

# THE APPLICATION OF CHARACTER EDUCATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGIOUS VALUES AND STUDENT INDEPENDENCE AT THE INTEGRATED VOCATIONAL SCHOOL IBADURRAHMAN LEMBURSITU SUKABUMI CITY

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## **Abstract:**

*This study aims to explore the implementation of strategies for the formation of religious and independent character in students at the Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu, Sukabumi City. Although many previous studies have addressed character education, few have examined the incorporation of religious values and independence in the context of vocational learning. This research fills this gap using qualitative methods, which include observations, interviews, and documentation studies. Data is collected through direct observation in the classroom and outside the classroom, as well as documentation of student activities. The results of the study show that an approach that integrates religious values through formal learning and extracurricular activities is able to strengthen students' character, both morally and socially. These findings indicate that the implementation of comprehensive and consistent character education can have a significant impact on the personal formation of students who are independent and have integrity. This research contributes to a deeper understanding of the importance of character education in vocational schools.*

*Keywords: character education; religious; Independence*

## INTRODUCTION

Character education has become one of the main priorities in the modern world of education, where the development of students' character not only rests on cognitive aspects, but also on affective and psychomotor aspects (Kulsum, 2024; Fitriyani et al., 2024). In this era of globalization and technological advancement, education not only serves as a tool to transfer knowledge, but also as a means to form a complete personality (Syarah Tintis et al., 2024; Wafa, 2023). Therefore, character education is crucial in equipping students with the moral and ethical values needed to live a responsible life. This comprehensive character formation includes the development of cognitive aspects, which involve reasoning and understanding, as well as affective aspects, which relate to emotions and attitudes, and psychomotor aspects, which relate to practical actions and skills (Yunior et al., 2024; Yanti, 2022)

One of the main goals of character education is the formation of religious values and independence that can equip students to face various challenges in their personal and social lives (Sari, 2024). The concept of religious character education includes the development of strong spiritual and religious attitudes, which are reflected in students' daily behavior, such as honesty, simplicity, and a sense of responsibility (Zain & Mustain, 2024). Religious education is not only about instilling religious doctrines, but also involves appreciating and practicing these values in real life (Lestari, 2024; Lutfiana, 2024). On the other hand, independence is an important component of character education that focuses on students' ability to make their own decisions, take responsibility for their actions, and take initiative in various aspects of life (Yuliyanti et al., 2024; Siregar et al., 2024). Thus, the integration of religious values and independence in character education is expected to produce individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also emotionally and spiritually mature.

Effective character education must be able to integrate these two aspects harmoniously (Rahayu et al., 2024; AthorIQ & Sitika, 2024). The concept of religious character and independence are not two separate things, but complement and reinforce each other. Education that focuses on just one aspect, such as independence without a moral and religious foundation, can produce individuals who may be intellectually capable but lack clear moral guidance (Ma'ruf et al., 2024). In contrast, an education that focuses only on the religious aspect without independence can produce individuals who may have good morals, but are less independent in decision-making and innovation (Hayati & Utomo, 2020). Therefore, a balance between the development of religious character and independence in the educational curriculum is very important to produce individuals who are holistic and ready to face various challenges in life in the future (Alinata et al., 2024).

Although the importance of character education has been widely recognized, there is still a significant gap in understanding how religious values and independence can be effectively integrated into the school curriculum. Many studies have focused on

only one aspect, both religiosity and independence, without paying enough attention to how the two can complement and strengthen each other. For example, Lestari's research entitled Implementation of Moral Faith Learning to Form Social Care Character and Humble Character in Students of Mts Riyadlatul Ulum Batanghari East Lampung (Lestari, 2024) and Muhammad Iqbal Fadlilah entitled The Role of PAI Teachers in the Digital Era in Developing the Character Values of Class VII Students at SMP Muhammadiyah 03 Purwokerto (Fadlilah, 2024) shows that character education often emphasizes more on cognitive and moral aspects without deeply touching on spiritual aspects and personal autonomy.

