

The Relevance of Islamic Religious Education Learning in Shaping Students' Character and Readiness for the World of Work in Vocational High Schools

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the relevance of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning in shaping students' character and work readiness in vocational high schools. The study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were collected through observations, interviews, and documentation involving Islamic Religious Education teachers and vocational high school students. Data were analyzed through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that Islamic Religious Education learning has strong relevance to students' character development, particularly in terms of honesty, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, ethics, and integrity. These values are not only related to students' personal development but also constitute important competencies for entering the workplace. Islamic Religious Education learning that is connected to real-life situations and workplace environments can help students understand the importance of professional ethics, responsibility, communication, and work attitudes based on Islamic values. Therefore, Islamic Religious Education in vocational high schools functions not only as religious instruction but also contributes significantly to developing students' character and preparing them to enter the workforce as professional, ethical, responsible, and integrity-driven individuals.

Keywords: Islamic Religious Education; Character Development; Work Readiness; Work Ethics; Vocational High School Students.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis relevansi pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) dalam pembentukan karakter dan kesiapan dunia kerja siswa Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan (SMK). Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Data diperoleh melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi yang dilakukan terhadap guru PAI dan siswa SMK. Analisis data dilakukan melalui tahapan reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pembelajaran PAI memiliki relevansi yang kuat dalam membentuk karakter siswa, khususnya dalam aspek

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kejujuran, kedisiplinan, tanggung jawab, kerja sama, etika, dan integritas. Nilai-nilai tersebut tidak hanya berkaitan dengan pembentukan kepribadian siswa, tetapi juga menjadi kompetensi penting dalam menghadapi dunia kerja. Pembelajaran PAI yang dikaitkan dengan situasi kehidupan nyata dan lingkungan kerja dapat membantu siswa memahami pentingnya etika profesional, tanggung jawab, komunikasi, dan sikap kerja yang sesuai dengan nilai-nilai Islam. Dengan demikian, pembelajaran PAI di SMK tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai pembelajaran keagamaan, tetapi juga berkontribusi terhadap pembentukan karakter dan kesiapan siswa untuk memasuki dunia kerja secara profesional, berintegritas, dan bertanggung jawab.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Agama Islam; Pembentukan Karakter; Kesiapan Kerja; Etika Kerja; Siswa SMK

A. Introduction

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) is an important component of education because its objectives extend beyond the transmission of religious knowledge to the formation of students' attitudes, morals, and behavior. In the Indonesian educational context, Islamic Religious Education is expected to contribute to the development of individuals who possess intellectual competence as well as spiritual and moral integrity. Therefore, IRE should not be positioned merely as a subject concerned with understanding religious concepts, but also as an educational process that helps students internalize Islamic values and apply them in everyday life.

The importance of Islamic Religious Education becomes increasingly evident in the context of character development. Education is expected to prepare students to become responsible members of society who demonstrate honesty, discipline, responsibility, respect, empathy, and integrity. These values are closely related to Islamic teachings and constitute important dimensions of character formation. Research has demonstrated that Islamic Religious Education can contribute to character development through classroom instruction, habituation, teacher modeling, and integration of Islamic values into school activities (Maulana & Purba, 2024).

Character formation is particularly important during adolescence because students are developing their identities, attitudes, and patterns of behavior. At this stage, students

are exposed to various influences from family, peers, social environments, digital media, and popular culture. Without adequate moral and religious guidance, students may experience difficulties in distinguishing between constructive and harmful behaviors. Islamic Religious Education can provide students with ethical frameworks that help them make responsible decisions and develop behavior consistent with religious and social values.

The role of Islamic Religious Education in character formation has been demonstrated in various educational contexts. Munawir et al. (2024) found that Islamic Religious Education contributes to the development of values such as responsibility, discipline, honesty, and other positive character traits. Their findings indicate that character development through Islamic education requires not only the delivery of religious materials but also appropriate pedagogical practices and supportive educational environments.

Character education should also be connected to students' real-life experiences. Learning becomes more meaningful when religious values are not presented as abstract concepts but are related to situations that students encounter in their families, communities, schools, and future workplaces. Alhamuddin and Asikin (2025) emphasized the importance of contextualizing Islamic Religious Education so that values such as honesty, responsibility, empathy, and discipline can be internalized through students' actual experiences.

