

## **Perceptions of Teachers and Students of Vocational High Schools on the Learning Model of PAI Based on Preparation for the World of Work**

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### ***ABSTRACT***

*Islamic Religious Education (PAI) plays an important role in shaping the akhlak and character of students, especially in the context of Vocational High Schools (SMK) that prepare students for the world of work. However, PAI learning in SMK is often still theoretical and less relevant to industrial needs. This study aims to examine teachers' and students' perceptions of a PAI learning model oriented toward work-readiness at SMK ICB Bandung. Using a qualitative approach with a case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The results of a word frequency query using NVivo 12 showed that akhlak aspects were the primary concern in PAI learning, with the highest frequency of occurrence in the interviews. Both teachers and students view akhlak such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, and work ethic—as fundamental components of character that directly support readiness to enter the workforce. Learning models applied include Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Project-Based Learning (PjBL), Discovery Learning, and approaches such as Uswah Hasanah and Ibrah Mauidzah. However, implementation still faces challenges, such as limited teacher experience with industrial contexts, lack of facilities, and overly theoretical teaching methods. Students express a desire for more interactive, practice-oriented, and industry-relevant learning models that integrate Islamic values into work simulations and Islamic soft-skills training. Therefore, innovation is needed to develop a more applicable PAI learning model, including the use of digital technologies and improved teacher competence in understanding the demands of the professional world.*

*Keywords: Islamic Religious Education, Vocational High School, Learning Model, World of Work Readiness*

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## INTRODUCTION

Education has a very important role in shaping individuals who are competent, characterized, and ready to face challenges in the world of work. Islamic Religious Education (PAI) as one of the compulsory subjects in schools has the responsibility of shaping the morals and morals of students so that they not only have technical skills, but also Islamic values that can be a guide in the world of work<sup>1</sup>. However, in the context of Vocational High Schools (SMK), PAI learning is often still theoretical and less integrated with the needs of the industrial and business world<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the PAI learning model based on the preparation of the world of work becomes an indispensable innovation to ensure that SMK graduates are not only ready in terms of technical skills, but also have an understanding of religion that is applicable in the world of work<sup>3</sup>.

In the reality of life today, there is a gap between education in schools and the demands of the world of work. Many SMK graduates experience difficulties in adapting to the work environment due to the lack of non-technical skills, including work ethics, integrity, and Islamic values that should be the foundation of work.<sup>4</sup>. This phenomenon shows that PAI learning in SMK is still not optimal in instilling values that can be applied in the world of work. This is reinforced by various studies that show that many SMK students experience difficulties in facing the challenges of the world of work due to weak character education and lack of relevance of religious learning to professional life<sup>5</sup>. Therefore, a new learning model is needed in learning PAI that is more contextual and oriented to the world of work.

The concept of work-based learning was initially applied more in the field of technical

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<sup>1</sup> Ani Ramayanti, Bambang Qomaruzzaman, and Qiqi Yulianti Zaqiah, 'Implementation of PAI Learning Innovations Based on Multiple Intelligences in Vocational High Schools', *Journal of Educatio FKIP UNMA*, 9.4 (2023), 1910-15 <<https://ejournal.unma.ac.id/index.php/educatio/article/view/6234>>; Dewi Lestari, Yusnaili Budianti, and Muhammad Rifai, 'Development of PAI Module Based on Akhlak Al-Karimah Values to Improve Students' Religious Character', *Research and Development Journal of Education*, 9.2 (2023), 1159 <<https://doi.org/10.30998/rdje.v9i2.16259>>.

<sup>2</sup> Udin Supriadi and Munawar Rahmat, 'Building the Character of Humility Through the Prophet Sulayman Model in Kindergarten', 2019 <<https://doi.org/10.2991/sores-18.2019.90>>; Udin Supriadi, Mohammad Rindu Fajar Islamy, and Achmad Faqihuddin, 'Internalization of Wasathiyah Values in Efforts to Enhance the Religiosity and Tolerance of Students Based on Mentoring: An Exploratory Study of the UPI Tutorial Program', *Jurnal Iqra': Kajian Ilmu Pendidikan*, 8.2 (2023), 222-39 <<https://doi.org/10.25217/ji.v8i2.2747>>; Syahidin Syahidin Faisal Fauzan Ilyasa, Rizal Permana, Muhammad Rifky Faisal Jalal, Fahmi Fazar, 'Integrasi Konsep Ta'dib Dengan Program 5S Dalam Pembentukan Karakter Sosial Dan Cinta Damai Siswa', *Intelektual: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Studi Keislaman*, 15.1 (2025), 75-96.

<sup>3</sup> Arje C Djamen, H Lumapow, J Lengkong, V Rotty, I Tuerah, J Batmetan, 'Aylin and Tasci Methods in Measuring E-Learning Readiness Implementation', *Ismart Edu: Journal of Information Technology Education*, 2.2 (2021), 1-15 <<https://doi.org/10.53682/ise.v2i2.2986>>; Mochamad Cholik, 'Improving Student Learning Outcomes Through the Use of Quizizz as an Interactive Learning Tool in Smk', *JlPI (Scientific Journal of Research and Learning Informatics)*, 8.2 (2023), 428-35 <<https://doi.org/10.29100/jlpi.v8i2.4156>>.

<sup>4</sup> Brendan Mitchell and Clare Gordon Buntic, 'Successfully Implementing Technical and Vocational Education and Training Programmes in Secondary Schools', *World Journal of Vocational Education and Training*, 4.1 (2022), 36-45 <<https://doi.org/10.18488/119.v4i1.3219>>; Muhammad Iqbal and others, 'Challenges of Implementing Character Education Based on Islamic Values in the Independent Campus Learning Curriculum (MBKM)', *QALAMUNA: Journal of Education, Social, and Religion*, 14.1 (2022), 757-68 <<https://doi.org/10.37680/qalamuna.v14i1.4839>>.