In addition, other studies also show that there are inconsistencies in the implementation of religious character education in various schools, which are caused by differences in culture, local values, and religious views. In Meyrosa Chairani's research entitled Implementation of Religious Character Education and Discipline Through School Culture in MIN 2 South Lampung (Chairani, 2021) found that some schools have difficulty in integrating religious values in students' daily activities due to a lack of support from the school environment and the community.

To address this gap, a more holistic and integrative approach is needed in character education, where religious values and independence can be implemented simultaneously and mutually supportively. The novelty of this study lies in the development of a character education model that combines these two aspects in a balanced manner, taking into account contextual factors such as local culture and the specific needs of students. This model is designed to not only teach values through theory, but also through real practice in everyday life, both inside and outside the classroom. This is in line with the theory of social learning put forward by Bandura (1977), which emphasizes the importance of learning through observation and imitation of the behavior of others, especially authority figures such as teachers. In addition, this approach also includes participatory learning strategies, in which students are given the opportunity to be actively involved in designing and implementing activities that support their character development, as proposed by Freire (1970).

Recent research in the last ten years has shown that effective character education must take into account contextual and cultural aspects of the local (Muaz & Ruswandi, 2022). Research by Lickona (2018) shows that character education that focuses on universal values without taking into account the local cultural context often fails to achieve the desired goals. Another study by Berkowitz (2020) emphasizes the importance of the involvement of the entire school community, including teachers, students, and parents, in the character education process. In Indonesia, research conducted by Rahmawati (2022) shows that character education that integrates religious values and independence can produce students who not only have strong moral integrity, but also have the ability to think critically and independently in making decisions. However, there

are still shortcomings in research that explicitly combines these two aspects in one complete educational model.

This research has a high urgency considering the increasingly complex challenges faced by the current young generation, both in social, economic, and moral contexts. With the increasing influence of globalization and the development of information technology, students are faced with a variety of choices and influences that can shape their character (Nature, 2023). Therefore, a strong character education, which integrates religious values and independence, is becoming increasingly important to help students face these challenges in a thoughtful and responsible way (Shahabah et al., 2024). This research contribution will not only provide a deeper understanding of how these values can be integrated in school curricula, but will also provide practical guidance for educators in designing and implementing character education programs that are more effective and relevant to student needs.

The main purpose of this study is to develop a character education model that integrates religious values and independence in a balanced manner, as well as to test the effectiveness of this model in the context of education in Indonesia. This research will be conducted at the Integrated Vocational School of Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City, which was chosen as the location of the research because of its success in implementing various character education programs. The unit of analysis in this study includes school principals, heads of curriculum areas, teachers appointed by the principal and students with a focus on how religious values and independence are taught and practiced in daily life in schools. Through this research, it is hoped that more effective strategies can be found in educating students to become religious and independent individuals, as well as making a real contribution to the development of character education in Indonesia as a whole.

## **METHOD**

This research aims to implement the strategy of forming religious and independent character of students at the Integrated Vocational School of Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City, with a focus on learning strategies, development, and the role of teachers. The method used in this study is a qualitative method with a type of descriptive case study. The research was conducted at the Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu, Sukabumi City, from November 15, 2023 to May 20, 2024.

This research involves several main data sources, namely one principal as the person in charge, one head of curriculum, one teacher, and one student. Data were collected through three main techniques: observation, interviews, and documentation studies. In the data collection process, researchers play an active role in digging up information from informants with an in-depth approach, which allows for a more detailed understanding of the strategies implemented in the school.

The data analysis was carried out based on three main stages developed by Miles

and Huberman: data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions. Data reduction is done by filtering and selecting relevant and important data, using Atlas.ti version 9 software to help with this process. The use of Atlas.ti allows researchers to do coding, which is the tagging of raw data with certain labels which are then classified according to research needs. This process is carried out transparently to ensure the accuracy and honesty of the data analyzed.