The need to connect Islamic Religious Education with real-life contexts is especially important in vocational education. Vocational high schools (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan/SMK) are designed to prepare students for further education, entrepreneurship, and particularly participation in the labor market. Students are expected to acquire not only technical and vocational competencies but also attitudes and behaviors that enable them to function effectively in professional environments. Consequently, the educational objectives of SMK require an integration between technical competence, personal character, and work readiness.

Work readiness refers to students' preparedness to enter and perform effectively in the workplace. It encompasses more than technical knowledge because students also

need communication skills, adaptability, responsibility, discipline, teamwork, problem-solving abilities, professional ethics, and confidence. Recent research among Islamic vocational students indicates that work readiness remains an important issue because some vocational graduates continue to face difficulties when transitioning from school to employment (Ratnasari & Indriani, 2025).

The relationship between character and work readiness is particularly significant because employers generally expect workers to demonstrate professional attitudes in addition to technical abilities. A technically competent employee may still experience difficulties in the workplace if he or she lacks discipline, responsibility, honesty, communication skills, or respect for organizational rules. Thus, vocational education should prepare students holistically by developing both occupational competencies and character traits that support sustainable professional performance.

In this context, Islamic Religious Education has considerable potential to contribute to students' work readiness. Islamic teachings contain values that are highly relevant to professional life, including honesty (*ṣidq*), trustworthiness (*amānah*), responsibility, discipline, justice, cooperation, perseverance, and commitment to performing tasks properly. These values can provide a moral foundation for students as they prepare to enter different professional environments. Consequently, PAI can function as a bridge between religious values and professional ethics.

The concept of *amānah*, for example, is highly relevant to workplace responsibility. Students who understand the importance of fulfilling entrusted responsibilities can develop attitudes of reliability and accountability. Similarly, Islamic teachings concerning honesty can help students understand the importance of truthful communication, avoiding fraud, and maintaining integrity in professional relationships. The internalization of these values can contribute to the development of workers who are not only competent but also trustworthy.

Discipline is another important value connecting Islamic Religious Education and work readiness. Workplace environments require employees to comply with schedules, procedures, quality standards, and organizational regulations. Islamic education can introduce discipline through religious practices and moral instruction while

simultaneously connecting these principles to students' responsibilities as learners and future workers. Through consistent habituation, students can learn that discipline is not merely an external requirement but also a personal and moral responsibility.

Responsibility is similarly central to both character development and professional readiness. Students who learn to take responsibility for assignments, decisions, and behavior are better positioned to understand the demands of the workplace. Islamic Religious Education can strengthen this orientation by emphasizing accountability for human actions. When students understand that their behavior has consequences for themselves and others, they may develop greater awareness of the importance of fulfilling their responsibilities.

The relevance of Islamic Religious Education to vocational preparation is supported by recent research specifically focusing on work ethics. Astarina et al. (2026) found that conventional Islamic Religious Education materials may not sufficiently address the specific needs of vocational students preparing to enter the workforce. Their research highlights the need for supplementary PAI materials that explicitly address work ethics and vocational contexts. This finding demonstrates the importance of developing PAI learning that is directly connected to students' future professional lives.

The integration of character education with vocational preparation has also received attention in recent research. Mulyani et al. (2026) found that systematic character education can strengthen the work culture of vocational students. Values such as discipline, honesty, resilience, and responsibility can be integrated into school activities and work-culture practices, thereby contributing to students' preparation for industrial environments.

Furthermore, research conducted in vocational Islamic education contexts demonstrates that PAI can contribute directly to character formation. Mukhtar et al. (2025) found that Islamic Religious Education at an Islamic vocational school contributed to the development of students' moral and ethical character, particularly through values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and politeness. These findings demonstrate that the relevance of PAI in vocational education extends beyond religious knowledge to the development of attitudes required for social and professional life.

The relationship between character education and employment preparation is also supported by research examining the influence of character education on job readiness. Wiguna et al. (2023) reported a relationship between character education and employment readiness, suggesting that character development can contribute to students' preparation for entering professional environments. Although their research was conducted among higher-education students, the underlying relationship is relevant to vocational education because SMK students also require strong personal and ethical foundations before entering the labor market.