<sup>5</sup> Wawan Ahmad Ridwan and others, 'Noble Character Building at Widya Kusuma Islamic Kindergarten, Saladara, Cirebon, Indonesia', *Edusci Journal*, 1.3 (2024), 120-28 <<https://doi.org/10.62885/edusci.v1i3.169>>;

skills, such as industrial engineering, business, and information technology<sup>6</sup>. However, recent developments show that non-technical aspects, including religious education, also have an important role in shaping a workforce that is competitive and has integrity<sup>7</sup>. Religious education in the context of SMK should not only focus on cognitive aspects, but also on character building and work ethics based on Islamic values<sup>8</sup>. The learning model based on the preparation of the world of work in PAI includes various approaches, such as collaborative learning with the industrial world, as well as the integration of Islamic values in work practices<sup>9</sup>. With this model, it is expected that students will not only understand Islamic teachings theoretically, but also be able to implement them in the work environment.

This concept of Islamic Religious Education learning based on preparation for entering the world of work emphasizes a transformative educational paradigm. It is not merely a modification of content, but a fundamental shift in the orientation of learning, pedagogy, and expected outcomes<sup>10</sup>. At its core, this model seeks to harmonize religious principles with professional demands by embedding Islamic values directly into work-related competencies. It integrates moral and ethical teachings such as trustworthiness (amanah), sincerity (ikhlas), and justice ('adl) into real world simulations and vocational practices<sup>11</sup>. The objective is to foster not only

<sup>6</sup> Johar Maknun and others, 'Teacher Competency of Vocational High School (SMK) in the Era of Industrial Revolution 4.0', 2021 <<https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210203.110>>; Ahtisham Younas, Sergi Fàbregues, and John W. Creswell, 'Generating Meta-inferences in Mixed Methods Research: A Worked Example in Convergent Mixed Methods Designs', *Methodological Innovations*, 16.3 (2023), 276–91 <<https://doi.org/10.1177/20597991231188121>>; Akhmad Asyari and others, 'Exploring Student Creativity and Collaboration Through Project-Based Learning With Google Sites', *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10.2 (2024), 308–22 <<https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v10i2.40215>>.

<sup>7</sup> Fatwa Tentama, Bambang Sudarsono, and Fanani Arief Ghazali, 'Implementation of Training for Work Attitude, Work Knowledge and Work Skills of Vocational Students Towards the World of Work', *BERNAS: Journal of Community Service*, 5.3 (2024), 2108–14 <<https://doi.org/10.31949/jb.v5i3.9516>>; Fahru Riza and Yoto Yoto, 'Building Emotional Intelligence of Vocational Students to Answer the Challenges of Modern Industry', *Briliant: Journal of Research and Conceptual*, 8.4 (2023), 940 <<https://doi.org/10.28926/briliant.v8i4.1643>>.

<sup>8</sup> Farid Setiawan and others, 'Policy on Strengthening Character Education through Islamic Religious Education', *Al-Mudarris (Scientific Journal of Islamic Education)*, 4.1 (2021), 1–22 <<https://doi.org/10.23971/mdr.v4i1.2809>>.

<sup>9</sup> Jamal and others, 'Fostering Social Attitudes Through Project Based Learning in Islamic Religious Education', *JlIP - Scientific Journal of Education Sciences*, 6.10 (2023), 7834–41 <<https://doi.org/10.54371/jlup.v6i10.2489>>; Damar Fatika Sari, 'Improving the Quality of Vocational Education in the 21st Century Learning Era to Answer Industry 4.0 Challenges', *Sang Acharya: Journal of Teacher Profession*, 4.1 (2023), 71–79 <<https://doi.org/10.25078/sa.v4i1.3234>>.

<sup>10</sup> Muhamad Parhan and others, 'Developing a Contextual Learning Model in Islamic Education To Improve Applicable Knowledge and Foster Knowledge-Based Virtues', *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10.1 (2024), 75–86 <<https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v10i1.35205>>; Tubagus Chaeru Nugraha, El Sawy El Sawy Ahmed Abdel Rahim, and Fahmy Lukman, 'Integrating Problem-Based and Flipped Learning in Islamic Religious Education: A Pathway To Achieving Sustainable Development Goals', *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10.1 (2024), 125–36 <<https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v10i1.35204>>; Dilshoda Nurmukhammadova Saodat Toshtemirova, Nilufar Koshanova, Zilola Khaydarova, Feruza Ilmurodova, Mahfuza Sadullaeva, 'Integrative Pedagogy And Didactic Models In Teaching History Through Islamic Education: Insights From Uzbekistan', *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 11.1 (2025), 63–76.

<sup>11</sup> R. Siti Pupu Fauziah and others, 'Promoting Islamic Value for Green Skill Development in Islamic Vocational High School', *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 10.1 (2024), 53–64 <<https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v10i1.35383>>; Arifin Syamsul, Huda Miftachul, and Mufida Nur Hayati, 'Developing Akhlak Karimah Values Through Integrative Learning Model in Madrasah', *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 9.1 (2023), 41–54 <<https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v0i0.24443>>; Ce Zheng and others, 'Deep Learning-Based Human Pose Estimation: A Survey', *ACM Computing Surveys*, 56.1 (2023) <<https://doi.org/10.1145/3603618>>.

religiously observant individuals but also professionals who are ethically grounded and spiritually aware. In doing so, PAI becomes a strategic medium for character formation that aligns with the values demanded by contemporary industries, such as discipline, integrity, teamwork, and accountability.

