



THE PRINCIPAL'S LEADERSHIP ROLE IN DEVELOPING STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS CHARACTER AT ASEMBAGUS STATE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL 1

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Abstract:

The purpose of this study is to examine the principal's leadership role in developing students' religious character at Asembagus State Senior High School 1, and to identify the program, its outcomes, and the problems encountered during implementation. This study used a qualitative case study technique. Interviews, observation, and documentation were used, while data analysis used an interactive model that included data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. According to the findings, the principal's function as a leader, manager, innovator, administrator, supervisor, and educator has a substantial impact on religious character development. The religious character development program is implemented systematically through habituation activities such as morning greetings, group prayers, Quran recitation, congregational prayer, and the incorporation of religious values into education. The program implementation results in positive changes in students, including increased religious discipline, politeness, social awareness, and self-control. Despite the positive results of this program, there are still many obstacles in implementing religious character development, such as low intrinsic motivation of students, minimal parental involvement, and the strong and challenging influence of social media. The research results also show that strong and sustainable synergy with the surrounding social environment, continuous and systematic implementation of character education programs, and effective leadership of the principal are all necessary for the successful development of religious character. Consequently, sustained collaboration among educational institutions, families, and community stakeholders is imperative for promoting the long-term internalization and reinforcement of religious values.

Keywords: Developing Character; Principal Leadership; Students' Religious Character.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a critical tool for forming human personality and fully fulfilling one's potential. Individuals not only gain knowledge during the educational process but also experience a shift in their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, which in turn influence their social relationships. As a result, the quality of a country's educational system has a significant impact on its advancement¹. Education is a critical tool for forming human personality and fully fulfilling one's potential. Individuals not only gain knowledge during

¹ Kukuh Wurdianto et al., "Sistem Pendidikan Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Kanderang Tingang* 15, no. 1 (2024): 1–11.



the educational process but also experience a shift in their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours, which in turn influence their social relationships. As a result, the quality of a country's educational system has a significant impact on its advancement. According to Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, education plays a strategic role in national development. Education aims to facilitate the development of learners' potential to become individuals who are faithful and devoted to God Almighty, exhibit strong moral integrity, and are intellectually capable, creative, autonomous, and responsible members of society. It shows that character development is the main basis for shaping students' personalities and that education is not focused solely on cognitive qualities².

However, the current state of education reveals an imbalance between cognitive accomplishment and character development. The learning process continues to focus on academic features, whereas affective and psychomotor parts are not fully developed. However, these three dimensions must be integrated holistically to achieve optimal educational goals³. Students who experience this imbalance may develop a range of moral issues, including deteriorating ethics, a lack of social sensitivity, and a lack of self-control.

As the world becomes more digital and global, educational challenges become more complex. Advancements in information technology make it easy to access a variety of knowledge sources. Still, they also have drawbacks, such as a moral crisis, the erosion of societal values, and an increase in teenage deviance⁴. This circumstance underscores the importance of educational institutions actively fostering strong character traits, particularly those related to moral and religious growth, alongside a knowledge-centered approach. Because it fosters the development of spiritual, moral, and ethical values grounded in religious teachings, religious character is an essential part of character education. The goal of religious character education is to cultivate religious people who live moral lives⁵. Consequently, cultivating religious character is a crucial basis for producing a generation that is both intellectually gifted and morally upright.

The principal's involvement in leading the development of Islamic religious character in schools is inextricably linked to its effectiveness. Principals have a strategic role in developing policies, overseeing programs, and fostering a school culture that promotes character development⁶. Effective leadership may integrate religious beliefs into the curriculum, learning activities, and school culture in a sustainable manner. Furthermore, principals serve as role models in instilling religious beliefs within the school community⁷. This school is among several that incorporate religious programming into their curricula. The program includes congregational Dhuha and Dhuhur prayers, Quran memorization activities, and the practice of reading the Quran before learning

² I Made Ariasa Giri, "Kontribusi Sarana Pendidikan Terhadap Kualitas Pendidikan Di Sekolah," *Jurnal Penjaminan Mutu* 1, no. 1 (2015): 46–53.