Once the data has been reduced, the next step is to present the data. The data that has been filtered and grouped is then described in the form of text. The presentation of this data aims to provide a clear picture of the research findings, where the researcher uses a structured brief description to connect between the categories found.

The final stage in data analysis is the drawing of conclusions, which is carried out after all existing data has been reduced and presented. At this stage, the researcher compiles conclusions based on the data configuration that has been collected from the principal, curriculum waka, teachers, and students, all of which are related to the research theme.

To ensure the validity of the research results, various data validity tests are carried out, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability tests. Researchers are actively present at the research site and are directly involved in each stage of data collection, thus allowing for thorough examination and verification of results throughout the research process.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **A. Research Results**

Implementation of the Strategy for Forming Religious and Independent Character for Students of Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City

#### **a. Learning Strategies**

##### **1) Interview**

In implementing learning strategies related to the formation of religious character and student independence, SMK Terpadu Ibadurrahman Kota Sukabumi has applied a method by providing understanding through learning and acting, both in the classroom or outside the classroom. The data source can be obtained from;

Ayt: Students are given learning about religion, whether it is through learning in the classroom or through extracurricular activities, in the continuation of which it is seen to the extent that they act it in their daily interactions, it can be through behavioral attitudes in the classroom, outside the classroom such as when communicating with friends, and their association with their friends, can also be seen from their attitude towards the teacher, either in the classroom or outside the classroom. (Principal of Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City)

WD: After they understand the religiosity and independence that they get from extracurricular lessons and activities, they need to be directed, they need to be given examples. (Waka Curriculum of Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City, n.d.)

Dns: Understanding religion and independence is very necessary, that's why it is not enough to learn in the classroom alone, it needs to be developed and set an example. It is indeed difficult and gradual, but we have to do it again, this is our duty to them. (Teacher of Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Sukabumi City, n.d.)

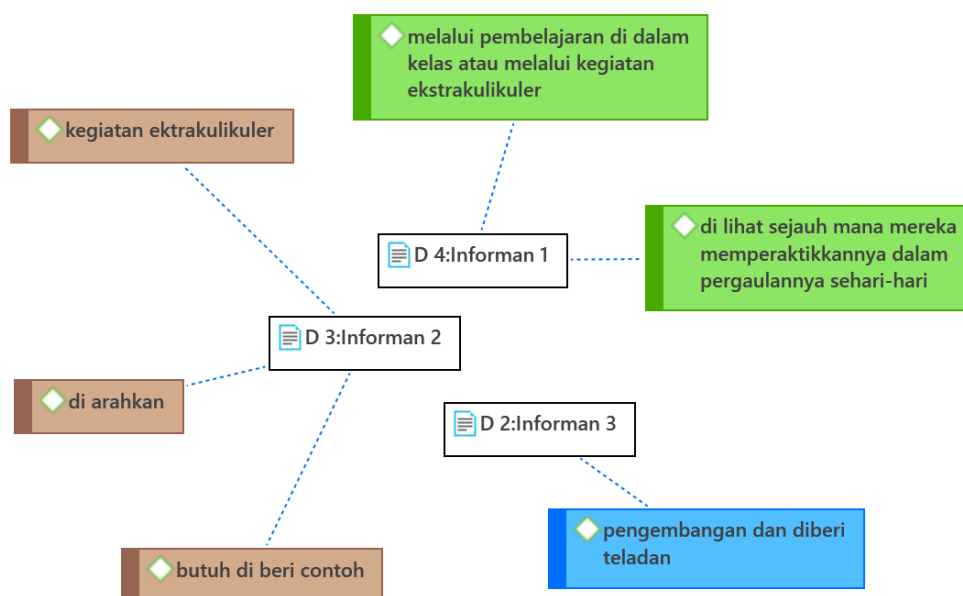


Diagram of Student Character Formation Strategy Diagram  
Atlas T.i.9 Version

## 2) Observation

The results of the researchers' observations in the field have given a clear picture that, in the classroom, the teacher before delivering the material, the teacher first conveys greetings to the students, the teacher seems to give an example in front of the students, starting from how to dress, speak and communicate with students. And outside the classroom, the researcher observed students giving an impression with what they saw from their teachers, such as dressing neatly, communicating well with peers and maintaining harmony and morning apple prayer together. On the other hand, students pray in congregation at the mosque, participating in a series of activities, this is a daily practice that has been applied to students in order to form character.