In previous studies, most of the research on PAI learning mostly discussed the effectiveness of technology-based learning methods or conventional approaches in the classroom. Zubair et al. (2024) emphasized that evaluation that is relevant to industry needs can support higher quality learning, so the PAI curriculum needs to be designed to include elements such as ethics, character, and policies that integrate religious values in professional practice<sup>12</sup>. Furthermore, research by Nurhayati et al. (2024) highlighted the role of counseling guidance in religious education, which contributes to the formation of students' identity as the foundation of their readiness to face the challenging world of work. Character-based education and the application of religious values in practical situations are essential in creating graduates who are not only competent, but also have integrity<sup>13</sup>. In addition, Harmi (2022) studied a model of PAI learning based on religious moderation to instill moderation values in students, which is relevant to the industry's need for a workforce that has a moderate and inclusive religious understanding<sup>14</sup>. Meanwhile, research on the integration of PAI with the world of work is still very limited. Some existing studies highlight the aspects of character education in general, without specifically examining how PAI learning can be adapted to the needs of industry and the business world. Therefore, there is a research gap in terms of how PAI can be designed and implemented to prepare SMK students to be better prepared to face the challenges of the world of work. This is the main reason for the need for this study to fill the existing gap and provide new insights in the development of PAI curriculum in SMK.

The novelty of this research lies in the model used in studying PAI learning in vocational schools from the perspective of implementing a work-based PAI learning model. In contrast to previous studies that mostly discuss the effectiveness of digital-based learning methods or traditional model, this study focuses on how PAI learning can be designed in a more contextual and applicable manner in accordance with the needs of industry and the business world. The uniqueness of this research is also seen in its emphasis on specific dimensions of workplace readiness that are integrated with Islamic values, including akhlak indicators such as honesty, responsibility, discipline, communication ethics, and Islamic work ethics, as well as students' abilities in applying Islamic soft skills through work simulations. This study also provides a new perspective on the perception of the teacher and students' perceptions in implementing a work-based PAI learning model, particularly in terms of identifying challenges in implementation,

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<sup>12</sup> Abdul Bashith La Zubair, Dian Amirul Mu mini, Zikri Adib Kurnia, 'Strategi Inovatif Dalam Pengembangan Evaluasi Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Untuk Meningkatkan Kualitas Pendidikan', *Jurnal Pendidikan Indonesia*, 5.11 (2024), 1217–27 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.59141/japendi.v5i11.5911>>.

<sup>13</sup> Ricki Wahyudi Agus R. Nurhayati, Sitti Satriani Is, Kahar, Mulkiyan, Taufiqurrahman, Ricki Wahyudi Agus R. Nurhayati, Sitti Satriani Is, Kahar, Mulkiyan, Taufiqurrahman, 'The Role of Bk and Pai in Shaping the Learning Independence of Students at School', *Journal of Muslim Intellectual Media and Spiritual Guidance*, 10.2 (2024) <<https://doi.org/DOI: 10.47435/mimbar.v10i02.3149>>.

<sup>14</sup> Hendra Harmi, 'Islamic Religious Education Learning Model Based on Religious Moderation', *JRTI (Indonesian Journal of Action Research)*, 7.2 (2022), 228 <<https://doi.org/10.29210/30031757000>>.

students' expectations for interactive and practice-based learning, and the need for teacher competence in industrial contexts. This study aims to examine the perceptions of teachers and students towards a more contextualized and workplace-based PAI learning model. Thus, the results of this study are expected to contribute to the development of a more relevant PAI curriculum for vocational students, equipping them with not only technical competencies but also the ethical and character foundation necessary to face the challenges of the professional world based on Islamic values.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore the real-world implementation of the PAI learning model oriented toward workplace preparation<sup>15</sup>. The qualitative method was selected because it facilitates a deep and nuanced understanding of perceptions, behaviors, and experiences as lived by participants in this case, teachers and students within their natural educational environment<sup>16</sup>. In practice, this involved conducting in depth interviews with five PAI teachers and observing several classroom sessions at SMK ICB Bandung, where various learning models such as Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Uswah Hasanah, and Project-Based Learning (PjBL) were applied to integrate Islamic values into vocational contexts. The case study design, as articulated by Yin (2009), enabled the researchers to investigate this integration process within a bounded system namely, a vocational high school with a strong industrial alignment thus capturing the complexity of moral education embedded in work-relevant instruction. The research site, SMK ICB Bandung, was chosen due to its strong linkages with the business and industrial sectors, allowing researchers to examine how Islamic teachings are contextualized through work simulations, soft-skill training, and practical assignments. This combination of theory and field-based application provided a holistic view of how PAI can serve both spiritual and professional development in vocational settings.

Data were collected through in depth interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis related to PAI learning at SMK ICB Bandung. In depth interviews provided insight into the perceptions and lived experiences of both teachers and students. Observations captured classroom dynamics and teaching strategies in practice. Document analysis including syllabus, lesson plans, and instructional materials allowed triangulation and validation of the qualitative data. Data analysis in this study was conducted using thematic analysis supported by NVivo 12 software. This technique involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data, allowing researchers to interpret complex meanings and relationships. NVivo facilitated the organization of data into codes and categories, which enabled the synthesis of key themes related to workplace readiness,

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<sup>15</sup> John W Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* (London: SAGE Publications, 1998).