³ Dewi Amaliah Nafiati, "Revisi Taksonomi Bloom: Kognitif, Afektif, Dan Psikomotorik," *Humanika, Kajian Ilmiah Mata Kuliah Umum* 21, no. 2 (2021): 151–72.

⁴ Hari Suriadi and Neni Sriwahyuni, "Problematika Karakter Generasi Muda Di Era Digital: Analisis Kritis Terhadap Tantangan Moral Dan Sosial Di Era Teknologi Informasi," *Journal of Social, Educational and Religious Studies* 1, no. 2 (2025): 20–37.

⁵ Mutia Sari, Fajri Ismail, and Muhammad Win Afgani, "Pembiasaan Nilai-Nilai Keagamaan Sebagai Kunci Pembentukan Karakter Religius," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keguruan* 1, no. 2 (2023): 712–21.

⁶ I Gusti Ngurah Santika, "Kepala Sekolah Dalam Konsep Kepemimpinan Pendidikan: Suatu Kajian Teoritis," *Widya Accarya* 7, no. 1 (2017).

⁷ Aghna Mahirotul Ilmi and Muhamad Sholeh, "Manajemen Kepala Sekolah Dalam Mewujudkan Budaya Religius Di Sekolah Islam," *Inspirasi Manajemen Pendidikan*, 2021, 389–402.

activities. These programs demonstrate a systematic effort to mold kids' religious character through school culture. However, implementing these programs requires a variety of dynamics, including design, execution, and evaluation. Therefore, an in-depth study is needed to understand the role of principal leadership in effectively developing students' religious character.

In this study, Prihatin and Khoiroh examined the role of principal leadership in developing religious character education at State Senior High School 1 Yogyakarta. This study used a qualitative case study approach and collected data through interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings show that principals play an important role as transformational leaders, capable of fostering a religious culture through exemplary behaviour, habit formation, and the incorporation of religious principles into intracurricular and extracurricular programs. Meanwhile, the research we conducted focused more on the role of the principal's leadership in developing students' character through exemplary behaviour and good habits from the principal himself and the teachers, so that it is hoped that it can improve the quality of the students' religious character. In addition, the principal serves as a manager, systematically and sustainably overseeing religious programming. Theoretically, this study supports the concept of transformational leadership, which emphasizes the relevance of vision, inspiration, and role models in developing student character. The study is similar to the one conducted at State Senior High School 1 Asembagus in that it focuses on the principal's involvement in promoting religious character through a school culture approach. However, the setting of the research and innovation initiatives created makes a difference. According to a study done at SMA Negeri 1 Asembagus, special initiatives that increase students' social duties include the Ramadan Safari⁸.

Ilmi and Sholeh looked at how well principal leadership in Islamic-based schools improved students' religious character. This study employs a qualitative descriptive methodology and focuses on the principal's administrative role in organizing, planning, carrying out, and assessing religious activities. The study's findings demonstrate that the principal's administration strongly influences the success of religious character development, the availability of infrastructure, and parent and teacher participation.

The study's conclusions align with educational management theory, which highlights the necessity of efficient resource management to accomplish character education objectives. Similarities with the research at State Senior High School 1 Asembagus include an emphasis on managerial functions and the need for teamwork among all school personnel. The distinction lies in the implementation strategy, where State Senior High School 1 Asembagus focuses not only on managerial issues but also on strengthening the principal's position as an inventor, supervisor, and educator in the comprehensive development of religious character⁹.

Based on the description above, the role of the principal in developing students' religious character is based on 6 principles, namely: (1) Educators provide moral examples, (2) Managers manage religious programs, (3) Administrators design the curriculum, (4) Supervisors evaluate activities, (5) Visionary leaders, and (6) Motivators to instill the values of worship. It is important to conduct a comprehensive qualitative

⁸ Rani Putri Prihatin and Shobaihatul Khoiroh, "Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Di SMAN 1 Yogyakarta," *Nusantara: Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia* 1, no. 1 (2021): 1–14.