## 3) Documentation Studies

At the documentation study stage, the researcher obtained data in the form of examples given by teachers in the form of, teachers have carried out their duties

as ceremonial officers, teachers also carry out making drinks, this is in line with the results of interviews, where teachers must first give examples to their students.

## **b. Development**

### **1) Interview**

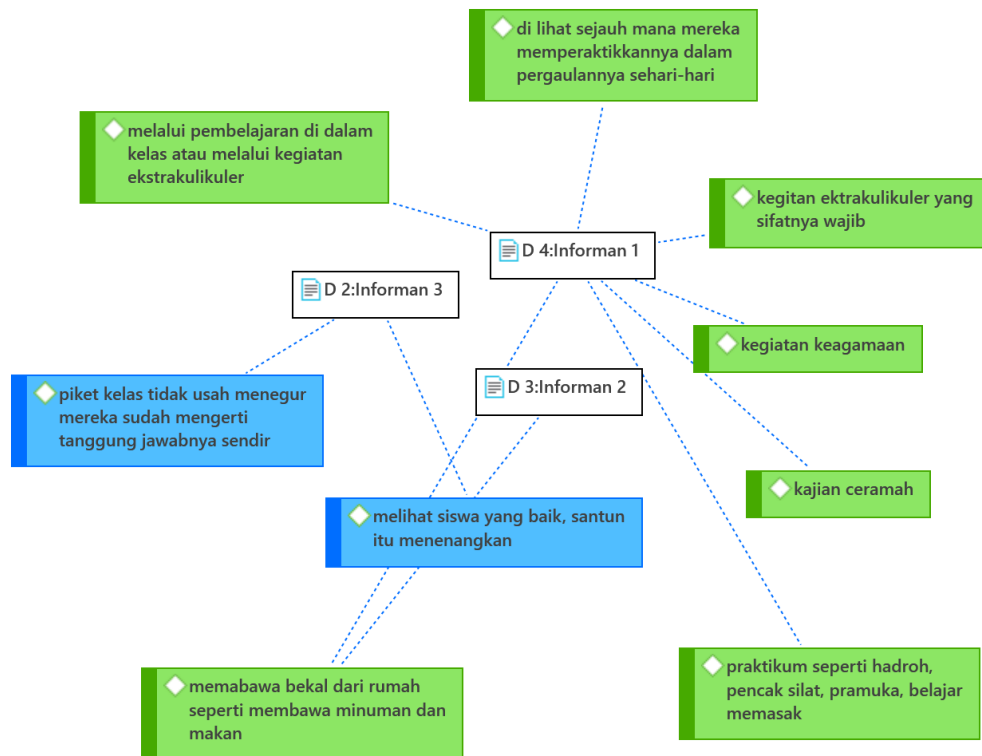
In addition to providing briefing and learning, at the Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City, an extracurricular activity program was also held to develop student understanding. This is obtained from interview sources for:

Ayt: to add more maturity, it is very necessary to hold a development program, this development includes extracurricular activities that are mandatory for students. We have carried out many activities that support the formation of religious and independent student character through, religious activities, namely morning prayers together, conducting congregational prayers, lectures to invite figures, as well as types of practicum activities such as hadroh, pencak silat, scouting, learning to cook and others. This school also builds a program for students who are encouraged to bring provisions from home such as bringing drinks and meals, this is so that students do not waste, reduce waste, little by little help them learn independently. (Principal of Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City)

WD: To encourage students to get closer to religion, it is necessary to develop religious activities as well, such as shodaqoh on Friday as much as possible, joint community service work to clean the mosque and school environment, or other extracurricular activities such as hadroh, religious discussions, questions and answers about religion. With such development, it is hoped that there will be things that are inherent in students. Once again it is a manifestation of the vision, mission and goals of the Ibadurrahman Integrated Vocational School in Sukabumi City. (Waka Curriculum of Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City, n.d.)