<sup>16</sup> Hyoyon Paik and others, 'Integrated Perspectives in Design: Issues and Perspectives of Design Research, Education, and Practice', *Design Journal*, 22.5 (2021), 581–605 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/14606925.2019.1622315>>; Helen Walls and Michael Johnston, 'Teachers Beliefs and Practices for the Teaching of Writing in the New Zealand Elementary School: Influences on Student Progress', *Australian Journal of Learning Difficulties*, 28.1 (2023), 27–54 <<https://doi.org/10.1080/19404158.2023.2208145>>.



Such as akhlak development, soft skills, teacher strategies, and student engagement<sup>17</sup>. In addition, the analysis process was guided by the analytical steps proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which include data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification<sup>18</sup>. These stages were systematically applied to ensure analytical rigor—from the selection and condensation of relevant data, through the visual presentation of themes, to the formulation of final interpretations. Furthermore, the thematic framework was informed by Joyce and Weil's (2003) theory of learning models, particularly in relation to the elements of syntax, social systems, and support systems in instructional design, which provided a theoretical foundation for interpreting how PAI learning models align with vocational and character-based education<sup>19</sup>.

From these procedures, a preliminary proposition emerged: that effective PAI learning for vocational students requires an integration of Islamic values with practical, contextualized learning methods that align with workplace expectations. This proposition is further developed in the discussion section and is grounded in both empirical findings and theoretical insights from prior research, on curriculum relevance and on teacher competence in the era of industrial revolution 4.0.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To gain deeper insight into the dominant themes reflected in participants' perceptions, this study utilized NVivo12 to perform a word frequency query on the interview transcripts. This technique helps to identify key concepts and recurring patterns in qualitative data, offering an initial mapping of what participants emphasized most when discussing the implementation of the PAI learning model based on workplace preparation. By analyzing the most frequently occurring words, researchers were able to highlight the central constructs that shape the discourse around Islamic moral education in vocational settings. The results of the *word frequency query* in Nvivo12 display a list of words that frequently recur in the data. The following list represents the words with the highest frequency in the analyzed text. The results of the Nvivo12 *word frequency query* in Table 1 show that the word 'Akhlak' dominates the interview findings with a frequency of 1.52% of all interview data. The top 10 words with the highest frequency of Nvivo12 analysis results can be presented in the following table:

**Table 1.**  
**Word Frequency Query Results in Nvivo12 Displays a List of the Top 10 Words that Appear Most Frequently in the Data.**

No.	Word	Lenght	Count	Weight Frequency (%)
1.	Akhlak	5	139	1,52 %
2.	Learning	12	126	1,38 %
3.	Students	5	87	0,95 %

<sup>17</sup> S Suharti, 'Sains Dalam Pendidikan Islam Selama Pandemi Covid-19: Analisis Bibliometrik Menggunakan Nvivo 12 Plus', *Book Chapter of Proceedings Journey-Liaison ...*, 1.1 (2022), 459–67 <<https://j-las.lemkomindo.org/index.php/BCoPJ-LAS/article/view/49>>.

<sup>18</sup> A. M. Miles, M. B., & Huberman, *Analisis Data Kualitatif*. (T. R. Rohidi, Penerj.) (Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Press, 1992).

<sup>19</sup> Bruce Joyce and Marsha Weil's, *Fifth Edition Models of Teaching* (Prentice Hall of India, 2003).

4.	Material	6	78	0,85 %
5.	Character	6	56	0,6 %
6.	Class	5	56	0,6 %
7.	Model	5	56	0,6 %
8.	Learn	7	51	0,6 %
9.	School	7	35	0,56 %
10.	Media	5	31	0,25 %

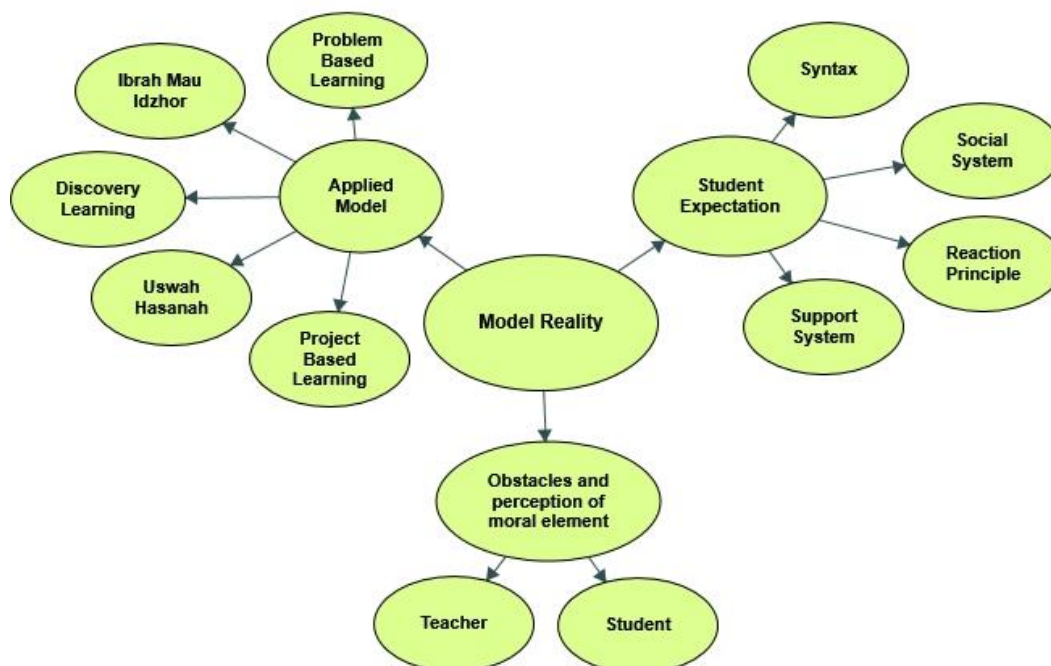
The results of *Word Frequency Query* obtained from NVivo12 show that the key words that often appear in interviews regarding the perceptions of vocational teachers and students towards the PAI learning model based on the preparation of the world of work can be interpreted as several important aspects, starting from the word Akhlak which has the highest occurrence with a frequency of 139 times (1.52%). This shows that the moral aspect is one of the main focuses in the applied Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model. The word Learning occupies the second position with a frequency of 126 times (1.38%), which indicates the importance of the methods and approaches used in the teaching-learning process. In addition, the word Student appears 87 times (0.95%), indicating that students are the main subject in this study. The word Material appeared 78 times (0.85%), indicating that the content taught in PAI learning is also an important concern. The word Character appears 56 times (0.6%), illustrating the relevance of character education in the implemented learning model. The words Class, Model, and Learning appeared 56, 56, and 51 times respectively, indicating that the classroom environment as well as the learning methods used in PAI play a role in student character building. Meanwhile, the words School and Media appeared with lower frequencies, 35 and 31 times respectively, indicating that the role of institutions and technology in learning is still taken into account although not the main factor. The *Word Cloud* feature is presented as follows:



**Figure 2.**

**Word Frequency Query Results in Nvivo12 Visualized Through the Word Cloud feature.**

Utilizing the *Concept Map* feature in Nvivo12, the perceptions of vocational teachers and students towards the PAI learning model based on preparing for the world of work to facilitate making a thematic map of findings are visualized as follows:



**Figure 3. Results of Concept Map Feature Visualized Through Nvivo12**

This study revealed several important findings related to the perceptions of vocational teachers and students towards the PAI learning model based on the preparation of the world of work at SMK ICB Bandung. The map shows that the application of PAI learning model in equipping students to face the world of work is divided into three main aspects. First, the learning model used by teachers in supporting learning, especially in the aspect of morals. Second, the obstacles faced and students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the learning model in instilling moral values. Third, students' expectations of the ideal PAI learning model in preparing them for the world of work.

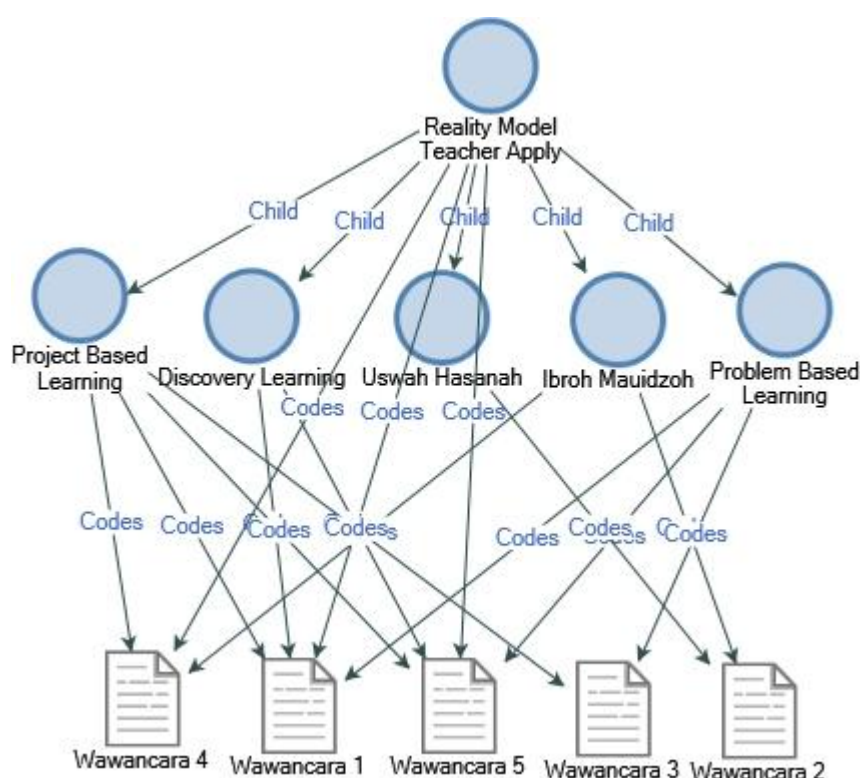
### **The Reality of Teacher-Applied Learning Models**

Learning models have a vital role in supporting the achievement of learning objectives, as a conceptual framework that describes systematic procedures and serves as a guide for designers.<sup>20</sup> . In Islamic Religious Education (PAI), the learning model is not just a method of delivering material, but also a strategic approach that aims to develop the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects of students. In other words, the learning model in Islamic Education must be able to provide a holistic learning experience, including intellectual understanding, strengthening

<sup>20</sup> Udin Supriadi and others, 'The Role of Islamic Education Teachers in Preventing Radicalism at Madrasa Aliyah', *Nazhruna: Journal of Islamic Education*, 4.1 (2021), 74-90 <<https://doi.org/10.31538/nzh.v4i1.1073>>; Abdillah Muflih Fahmi Fazar, Faisal Fauzan Ilyasa, Rizal Permana, 'Development of SYAM (Synectic-Amtsai) Model in Islamic Education Learning at SMPN 1 Margahayu', *TADRIS: Journal of Islamic Education*, 9.2 (2024), 35-55 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.19105/tjpi.v19i2.15251>>.



of religious values, and application in daily life. According to Joyce and Weil (2003), an effective learning model must be able to create dynamic interactions between educators and students. The ideal learning process is when students are actively involved, not only receiving information, but also participating in exploring Islamic concepts that are relevant to their lives.<sup>21</sup> . With the right approach, PAI learning can help learners understand religious values deeply, so that it is not only a theoretical insight, but also can be practiced in daily attitudes and behaviors. In practice, PAI teachers apply various learning models tailored to the needs of students and the relevance of the material.