⁹ Ilmi and Sholeh, "Manajemen Kepala Sekolah Dalam Mewujudkan Budaya Religius Di Sekolah Islam."

study examining the principal's leadership in fostering students' religious character at SMA Negeri 1 Asembagus.

RESEARCH METHOD

A case study strategy using qualitative methodologies was used in this investigation. This study aims to examine the role of the principal's leadership in developing students' religious character at SMA Negeri 1 Asembagus, with a focus on the leadership role, religious character development program, program results, and challenges faced during the implementation of students' religious character development. Given the current environment, this approach provided researchers with a thorough understanding of the meanings, viewpoints, and experiences of the research participants¹⁰. The educational environment of SMA Negeri 1 Asembagus is thoroughly examined in this study using a case study methodology. This analytical approach may be used to conduct a complete investigation of the principal's leadership approach in cultivating kids' religious character. For this study, conducted in a naturalistic setting, the researcher served as the primary tool for gathering, assessing, and interpreting qualitative data.

The primary sources of information used in this study are primary and secondary data. Key informants directly supplied primary data through semi-structured interviews and close observation. The informants in this study were the principal, vice principal for student affairs, teachers, and students. This content focuses on the employment of faith-based activities in the classroom, religious character development programs, and the principal's leadership style. In the meantime, secondary data were gathered from a variety of documentation sources relevant to the study's goals, including school profiles, religious activity calendars, institutional work plans, and associated archival materials. Utilizing these tools promotes data triangulation and increases the quality and dependability of results derived from primary data sources¹¹.

Data collection in this study involved a combination of participant observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. The observational activities were carried out in a naturalistic setting, with the researcher taking an active, participatory role to generate rich, context-sensitive insights into daily school practices. The observations were specifically directed toward the implementation of religious activities, the development of a religious-oriented school culture, and the principal's leadership practices in supporting the formation of students' religious character¹².

Subsequently, semi-structured interviews were conducted with flexible interview parameters. This technique aims to collect detailed information about the principal's leadership role, the strategies used, and the challenges encountered in developing students' religious character¹³.

¹⁰ Dimas Assyakurrohim et al., "Metode Studi Kasus Dalam Penelitian Kualitatif," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sains Dan Komputer* 3, no. 01 (2022): 1–9.

¹¹ Qomaruddin Qomaruddin and Halimah Sa'diyah, "Kajian Teoritis Tentang Teknik Analisis Data Dalam Penelitian Kualitatif: Perspektif Spradley, Miles Dan Huberman," *Journal of Management, Accounting, and Administration* 1, no. 2 (2024): 77–84.

¹² Rizal Safarudin et al., "Penelitian Kualitatif," *Innovative: Journal Of Social Science Research* 3, no. 2 (2023): 9680–94.

¹³ Imami Nur Rachmawati, "Pengumpulan Data Dalam Penelitian Kualitatif: Wawancara," *Jurnal Keperawatan Indonesia* 11, no. 1 (2007): 35–40.

Documentation approaches were employed to complement study data by gathering a variety of relevant documents, including written records, activity images, program archives, and school administrative data. This documentation data supported and reinforced the data gathered through observation and interviews¹⁴. In this study, data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes: Data reduction is the process of sifting, simplifying, and categorizing data pertinent to the research topic. Data Presentation: The condensed data was then presented in descriptive narrative form, tables, or charts for easy comprehension. Drawing Conclusions and Verification: In the last stage, conclusions are drawn from the examined data, and verification is performed to confirm the validity of the findings¹⁵.