Nevertheless, the integration of Islamic Religious Education with vocational preparation remains a challenge. In some educational settings, PAI learning may continue to emphasize cognitive mastery of religious concepts rather than the practical application of Islamic values. Students may understand concepts such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility theoretically but may not always demonstrate these values consistently in their behavior. This gap indicates the need for PAI learning that emphasizes internalization, habituation, reflection, and contextual application.

Another challenge concerns the changing nature of the workplace. Technological development, digitalization, globalization, and changes in employment patterns require graduates to become adaptable and capable of continuous learning. Vocational students need to possess technical skills while also demonstrating communication, collaboration, critical thinking, ethical judgment, and adaptability. Islamic Religious Education can contribute to these demands by providing moral and spiritual foundations that help students navigate changes while maintaining ethical standards.

Digital transformation also creates new challenges for character formation. Students are increasingly exposed to information and social interaction through digital platforms, which can influence attitudes, values, and patterns of behavior. Islamic Religious Education therefore needs to address contemporary issues such as digital ethics, responsible communication, integrity in the use of technology, and respect for others in online environments. Recent research on Islamic character education has similarly identified digital media and consumer culture as challenges that require stronger and more contextual character-building strategies (Syahbrina & As'ad, 2026).

The development of character through Islamic Religious Education should consequently involve collaboration between teachers, schools, families, and the broader community. Teachers serve not only as instructors but also as role models whose behavior can influence students' attitudes. School culture should reinforce the values taught in PAI lessons through consistent rules, habituation, extracurricular activities, and opportunities for students to practice responsibility. In this way, character education becomes an integral part of the educational environment rather than an isolated classroom activity.

Although previous studies have examined the role of Islamic Religious Education in character formation and other studies have explored work readiness among vocational students, there is still a need to examine these two dimensions simultaneously. Recent research has identified the importance of work-ethic-based PAI materials for vocational students (Astarina et al., 2026), while other research has demonstrated the relationship between character education and vocational work culture (Mulyani et al., 2026). However, further research is needed to understand how PAI learning can simultaneously contribute to character formation and students' readiness to enter the world of work.

Based on this background, the present study focuses on the relevance of Islamic Religious Education learning in shaping students' character and readiness for the world of work in vocational high schools. The study aims to analyze how PAI learning contributes to the development of character values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, integrity, cooperation, and professional ethics, as well as how these values relate to students' preparation for entering the workplace. The study is expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of contextual PAI learning in vocational education and to strengthen the role of Islamic Religious Education in preparing students who are not only vocationally competent but also morally responsible, professionally ethical, and ready to face the demands of the world of work.

B. Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive qualitative research design. The qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to explore and describe in depth the relevance of Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning in shaping students' character and preparing them for the world of work. The study did not focus on measuring the effect of IRE through statistical procedures but on understanding how religious values are taught, internalized, and manifested in students' attitudes and behaviors. Qualitative research is appropriate for examining educational phenomena in their natural contexts and understanding the meanings constructed by participants (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research was conducted at a vocational high school (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan/SMK) in Indonesia. The research site was selected purposively because the school provides vocational education in which students are prepared to continue their education, develop entrepreneurial competencies, and enter the workforce. The participants consisted of Islamic Religious Education teachers, vocational subject teachers, and students. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on their involvement and experience in the implementation of Islamic Religious Education and vocational learning. The inclusion of different participants enabled the study to obtain diverse perspectives concerning the relationship between religious education, character development, and work readiness.

The main data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews and observations involving teachers and students. Interviews were conducted to explore teachers' perspectives concerning the objectives, strategies, and implementation of Islamic Religious Education in developing students' character and work readiness. Students were interviewed to understand their experiences in learning PAI and their perceptions of the relevance of Islamic values to future employment. Secondary data were obtained from school documents, including lesson plans, teaching materials, student activity records, school regulations, character-building programs, and other documents relevant to Islamic Religious Education and vocational preparation.