**Figure 4. Reality of the Learning Model used by Teachers**

Based on the results of interviews with five Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers at SMK ICB Bandung, and supported by observation data and related documents, it was found that the learning model applied in PAI learning based on readiness for the world of work consists of several learning models. The learning model most often used as the first step is Problem Based Learning (PBL). This model serves to build students' thinking framework so that they have a strong basic understanding of moral material before proceeding to a more concrete application stage. After the initial understanding stage is formed, each teacher uses a different approach in teaching the concept of morals in an applicative manner. One of the models applied is the Qur'anic learning model, such as Ibrah Maudzoh, which serves to provide reinforcement of moral values through reflection on relevant stories and case studies. With this approach, students are expected

<sup>21</sup> Bruce Joyce and Marsha Weil's, *Fifth Edition Models of Teaching* (Prentice Hall of India, 2003).

to be able to take lessons and valuable experiences as provisions in facing the world of work. Another model used is Uswah Hasanah, which is considered the most effective by some teachers because it emphasizes the importance of teacher exemplary in shaping student character. In this model, the teacher acts as a role model who provides a real example of acting and behaving in accordance with Islamic values, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad. In addition, the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model is also applied to provide opportunities for students to apply their understanding through concrete projects. This model aims to train students' practical skills to be better prepared to face challenges in the world of work. Meanwhile, the Discovery Learning model is used as an explorative approach that allows students to discover moral concepts through a process of independent information seeking and analysis.

Various learning models have been implemented in work based PAI learning; however, the dominant learning models remains predominantly theoretical. Teaching materials emphasize academic understanding more than the application of religious values in a professional context. As a result, students have a good conceptual understanding, but are less able to implement moral values in the work environment. This condition shows a gap between theory and practice which can have an impact on students' readiness to face the challenges of the industrial world. In addition, the limited experience of teachers in understanding the dynamics of the world of work is a major obstacle in industry-based teaching. Many teachers have an academic background but lack practical experience in the industrial sector, so learning does not accommodate the realities faced in the world of work. This causes scenarios or case studies presented in learning to be less contextual and not fully reflect the real challenges in the industrial world. Therefore, strengthening the capacity of teachers in understanding and implementing work-based PAI learning is crucial. Training is needed for teachers so that they can understand the needs of the industry and be able to design learning models that are more applicable and relevant.

Zaman (2024) revealed that well-prepared and skilled teachers are needed for a better education system. Despite the comprehensive nature of education goals, there is still a gap between theory and practice and teachers often face difficulties in integrating the two. In addition, the utilization of electronic media, updating teaching methods, and adjusting learning strategies according to the needs of students are still aspects that lack attention<sup>22</sup>. In line with this, Maknun (2021) states that the demands of the industrial revolution 4.0 affect teacher competencies, including mastery of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in carrying out their professional duties. Competencies that must be possessed by teachers include pedagogical, personal, professional, and social aspects. Therefore, teachers need to keep up with educational developments to improve the quality of learning. In the era of the industrial revolution 4.0, teachers are also required to have new literacy skills, such as digital literacy, technology, humanism, critical thinking, collaboration,

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<sup>22</sup> Rukhasana Zaman and Khisro Kaleem Raza, 'Developing a Strategy for Linking Theory and Practice in Teacher Education', *Journal of Asian Development Studies*, 13.1 (2024), 504-13 <<https://doi.org/10.62345/jads.2024.13.1.42>>; Han YANG and others, 'Exploration and Practice on the Model of Industry-Education Integration for Computer Majors-Take Electronic and Computer Engineering Major of Southwest Petroleum University for Example', *DEStech Transactions on Computer Science and Engineering*, iccis, 2019 <<https://doi.org/10.12783/dtcse/iccis2019/31889>>.

communication, and creativity, to support work-based learning.<sup>23</sup>

### Teachers' and Students' Perceptions of the Moral Elements and the Barriers Experienced

Perception, as explained by Mather (2016), is a rich and layered process formed not only by sensory stimuli but also shaped by one's past experiences, contextual circumstances, and existing knowledge<sup>24</sup>. Within the realm of education, teachers develop their perceptions of akhlak or Islamic moral character—through accumulated teaching experiences, their responses to digital-era challenges, and their insights into the critical role of akhlak in fostering student character<sup>25</sup>. On the other hand, students tend to construct their perceptions of akhlak based on how they see moral principles operating in daily interactions and real-life situations. In the framework of Islamic education, akhlak holds a central position as the foundation of character formation, emphasizing comprehensive ethical relations between humans and God, with others, and with the natural world. Far beyond theoretical understanding, akhlak in Islam is a moral obligation for every individual, guiding behavior and upholding integrity in accordance with the *maqashid sharia*, which aims to safeguard human dignity<sup>26</sup>. Consequently, the way both teachers and students perceive and internalize akhlak deeply affects how these moral values are translated into actions, especially when facing the ethical expectations of modern industrial life.