To ensure data reliability, this study used triangulation approaches, including source triangulation, which involves comparing data from multiple informants. The technical triangulation intended in this research is to compare data from observations, interviews, and documents. This strategy is utilized to boost the reliability and validity of research findings¹⁶. The study was conducted in stages, commencing with the pre-fieldwork phase. It includes developing the research hypothesis, deciding on a location, obtaining research licenses, and designing research tools. During the Implementation Stage (Fieldwork), data is collected on-site through observation, interviews, and documentation. The Analysis and Reporting Stage involves analyzing data, generating conclusions, and writing a study report based on scientific principles¹⁷.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Principal's Leadership Role in Developing Students' Religious Character

1. Role as a Leader

According to observations and interviews, the principal of Asembagus 1 State High School is a capable leader who can create a religious school culture and vision. In addition to carrying out administrative duties, the principal serves as a mentor, an important role model, and a catalyst for students' growth in religious character. The principal's efforts to foster collaboration among educators, students, and parents, and to ensure that all school policies promote the development of religious values, are clear examples of this.

This result is theoretically consistent with the idea of transformational leadership, which holds that leaders may inspire, encourage, and create a common vision throughout an educational institution¹⁸. Transformational leadership emphasizes the importance of role models, commitment, and the ability to build a positive organizational culture. The researchers believe that the principal's position as a visionary leader who can successfully incorporate religious principles into the school culture in a methodical and long-lasting way is essential to the development of religious character at Asembagus 1 State High School.

¹⁴ M Syahrani Jailani, "Teknik Pengumpulan Data Dan Instrumen Penelitian Ilmiah Pendidikan Pada Pendekatan Kualitatif Dan Kuantitatif," *IHSAN: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (2023): 1–9.

¹⁵ Matthew B Miles, A Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldana, *Qualitative Data Analysis* (sage, 2014).

¹⁶ Wiyanda Vera Nurfajriani et al., "Triangulasi Data Dalam Analisis Data Kualitatif," *Jurnal Ilmiah Wahana Pendidikan* 10, no. 17 (2024): 826–33.

¹⁷ Fahriana Nurrisa and Dina Hermina, "Pendekatan Kualitatif Dalam Penelitian: Strategi, Tahapan, Dan Analisis Data," *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran/ E-ISSN: 3026-6629* 2, no. 3 (2025): 793–800.

¹⁸ Joko Santoso and Panir Selwen, "Penerapan Strategi Kepemimpinan Transformasional Dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Organisasi Pendidikan," *Jurnal Ilmiah Kanderang Tingang* 14, no. 2 (2023): 400–409.

2. The managerial role

In their capacity as managers, the principal strategically plans, coordinates, and supervises religious programs, including Quran recitation, congregational prayer, and other religious habituation activities. In addition, the principal works with parents and the community, provides facilities, and assigns tasks to instructors.

Regular program implementation evaluations and the principal's active participation in religious activities support this conclusion. Students feel encouraged to participate in religious events when the principal is present, which has a favourable psychological effect. It is consistent with educational management theory, which holds that to accomplish educational objectives, the principal must be able to manage resources efficiently. It is in line with the theory of educational management, which states that the principal must be able to manage resources effectively to achieve educational goals¹⁹. Additionally, one of the most important factors influencing student behaviour is the leader's exemplary behaviour. According to researchers, the principal's active involvement shows how religious character development may be improved through participatory management.

3. Role as an Innovator

Through innovative initiatives such as the Ramadan Safari, in which students serve as Tarawih prayer leaders throughout the community, the principal further exemplifies his role as an innovator. This curriculum strengthens students' religious character and helps them become more confident and capable leaders. In theory, the principal must be able to implement innovations pertinent to the educational setting in their capacity as an innovator²⁰. Character development and values-based innovations are essential. According to researchers, this innovation is a tangible example of progressive leadership that can enhance the absorption of religious beliefs and increase the school's social role.

4. Role as Administrator

To support the implementation of religious character education, the principal of SMA Negeri 1 Asembagus has demonstrated strong administrative leadership. Regular congregational prayer, the constant recitation of the Quran, and the incorporation of Islamic practices into everyday school life are examples of institutional policies and organized activities that demonstrate this. Through methodical planning and coordination, the principal makes sure that these efforts are integrated into the academic agenda without impeding learning.