Dns: Student development programs are not only in terms of their majors as vocational students, but shaping morals towards them is much more important, if we see good students, manners are calming, class teachers don't have to reprimand them already understand their own responsibilities. If this situation can be maintained, then two things of religiosity and independence will be formed. (Teacher of Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City, n.d.)





## 2) Observation



school, demonstrating the active involvement of students and the commitment of educators.

**c. The Role of Teachers**

**1) Interview**

The Integrated Vocational School of Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City has successfully involved all elements of the school in the implementation of the student character building program. In this effort, teachers are not only responsible for providing academic guidance, but are also expected to play an active role in providing direction, escort, and example for students throughout the day, from arrival at school to their return.

This holistic approach shows that the responsibility in shaping the character of students is not only a burden of one party, but is the collective responsibility of all components of the school. Thus, the active and consistent involvement of all elements of the school, both teachers, staff, and the school environment as a whole, is expected to create an environment conducive to the development of strong and dignified student character. Information and understanding about the implementation of this program were obtained by researchers through in-depth sources. This source was obtained by the researcher from the results of interviews:

Ayt: The teacher is not only teaching but also giving an example, when the good example is applied every day, the students get used to it over time. (Principal of Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City)

WD: If there are no teachers who accompany them, they seem to be lacking in quick movement, then the teacher must escort and set a good example for them. (Waka Curriculum of Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City, n.d.)

Dns: As a teacher, my role is not only limited to teaching lessons in the classroom, but also as a role model for students. I believe that a good example should be applied consistently every day. When students see a positive and consistent example from me, they are more likely to imitate. For example, I always show good manners, hard work, and openness in interacting with students. I also prioritize values such as, cooperation, every action and decision I take. Through this consistency, I believe students will become more familiar with these values and apply them in their daily lives, even after they leave the school environment. (Teacher of Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City, n.d.)

Ska: Supervising and guiding. (Students of Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City, n.d.)