Based on interviews with five Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, supported by classroom observations and document analysis, it was revealed that teachers unanimously emphasized the strategic role of akhlak in PAI learning. They viewed it as a foundation for student character development, especially in the context of vocational education and preparation for the workplace. This study identified specific character dimensions that are integral to akhlak in this context, including honesty, responsibility, discipline, adaptability, and Islamic work ethics. One teacher noted that "discussing akhlak is essential for vocational students, as they will soon enter the workforce and face various challenges, particularly in the digital age."

Akhlak, therefore, functions not only as a guide in personal life but also as a critical factor in social and professional interactions. It must not remain a theoretical construct but should manifest in students' daily behavior. Teachers attempt to instill these values through concrete, relatable examples that demonstrate the real-world consequences of actions. Core values such as honesty which Thomas Lickona describes as the foundation of good character discipline and responsibility which foster integrity and independence and Islamic work ethics, as promoted by Imam Al-Mawardi in *Adab al-Dunya wa al-Din*, are essential in preparing students for the workplace. In

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<sup>23</sup> Johar Maknun and others, 'Teacher Competency of Vocational High School (SMK) in the Era of Industrial Revolution 4.0', 2021 <<https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.210203.110>>; Babang Robandi, 'Developing of Pedagogical Competence of Elementary School Teachers in West Bandung Regency', 2021 <<https://doi.org/10.33422/2nd.tleconf.2020.11.62>>.

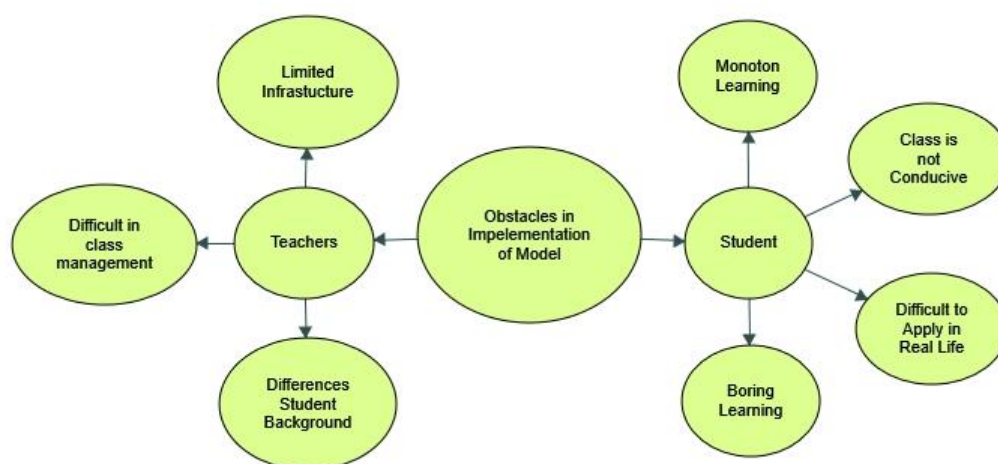
<sup>24</sup> George Mather, 'Foundations of Sensation and Perception', *Foundations of Sensation and Perception*, 2016 <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315672236>>.

<sup>25</sup> Achmad Faqihuddin and Riris Hari Nugraha, 'Model Pendidikan Muslim Millennial Parents Dalam Membina Akhlak Generasi Alpha', *Jurnal Obsesi: Jurnal Pendidikan Anak Usia Dini*, 7.6 (2023), 7785–99 <<https://doi.org/10.31004/obsesi.v7i6.4884>>; Elan Sumarna Faisal Fauzan Ilyasa, Muhammad Nurfaizi Arya Rahardja, Akhmad Rudi Masrukhin, Mailinda Anis Zulaiha, 'Keutamaan Ibu Dalam Hak Asuh Anak Perspektif Pendidikan: Analisis Hadits Tarbawi', *Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Agama Dan Ilmu Pengetahuan*, 22.1 (2025), 90–104.

<sup>26</sup> Ghazali, *Ihya 'Ulum Al-Din* (BRILL, 1963) <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004662087>>.

the increasingly competitive labor market, companies seek employees who are not only technically competent but also exhibit high levels of professionalism, integrity, and ethical behavior. Therefore, the role of PAI teachers is crucial in guiding students beyond theoretical knowledge toward the formation of strong moral character. Through the cultivation of akhlak, students learn to internalize key workplace values such as honesty, punctuality, accountability, and adaptive behavior in a dynamic work environment. PAI learning that focuses on the strengthening of character through akhlak becomes a strategic approach for producing vocational graduates who excel in both skill and morality.

Students share similar perspectives. They perceive the emphasis on akhlak as significantly beneficial to their daily lives. Some students reported becoming more patient, honest, polite, and caring after engaging in character-based Islamic learning. This indicates that the internalization of akhlak through PAI not only shapes ethical behavior but also improves students' self-awareness and emotional maturity. Both teachers and students recognize that akhlak plays a vital role in shaping behavior in accordance with Islamic values. For teachers, it is a tool to cultivate morally upright individuals; for students, it serves as a compass for navigating personal and professional challenges. This shared understanding confirms that akhlak not only aids in the development of students' character but also enhances their readiness for the workforce. In industrial settings, values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and work ethic are often key determinants of success. Consequently, cultivating akhlak from an early stage is imperative to ensure that students not only possess technical competencies but also conduct themselves professionally and ethically in the world of work.



**Figure 5. Obstacles in Implementation of Model**

In applying the PAI learning model as a conceptual framework and serves as a guide for designers as well as a support for achieving learning objectives. In this research, one of the focuses is the moral element as a fundamental aspect in preparing students to face the world of work. However, in the process of implementing learning, the implementation of learning models often faces various challenges. These obstacles are felt by both teachers and students during the learning

process, which can affect the successful implementation of the learning model.