Additionally, by supporting the provision of necessary religious resources and facilities, such as dedicated prayer rooms and suitable religious literature, the principal fosters an atmosphere that promotes the practice and absorption of religious principles. Reports, administrative papers, institutional archives, and photographs are used to record all pertinent acts systematically. These resources support ongoing efforts to improve the quality and effectiveness of future religious initiatives by providing evidence of program implementation and a strong basis for monitoring and assessment. Among the most crucial administrative responsibilities are setting institutional guidelines, planning

¹⁹ Siti Yumnah et al., "Strategi Kepala Sekolah Dalam Mengelola Sumber Daya Guru Untuk Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan," *Munaddhomah: Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 4, no. 1 (2023): 92–104.

²⁰ Sulis Maryati, "Kepemimpinan Transformasional Kepala Madrasah Dalam Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Islam Di Era Digital," *IQRO: Journal of Islamic Education* 8, no. 2 (2025): 910–20.

religious activities, and supplying suitable facilities. The principal is responsible for ensuring that all programs and activities are systematically documented and reported as part of the school's accountability framework and quality control protocols.

The results of this study show that school administrators are capable of effective administrative leadership, particularly in overseeing religious activities within the school setting. Establishing structured regulations, methodically planning religious events, and integrating religious rites into everyday school activities are a few examples. These findings are consistent with the educational administration approach, which sees school administrators as important participants in the development, implementation, and assessment of policies intended to achieve educational objectives. To enhance institutional performance and achieve desired educational outcomes, educational administration's theoretical underpinnings emphasize the strategic importance of planning, coordinating, and managing educational processes²¹.

The principal demonstrated outstanding administrative leadership in the creation and implementation of religious activity policies, according to a report by SMA Negeri 1 Asembagus. Concrete examples of this include the creation of structured programs such as regular communal prayers, the practice of reciting the Quran, and the incorporation of religious rites into regular school activities. The principal is also crucial in planning these events methodically to ensure that religious programs and academic standards are uniform and do not impede the educational process.

The principle is responsible for ensuring there is enough room for worship, including locations set aside for prayer and the necessary supplies. Every religious activity is carefully documented utilizing reports, institutional records, administrative archives, and visual proof. The quality of religious programs is regularly evaluated and enhanced using this data, which is also used to document program implementation. It aligns with the perspective of educational administration, which emphasizes the importance of documentation and reporting within the broader framework of management, oversight, and evaluation in educational institutions.

5. Role as Supervisor

The study's findings demonstrate that by encouraging the kids' religious character, the principal of SMA Negeri 1 Asembagus effectively fulfilled his supervisory responsibilities. Ongoing mentoring, close observation, and regular evaluations of the execution of religious projects are a few examples. In this context, educational supervision refers to the professional support provided to teachers to promote student development and improve the quality of learning outcomes. As a result, the principle serves as a supervisor and mentor, offering guidance, motivation, and solutions to a range of issues that come up during religious activities. It demonstrates the growing perception of supervision as a helpful and collaborative endeavour.

According to additional field data, school administrators actively oversee the conduct of religious activities during regular school hours, including communal prayers, Quran recitation, and the formation of children's religious attitudes. Direct observation and coordinated cooperation with religious program leaders and educators are key components of this supervisory approach. Periodic assessments that gauge the program's

²¹ A Samad Usman, "Meningkatkan Mutu Pendidikan Melalui Penerapan Manajemen Berbasis Sekolah," *Jurnal Ilmiah Didaktika: Media Ilmiah Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran* 15, no. 1 (2014): 13–31.

efficacy also reflect the full monitoring cycle, which includes planning, execution, and assessment.