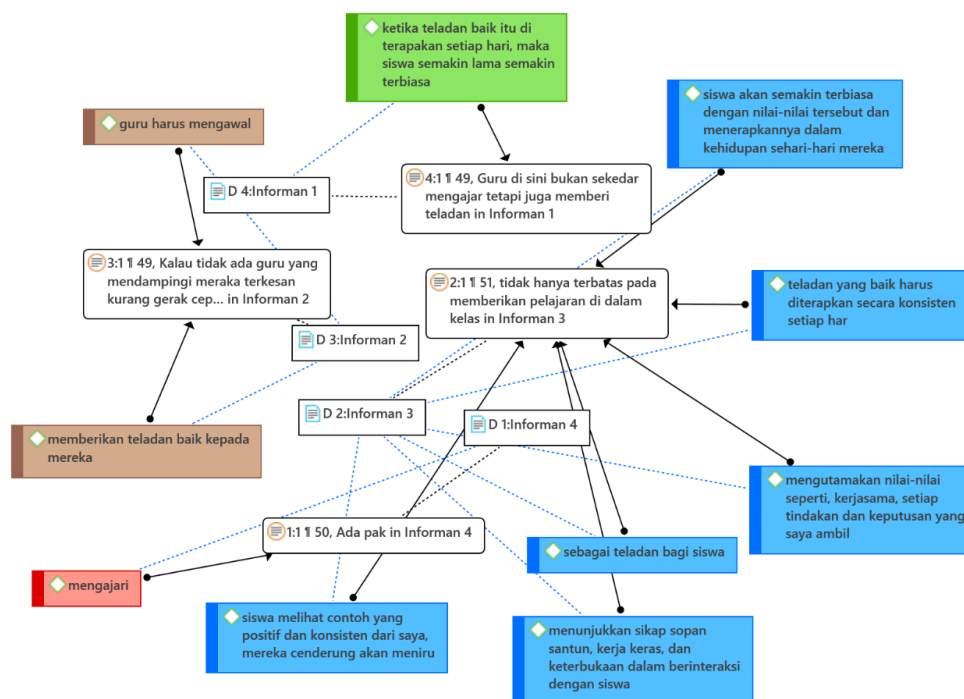


Diagram of the Teacher Role Schematic Atlas Version T.i.9.

## 2) Observation

The researcher's observation, seeing that there are general subject teachers who also participate in reprimanding students who are not good at behaving, and wearing uniforms, and speaking. On the other hand, teachers have gone around to the classrooms leading their students when prayer time arrives, during the apple prayer activity together, the teacher accompanies and at the same time gives an example, it is evident that in doing prayer the teacher chooses the place of the shof in front first, in terms of reading the prayer, the teacher participates in praying by mingling with the ranks of his students.

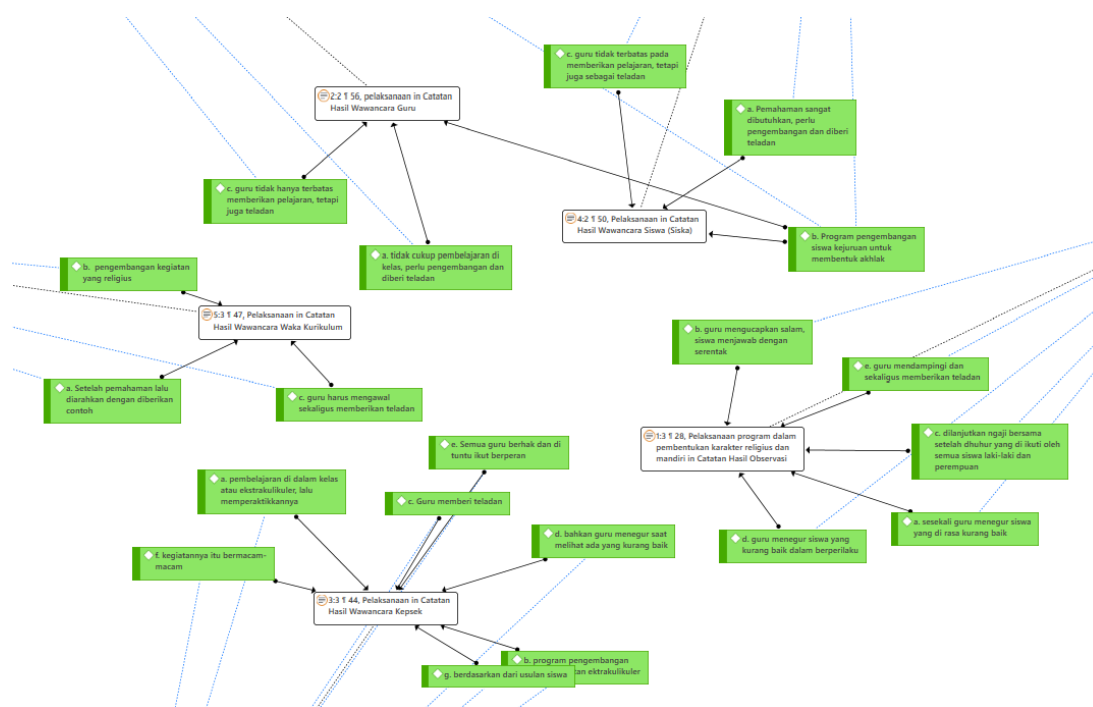
## 3) Documentation Studies

In addition to obtaining data from observations, researchers also obtained documentation results in the form of photographs depicting various student activities, both in the classroom and outside the classroom. This documentation is one of the important visual evidences in understanding the process of forming religious and independent character at the Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City. The photos not only capture the moment, but also illustrate how religious values and independence are implemented in students' daily activities.