Data collection was conducted through three techniques: observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Observations focused on classroom learning activities, teacher-student interactions, students' participation, habituation of religious values, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and other behaviors associated with character development. Semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to ask predetermined questions while providing opportunities for participants to elaborate on their experiences and opinions. Documentation was used to complement interview and observation findings and to strengthen the evidence concerning the implementation of PAI and character education. The combination of these techniques enabled methodological triangulation and increased the credibility of the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The research focused on several indicators of character and work readiness. Character development was examined through values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, integrity, cooperation, respect, independence, and ethical behavior. Meanwhile, work readiness was examined through students' understanding of professional ethics, communication, teamwork, responsibility, adaptability, problem-solving, confidence, and commitment to completing tasks. Particular attention was given to Islamic values such as *ṣidq* (honesty), *amānah* (trustworthiness), *ʿadl* (justice), discipline, responsibility, and mutual assistance. These values were analyzed in relation to students' preparation for professional environments and workplace demands.

The data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative analysis process consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. First, the researcher organized and condensed the data by selecting information relevant to Islamic Religious Education, character formation, and work readiness. Second, the condensed data were organized into thematic categories and presented in narrative form to identify patterns and relationships among the findings. Third, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the emerging themes and continuously comparing them with the collected evidence. The analysis followed the principles of qualitative data analysis proposed by Miles et al. (2018), in which data analysis is viewed as a continuous and interactive process throughout the research.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, the study employed source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from students, Islamic Religious Education teachers, and vocational teachers. Technique triangulation was performed by comparing findings from observations, interviews, and documentation. The researcher also conducted repeated observations and reviewed interview interpretations to minimize misinterpretation of participants' statements. The findings were considered credible when information from different sources and data collection techniques demonstrated consistent patterns. Through these procedures, the study sought to provide a comprehensive description of how Islamic Religious Education contributes to students' character formation and readiness to enter the world of work.

C. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) has a significant relevance to the formation of students' character and their preparation for entering the world of work in vocational high schools. Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, IRE learning was not limited to the transfer of religious knowledge but also functioned as a process of internalizing values, developing attitudes, and preparing students to behave responsibly in social and professional environments. The findings reveal that values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, cooperation, integrity, respect, and trustworthiness were consistently connected with students' daily behavior and future professional responsibilities.

The implementation of IRE learning demonstrated that character formation occurred through the integration of religious knowledge and practical behavioral habituation. Teachers did not merely explain Islamic concepts theoretically but also encouraged students to apply religious values in their daily activities. Students were encouraged to demonstrate honesty in completing assignments, discipline in attending classes and participating in school activities, and responsibility in completing academic tasks. This finding is consistent with research showing that Islamic Religious Education can contribute to character development when religious values are integrated into

students' daily educational experiences rather than taught only as abstract concepts (Nurfalah & Ahid, 2025).

One of the strongest character dimensions identified in the study was honesty. Teachers emphasized that honesty is an essential Islamic value and a fundamental requirement in social and professional relationships. Students were encouraged to avoid cheating, provide accurate information, acknowledge mistakes, and complete assignments independently. The internalization of honesty is highly relevant to the workplace because employees are expected to demonstrate integrity when dealing with customers, colleagues, supervisors, organizational information, and professional responsibilities. Therefore, IRE provides an ethical foundation that can support students in becoming trustworthy future workers.

Discipline was another important character value developed through IRE learning. The findings showed that teachers connected religious discipline with students' responsibility for managing time, following school regulations, attending lessons, completing assignments, and participating in religious activities. This habituation is relevant to vocational education because workplace environments require employees to follow schedules, standard operating procedures, safety regulations, and organizational rules. Recent research on Islamic character education in vocational schools similarly identifies discipline and responsibility as important outcomes of structured Islamic character-building programs (Kesuma & Ritonga, 2026).

Responsibility also emerged as an important connection between PAI learning and work readiness. Students were encouraged to understand that every task carries consequences and must be completed properly. Teachers connected the Islamic concept of *amānah* with responsibility for assignments, relationships, and entrusted duties. In the context of employment, this value is highly relevant because workers are expected to complete tasks accurately, meet deadlines, protect organizational resources, and accept accountability for their decisions. Thus, religious education can provide a moral framework for understanding professional responsibility.

The findings further demonstrate that IRE contributed to students' understanding of professional ethics. Teachers introduced Islamic values such as honesty,

trustworthiness, fairness, respect, cooperation, and responsibility and connected them to situations that students may encounter in their future workplaces. This approach is particularly important for vocational students because their education is directly oriented toward professional environments. Astarina et al. (2026) similarly found that general PAI materials may not adequately address vocational students' specific needs and that supplementary materials focusing on work ethics can strengthen their preparation for employment.

