAI students need to choose friends who have good religious character

Choosing friends with good religious character is an important aspect in the process of shaping students' religious character, because the friendship environment greatly influences an individual's religious attitudes, behavior, and motivation. Therefore, choosing to associate with friends who are friendly towards worship, active in religion, and have consistent religious attitudes is a social environment strategy that supports the formation of religious character (Afifah et al., 2025). Religious friends can serve as reminders and motivators in religious practices (such as congregational prayers, recitation of the Qur'an, reading the Qur'an), and at the same time as "*agents of change*" who influence the culture of learning and spirituality in the friendship environment.

2. Friendship According to Islam

The friendship environment is the first step for a person to gain group members after family. The interactions that occur in this environment will have positive or negative impacts (Umar, 2005) in HR from Imam Muslim (Book of Doing Good, chapter on the sunnah of associating with scholars) No. 4762 in the commentary on Sahih Muslim, explains the description of friendship relationships as being like a perfume seller, and an ironworker. If you befriend someone who sells perfume, you will inevitably smell its fragrance, and it may even cling to your body. If you befriend an ironworker, you are likely to be exposed to the heat of the fire, and your clothes may even catch fire. At the very least, you will smell the unpleasant odor produced by his work.

The above hadith can be summarized as follows: there are two types of environments, those that have a positive impact and those that have a negative impact. That is, if we befriend people who are pious, we will be influenced to be pious, and if we befriend evil people, it is possible that we will also do evil things (Nida, 2021). A good friendship and the highest level of kinship is when they are always there for each other, accompany each other, share opinions, complement each

other, can be a place to exchange ideas, and are mutually beneficial and united to achieve a goal (Cahyono, 2019). Therefore, from this relationship, a person feels a sense of kinship, comfort, and fear of loss and sadness when seeing a friend sad, and they usually tend to influence each other. Allah SWT has said in Q.S al-Zukhruf:67 which means:

“Close friends on the Day of Judgment will be enemies to one another, except for the friends of the righteous.”

The above verse explains the importance of reminding friends to do good, influencing each other, and helping each other. The influence of the Prophet Muhammad's friendships is so great that he described friendships as being like two hands, which can help, complement, and support each other to achieve a goal (Asiyah et al., 2019). In the book *Bidayat Al-Hidayat*, Imam al-Ghazali mentions that if you want to choose friends, you should pay attention to the following.

- 1) Intelligent
- 2) Good character
- 3) Pious
- 4) Not attached to (does not glorify) worldly possessions (zuhud)
- 5) Honest (Ardiyansyah Permana, 2016).

D. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that friendship interactions have a significant influence on the development of religious character among PAI IAIN Kerinci students, where a positive social environment encourages the application of religious values in daily life. In addition, the study found that female students are more easily influenced by their environment than male students. These findings confirm that the formation of religious character does not only depend on internal factors, but is also influenced by social interactions that occur in the academic environment. For further research, it is recommended to examine in more depth other factors that contribute to the formation of religious character, such as the role of the family, the influence of digital media, and effective learning methods for instilling religious values in students. In addition, further

research could also use more diverse approaches, such as qualitative or experimental methods, to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms of environmental influence on students' religious character.

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