This visual documentation includes various activities such as morning prayers together, congregational prayers, extracurricular activities such as hadroh, pencak silat, and scouting, as well as cooking practicum activities.

Through these photos, it is clear how students are actively and enthusiastically involved in each activity designed to develop their character.

With this photo documentation, researchers can enrich the analysis and interpretation of research findings. These photos are not only a visual aid, but also reinforce the observation and interview data that has been conducted. As visual evidence, this documentation provides an additional dimension in understanding how religious values and independence are applied practically and consistently in the daily lives of students at SMK Terpadu Ibadurrahman. It also supports the theory of social learning, where observation and imitation of behavior are one of the effective ways in learning and shaping students' character.



Network image of coding data for the implementation of the implementation of the strategy for forming religious and independent character of students of the Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City

The implementation stage is the initiation of a previously mature plan. If you look more closely, the five data sources in the figure above have actually given similar answers so that they immediately confirm the correctness of the data.

The process of implementing the religious and independent character formation program of the Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City begins with understanding and practice in the classroom and outside the classroom. Habituation activities become more

intense because all teachers, both religious and non-religious teachers, take an active role in it as the main example. From the simplest things such as saying greetings, teachers must be present to be the first example.

It is not enough for that, the program for the formation of religious and independent character is developed through extracurricular activities outside of regular learning hours. The goal is to mature the contextual understanding of the implementation of the formation of religious and independent character both in the school environment and outside the school. In addition to being determined by the direct school, students are also given the freedom to determine the form of their activities according to their interests and preferences. For example, morning prayers together, congregational prayers, lecture studies to invite figures, as well as types of practicum activities such as hadroh, pencak silat, scouting, learning to cook and others. The school also invites students to get used to bringing their own food from home. This is intended so that students do not waste, reduce waste, and practice independence in the school environment.

Table 1. Description of the results of the Implemantasi research

It	Aspects	Description
1	Learning Strategies	Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City has applied a method by providing understanding through learning and acting, both in the classroom and outside the classroom. Before delivering the material, the teacher first conveyed greetings to the students, the teacher was impressed to give an example in front of the students, starting from how to dress, speak and communicate with students. And outside of the classroom,
2	Development	Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman held an extracurricular activity program to develop student understanding. There are several series of activities that must be participated in by students, ranging from the formation of class pickets, mukamuka activities, pencak silat, hadroh, reciting together in mosques, as well as religious studies carried out by teachers, cults, practices in the laboratory
3	The Role of Teachers	All elements in the school are involved, in carrying out the character building program of

It	Aspects	Description
		their students, teachers are required to provide guidance, direction, escort, and good examples to students from the existence of the teacher in the school environment until they return from school. This is meant that the responsibility of shaping the character of students is not the responsibility of the teacher unilaterally, but everything. On the other hand, teachers have gone around to the classrooms leading their students when prayer time arrives, during the prayer apple activity together, the teacher accompanies and at the same time gives an example, it is proven that in doing prayer the teacher chooses the place of the front shof first, in terms of reading prayers, the teacher participates in praying by blending with the ranks of his students

## B. Discussion

Implementation of the Strategy for Forming Religious Character and Student Independence at the Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City

### a. Learning Strategies

Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City implements a learning method that combines theoretical understanding with direct practice. Teachers not only provide an understanding of religious values and independence in the classroom, but also show real examples in daily life. This strategy shows that a holistic approach to character education can produce students who are not only intellectually intelligent, but also emotionally and spiritually mature (Wahyudin, Y., & Sukardi, 2022; Herlina, N., & Darwis, 2023; Hasibuan et al., 2024; Jaenudin, 2024). By showing good and positive behavior, teachers can help students to develop good and dignified character. In the teacher's exemplary method, the teacher is not only a teacher who teaches subject matter, but also a role model who sets an example in daily life. This is in accordance with the active learning method, where students are invited to be actively involved in the learning process and given the opportunity to experience the concepts learned in relevant contexts (J. Priyanto Widodo, Lailatul Musyarofah, 2020; Haidar, 2024)