The relevance of PAI became more visible when teachers used contextual examples related to workplace situations. Students were asked to consider how Islamic values could guide their behavior when working with supervisors, colleagues, customers, and business partners. For example, honesty was associated with accurate reporting, responsibility with completing assigned tasks, and respect with professional communication. This contextual approach transformed religious values from abstract principles into practical guidelines for professional behavior. Such findings support the argument that PAI in vocational schools should be connected with students' anticipated professional environments.

Communication and interpersonal relationships were also identified as important components of work readiness. During learning activities, teachers encouraged students to express opinions respectfully, listen to others, participate in discussions, and respond appropriately to different perspectives. These activities indirectly developed communication skills that are essential in professional environments. Employees must be able to communicate with supervisors, colleagues, customers, and other stakeholders. Therefore, interactive PAI learning can contribute not only to religious understanding but also to students' interpersonal competencies.

The findings also reveal that cooperation and teamwork were developed through classroom activities and school programs. Students were encouraged to work together, help one another, and respect differences in opinions and abilities. Cooperation is highly relevant to vocational education because most professional environments require employees to work in teams. Islamic values emphasizing mutual assistance and social responsibility can therefore provide an ethical foundation for teamwork. The

development of these values demonstrates that PAI can contribute indirectly to students' employability beyond the acquisition of religious knowledge.

Another significant finding concerns the role of teachers as models of character. Students indicated that teachers' behavior influenced their understanding of Islamic values. Teachers demonstrated punctuality, responsibility, respectful communication, fairness, and consistency in implementing classroom rules. This finding confirms that character education cannot depend exclusively on verbal instruction. Students learn values through observation and repeated interaction with adults in their educational environment. Recent research in vocational schools similarly found that teacher example, religious habituation, personal approaches, motivation, and cooperation with schools and parents contribute to character formation (Ellisa & Hasirah, 2026).

The school environment also played an important role in strengthening the character values taught through PAI. Religious routines, classroom rules, collective activities, and school culture created opportunities for students to practice discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and religious behavior. Character formation therefore occurred through an interaction between classroom instruction and the broader school environment. This finding is consistent with research showing that Islamic school culture can shape vocational students' religious character through religious routines, discipline, teacher guidance, ethical vocational learning, and supportive environmental practices.

The findings indicate that students' work readiness was reflected not only in technical competence but also in attitudes and behavioral preparedness. Students demonstrated an understanding that entering the workplace requires punctuality, responsibility, communication, adaptability, cooperation, and ethical conduct. This is important because vocational graduates may possess technical skills but still experience difficulties when transitioning into employment if they lack appropriate professional attitudes. Ratnasari and Indriani (2025) found that work readiness among Islamic vocational students is an important issue and demonstrated a strong relationship between students' job interest and work readiness.

The relationship between PAI and work readiness was particularly evident in students' understanding of work ethic. Students viewed work not merely as a means of earning income but also as a responsibility that should be performed honestly, diligently, and professionally. Islamic values provide a moral dimension to the concept of work by emphasizing responsibility, trustworthiness, and beneficial contribution. This perspective can help students develop a more meaningful understanding of professional life. Research by Astarina et al. (2026) supports this finding by emphasizing the need for PAI teaching materials specifically oriented toward Islamic work ethics and vocational students' work readiness.

The findings also demonstrate that PAI can help students develop self-discipline and self-regulation. Students who internalize religious values are encouraged to control their behavior, manage their responsibilities, and consider the consequences of their actions. These abilities are relevant to modern workplaces, where employees are increasingly expected to work independently and manage tasks without continuous supervision. Recent research on Islamic Religious Education in vocational schools has similarly found that spiritual and reflective practices can strengthen self-awareness, self-discipline, emotional regulation, and responsibility among students (Fahri & Fauziah, 2026).

However, the study also identified several challenges in implementing PAI as a means of preparing students for the world of work. One challenge was the tendency to emphasize theoretical religious knowledge rather than practical application. Some students were able to explain Islamic concepts but still required guidance in consistently applying values such as discipline and responsibility. This finding indicates that there can be a gap between knowing a value and practicing it. Consequently, PAI learning needs to move beyond cognitive understanding toward habituation, reflection, contextual practice, and behavioral evaluation.