The effectiveness of this supervisory role depends on the principal's ability to communicate effectively and to exercise flexible leadership. Monitoring is portrayed as a positive, supportive process rather than a control mechanism by fostering positive connections with teachers and students. This humanistic approach is significant because authoritarian supervision methods are often less successful than dialogical and interactive approaches in helping pupils assimilate religious beliefs. As a result, the principal's monitoring methods align with recognized frameworks for educational supervision and are effectively implemented in practice. The study's findings demonstrate that the development of students' religious character is significantly aided by methodical, ongoing, and individual-centered monitoring.

6. Role as an Educator

Research findings at State Senior High School 1 Asembagus indicate that the principal not only performs managerial functions but also acts as an educator in developing students' religious character. This function is demonstrated by setting an example, cultivating values, and actively participating in the creation of a religious culture within the educational setting. In theory, it is the principal's duty as a teacher to teach moral principles and character to every member of the school community. As an instructional leader, the principal focuses on both character development and raising educational standards. It supports the idea that character education is a crucial component of education and needs to be internalized through a variety of school-related activities.

Based on field observations, the principal of State Senior High School 1 Asembagus demonstrates religious attitudes by being disciplined during worship, participating in religious events, and being courteous in day-to-day contacts. Because students often mimic the actions of people in positions of power and influence in the classroom, this role model is an effective method of indirect education. It is consistent with social learning theory, which holds that people acquire new skills by observing and imitating important role models. From my perspective, the principal's capacity to establish moral credibility and emotional ties with the school community significantly impacts how well he performs his duties as an educator. A principal who can behave as an example will have a greater impact on character development than one who only imparts knowledge. In this case, a humanistic approach is necessary for character education.

However, it might be argued that maximizing the principal's function as an educator necessitates the support of all teachers and education professionals. Without regular application of religious values, the process of character internalization may be suboptimal. As a result, communal synergy is required to establish a religious culture in schools. Overall, this discussion indicates that the principal at State Senior High School 1 Asembagus has effectively carried out his role as an educator through exemplary behaviour, fostering, and integrating religious values into various school activities. The role of the principal in developing students' religious character is based on 6 principles, namely: (1) Educators provide moral examples, (2) Managers manage religious programs, (3) Administrators design the curriculum, (4) Supervisors evaluate activities, (5) Visionary leaders, and (6) Motivators to instill the values of worship.

Developing Students' Religious Character

1. Religious Character Development Program

According to research findings, the religious character development program at Asembagus 1 State High School is carried out through planned regular activities such as morning greetings, group prayers, Quran recitation, congregational Dhuha and Dhuhur prayers, and religious studies. Furthermore, religious values are integrated into classroom instruction and reinforced through a reward-and-punishment system. It demonstrates that the school values not only cognitive but also emotive and psychomotor factors in the overall development of student character.

Theoretically, these findings are consistent with Thomas Lickona's notion of character education²². He claims that effective character building requires habituation, role modelling, and the incorporation of values into all school activities. The comprehensive method used at Asembagus 1 State High School demonstrates the continuity of intracurricular and extracurricular programming in developing students' religious character. From an academic perspective, the involvement of the entire school community, including the principal, teachers, and educational staff, is directly linked to the program's success. A program has to be implemented consistently over time and supported by continuous monitoring systems to be effective. As a result, this initiative may be regarded as a model of best practice for encouraging the development of religious character in secondary education.

2. Results of Religious Character Development

Increased self-control, courteous behaviour, social awareness, and religious adherence are just a few examples of how the research's findings demonstrate the extent to which students' behaviour has changed. Some pupils, in particular, demonstrated an internalized sense of responsibility in carrying out their religious duties without external encouragement from teachers. It suggests that religious ideas have been fully assimilated beyond mere cognitive comprehension and have become a crucial component of daily behaviour.

These findings are consistent with behaviourist theory developed by B. F. Skinner, which stresses observable behavioural changes as the primary indicator of learning. In a similar vein, Albert Bandura's social learning theory highlights the significance of environmental elements, particularly teacher role models, in the formation and upkeep of individual behaviour²³. These positive outcomes show that the religious character education program has progressed to the internalizing values stage, according to the researchers. At this point, kids are more motivated to participate in religious activities by internal incentives found in their value system than by outside pressure. It is a crucial indicator of how successfully character education is used in classrooms.