Teachers at the Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City play an important role as a model and role model for students in the

formation of religious and independent character. They not only convey the subject matter, but also demonstrate the attitudes, behaviors, and practices expected of students. This concept is in accordance with Bandura's statement which states that social learning theory, where individuals learn through observation and imitation of the behavior of others, especially authority figures such as teachers (Sidiq et al., 2024; Sa & Terboyo, 2024)

#### **b. Development**

Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City organizes various extracurricular activities designed to develop students' religious and independent character. These programs include religious activities such as morning prayers together, congregational prayers, and religious studies, as well as practicum activities such as hadroh, pencak silat, scouting, and cooking lessons. This approach reflects the holistic learning theory. This is in line with Gardner's opinion that education not only focuses on academic aspects, but also on the development of students' social, emotional, and practical skills (Ed, 2014; Wijaya et al., 2023; Rahmulyana et al., 2024).

Student Involvement in Development Activities: students at SMK Terpadu Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City are not only objects in the development program, but also actively involved in designing, organizing, and implementing these activities. They are invited to participate in religious activities and independence, such as cleaning mosques and schools, participating in religious discussions, and contributing to other extracurricular activities. According to Freire, participatory learning, where students have an active role in the learning process and their character development (Mukhyar, 2023; Puspitarini, 2022)

#### **c. The Role of Teachers**

Teachers as models of behavior are not limited to providing lessons in the classroom, but also as models of good behavior for students. Teachers at the Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City consistently show good manners, hard work, openness, and other desirable values to students. Through this consistency and example, students can imitate and absorb these values into themselves. This approach is in accordance with social learning theory. This is in line with Bandura's thinking that teacher behavior serves as a model for shaping student behavior (Elmontadzery et al., 2024; Marhayati et al., 2020).

In addition to being a model, teachers at the Integrated Vocational School Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City also act as companions and guides for students in the development of religious and independent character. Teachers of the Ibadurrahman Integrated Vocational School in Sukabumi City are required to provide direction, guidance, and escort directly to students, both in the classroom and outside the classroom. Teachers help students to understand the values being taught and encourage them to apply them in their daily lives. This approach is in accordance

with the constructivist learning theory stated by Vygotsky (Salsabila, 2024) i.e. learning occurs through the interaction between teachers and students and the construction of knowledge by students through their own experiences (Nasution et al., 2024; Qowim, 2024).

By implementing learning strategies, development, and the role of teachers that have been instilled in schools (Sulfiani, 2024), then the Integrated Vocational School of Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City can increase the effectiveness of the program to form religious character and independent students. The integration of relevant learning theories can help create a learning environment conducive to the growth and development of students' character (Tursina & Rudiansyah, 2024; Sumantri & Ahmad, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the research conducted, it can be concluded that the implementation of the strategy of forming religious character and student independence at the Integrated Vocational School of Ibadurrahman Lembursitu Sukabumi City has a significant positive impact on the development of student character. This study strengthens the previous findings that character education integrated in school activities is able to form students with strong and independent personalities.

From the perspective of the development of educational science and theory, this research emphasizes the importance of the role of character education in the formation of students' personalities. These findings not only support existing theories, but also expand the understanding of how well-designed and implemented strategies can facilitate effective character development in educational settings.

Further implications of this study show that by strengthening religious and independent character, students are better prepared to face future challenges, both in academic and social contexts. It also opens up opportunities for further research on how character building strategies can be adapted and applied in a variety of other educational contexts, as well as how technology can play a role in supporting the implementation of these strategies.

The contribution of this research to the educational literature is quite significant, because it provides new insights into the practice of character formation in the context of vocational secondary education, which has not received much attention so far. In addition, this research also offers a model or approach that can be adopted by other schools that have a similar vision in shaping the character of students.

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