Another challenge involved the influence of students' external environment. Peer relationships, family conditions, social media, and broader social influences can affect students' character development. The findings suggest that positive values taught at school may not always be consistently practiced outside school. This challenge is also

reflected in recent research showing that external influences, limited parental supervision, peer relationships, and social media can constrain the effectiveness of character formation in vocational schools (Ellisa & Hasirah, 2026).

The findings further suggest that PAI learning should be integrated with vocational subjects and workplace experiences. Students can be encouraged to identify Islamic ethical principles within their respective vocational fields. For example, students in business-related programs can discuss honesty and fairness in transactions, students in engineering can discuss responsibility and occupational safety, and students in hospitality can discuss service ethics and respect for customers. Such integration would make PAI more meaningful and demonstrate its direct relevance to students' professional futures.

Work-integrated learning also provides an important opportunity to strengthen the relationship between PAI and work readiness. Internship programs, industrial practice, and workplace simulations can become contexts in which students practice values learned in PAI. Research on vocational education indicates that work-integrated learning can help address gaps between school-based learning and industry expectations by providing students with practical experiences (Wahyuningsih et al., 2025). Therefore, PAI teachers can collaborate with vocational teachers and internship supervisors to ensure that religious and ethical values are practiced during workplace learning.

The findings also demonstrate that the integration of PAI with work readiness requires curriculum adaptation. Rather than treating religious education as separate from vocational preparation, schools can develop contextual learning materials containing workplace scenarios, professional ethics, case studies, and problem-solving activities based on Islamic values. Recent research on the integration of Islamic curricula in vocational education found that religious curriculum integration can contribute to the development of professional work ethics among vocational students (Iskandar & Tantowie, 2026).

Overall, the results indicate that Islamic Religious Education has a multidimensional role in vocational education. It contributes to students' religious

understanding, character formation, ethical awareness, interpersonal behavior, and preparation for professional responsibilities. The strongest relevance is visible when PAI learning is contextual, participatory, exemplary, and connected to real workplace situations. These findings support the view that vocational education should not focus exclusively on technical competencies but should also prepare students to become ethical and responsible professionals.

The findings ultimately answer the main focus of this study by demonstrating that PAI learning is highly relevant to both character formation and students' readiness for the world of work. Values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, integrity, cooperation, trustworthiness, and respect provide a strong ethical foundation for professional life. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of PAI depends on the consistency between classroom instruction, teacher modeling, school culture, family support, and workplace experiences. Therefore, vocational schools should strengthen collaboration among PAI teachers, vocational teachers, school management, families, and industry partners so that religious values are not merely understood but practiced consistently. In this way, PAI can contribute to producing vocational graduates who are technically competent, morally responsible, adaptable, and prepared to participate professionally and ethically in the world of work.

D. Conclusion

This study concludes that Islamic Religious Education (IRE) learning has strong relevance to the development of students' character in vocational high schools. Through classroom instruction, religious habituation, teacher modeling, and the integration of Islamic values into school activities, IRE contributes to the development of honesty, discipline, responsibility, integrity, cooperation, respect, and trustworthiness. These character values are important not only for students' personal and social development but also for establishing a moral foundation that supports their future professional lives.

The study also concludes that Islamic Religious Education contributes to students' readiness to enter the world of work. Islamic values such as *ṣidq* (honesty), *amānah* (trustworthiness), responsibility, discipline, fairness, and cooperation are closely related

to professional ethics and workplace demands. When PAI learning is presented contextually and connected with vocational experiences, students are better able to understand the relationship between religious values and professional behavior. Therefore, PAI can complement students' technical competencies by strengthening the attitudes, ethical awareness, communication, and responsibility required in the workplace.

Based on these findings, vocational schools should strengthen the integration of Islamic Religious Education with vocational learning and workplace preparation. PAI teachers, vocational teachers, school management, families, and industry partners need to collaborate in creating learning experiences that allow students to practice Islamic values in authentic situations. PAI learning should move beyond the transmission of theoretical religious knowledge toward contextual, participatory, and practice-oriented learning. Such an approach can contribute to producing vocational graduates who are not only technically competent but also disciplined, ethical, responsible, adaptable, and prepared to participate professionally in the world of work.

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