3. Challenges and Obstacles

Despite the program's favourable results, this study identified several implementation issues, including a lack of family support for religious practice, the

²² Dyan Nur Hikmasari, Happy Susanto, and Aldo Redho Syam, "Konsep Pendidikan Karakter Perspektif Thomas Lickona Dan Ki Hajar Dewantara," *Al-Asasiyya: Journal Basic of Education (AJBE)* 6, no. 1 (2021): 19–31.

²³ Irama, Sutarto, and RISAL, "Implementasi Teori Belajar Sosial Menurut Albert Bandura Dalam Pembelajaran PAI."

detrimental effects of social media, and relatively low levels of intrinsic motivation among certain students. These results imply that the development of religious character is influenced by both the educational setting and external factors.

This situation is theoretically consistent with Albert Bandura's social cognitive theory, which holds that individual behaviour is the outcome of an interplay between personal elements, the environment, and the conduct itself (reciprocal determinism). Furthermore, self-regulation theory states that successful character development is highly dependent on an individual's capacity to manage themselves, create objectives, and stay motivated²⁴.

Researchers claim that this problem underscores the importance of communities, families, and schools working together to foster students' religious character development. Character internalization will not proceed as smoothly if there is no continuity of values between the external and classroom environments. To reduce current challenges and increase the program's sustainability, cooperative tactics are therefore required, such as enhancing parent-child contact and teaching digital literacy.

CONCLUSION

Drawing on the findings and discussion, it can be concluded that the principal's leadership in promoting students' religious character at State Senior High School 1 Asembagus is both comprehensive and effective, encompassing six interrelated roles: leader, manager, innovator, administrator, supervisor, and educator. The school's culture was effectively infused with the principal's well-defined religious character and religious values. In the administrative function, religious programs were carried out systematically and cooperatively. The establishment of a systematic, responsible, and organized governance structure to oversee religious activities is an example of an administrative role. At the same time, the role of innovator is realized through the development of projects that are relevant and context-sensitive. In addition, by using an individual-centered approach, exemplary behaviour, and continuous assessment techniques, the principal enhances character development in his capacity as both supervisor and educator. Theoretically, these findings align with educational management and transformational leadership theories, which emphasize the importance of internalizing values, providing strong role models, and strategically allocating resources to achieve successful character education outcomes.

However, by integrating religious concepts into the teaching and learning process, implementing organized programs and establishing regular rituals, SMA Negeri 1 Asembagus has successfully developed students' religious character. Students' capacity to incorporate religious notions is demonstrated by observable behavioural advantages such as enhanced religious discipline, better social relationships, and greater self-regulation. However, the study also identified several challenges driven by external factors, including exposure to social media, family history, and low levels of intrinsic motivation among some kids. Therefore, the degree of interaction between the family, the larger community, and the school itself is equally important to the formation of religious character. Overall, the study's conclusions show that cooperative and moral leadership is

²⁴ Cecep Sobar Rochmat, Sayyida Nafisa Al-Razi, and Ima Nur Azizah, "Penerapan Mentor Life Learning Untuk Membentuk Karakter Islami Siswa Di Sekolah Dasar Berbasis Teori Sosial-Kognitif Albert Bandura," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran Indonesia (JPPI)* 5, no. 4 (2025): 1787–1800.

essential to establishing a long-lasting religious school culture and has a big impact on kids' character development.

Several recommendations can be made based on the study's findings. School administrators are encouraged to develop their leadership abilities by developing faith-based events and cultivating a friendly school climate that supports the ongoing acceptance of religious beliefs. Researchers are encouraged to employ quantitative or mixed-methods approaches in subsequent studies to improve the generalizability of the findings and provide a more thorough examination of the efficacy of specific leadership paradigms in fostering religious character development.

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