The obstacles experienced by teachers in implementing the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model, especially in the aspect of morals, can be classified into three main aspects. First, teachers face challenges in classroom management, especially when teaching in classes that are difficult to condition. This condition can hamper the effectiveness of learning, reduce student engagement, and make it difficult for teachers to deliver material optimally. Second, limited facilities and infrastructure are significant obstacles in implementing the designed learning model. Inadequate facilities, such as limited technology-based learning media, and a less conducive classroom environment, can reduce the effectiveness of delivering moral material to students. Third, teachers feel there are limitations in understanding moral material in depth. This is exacerbated by differences in students' level of understanding of moral values, so teachers need to adjust teaching methods so that they can be accepted equally by all students.

The obstacles in implementing the Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model are not only felt by teachers, but also by students. From the students' point of view, there are four main aspects that become challenges in the learning process. First, students often feel that the learning delivered is monotonous. The lack of variety in learning methods makes them lose interest and motivation to understand the material, especially if the delivery is done in a repetitive way. Secondly, students consider that the lecture method which is too dominant in learning makes the classroom atmosphere boring. The lack of active interaction between teachers and students can reduce their understanding and involvement in the learning process. Third, less conducive classroom conditions are also an obstacle in absorbing the material well. Factors such as noise, lack of discipline in the classroom, and lack of control over the learning situation can disrupt students' concentration. Fourth, students find it difficult to apply moral values in everyday life because learning is more theoretical and less direct practice. The lack of real experience in applying good morals in the school environment and outside of school causes students to have difficulty internalizing these values in their lives

The challenges encountered in implementing the learning model indicate that the components of the social system, instructional syntax, and support mechanisms have not been functioning effectively. To enhance the effectiveness of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), it is essential to revitalize the instructional framework to foster greater student engagement and interactivity<sup>27</sup>. Teachers are encouraged to structure learning sequences that promote exploration and critical reflection, enabling students to stay engaged and participatory throughout the learning process<sup>28</sup>. Moreover, fostering stronger peer interaction is crucial in cultivating a collaborative classroom atmosphere, particularly through the adoption of differentiated learning strategies that address students' varying levels of comprehension. Educators should also be attentive to learners'

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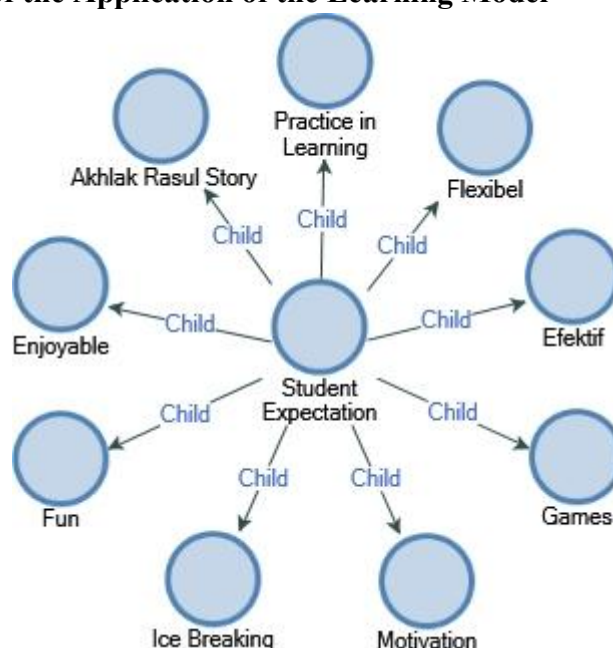
<sup>27</sup> Mokh Iman Firmansyah, 'Pendidikan Agama Islam Pengertian Tujuan Dasar Dan Fungsi', *Urnal Pendidikan Agama Islam -Ta'lim*, 17.2 (2019), 79–90 <<https://ejournal.upi.edu/index.php/taklim/article/view/43562>>; Abdillah Muflih Faisal Fauzan Ilyasa, Agus Fakhruddin, Achmad Faqihuddin, Muhammad Ramdan Mubarak Ramdan, 'The Role of the Mosque as a Medium of Da'wah in Building Religious Tolerance in the Community: An Analysis of Kampung Toleransi', *Islamic Communication Journal*, 9.2 (2024), 267–86 <<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.21580/icj.2024.9.2.22620>>.

<sup>28</sup> Sampara Palili and others, 'Model Strategi Pemativasian Melalui Pembelajaran Pai Di Smk Widya Nusantara Maros', *An-Nahdlah: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 3.1 (2023), 47–59 <<https://doi.org/10.51806/an-nahdlah.v3i1.74>>.



needs by offering personalized support and integrating a wider range of instructional media<sup>29</sup>. Incorporating technology more effectively and optimizing support resources can also enrich the learning experience. When applied holistically, these strategies not only deepen students' grasp of Islamic moral values but also help them develop interpersonal skills that are essential in professional settings.

### Student Expectations of the Application of the Learning Model



**Figure 6. Student Expectations Regarding the Implementation of Learning Models**

Students have expectations of learning models that are more relevant, interactive and able to support their personal development. They expect learning to be tailored to individual needs to be more meaningful, fun, flexible and not boring. Barnes (2014) revealed that learning designed according to students' needs can increase their engagement and motivation in learning.<sup>30</sup> . In addition, students emphasize the importance of an interactive approach that allows them to be active in the learning process. Perla (2023) explains that interactive learning methods can help students understand the material more deeply while increasing their proactive participation<sup>31</sup> . Well-structured tasks also play a role in enriching students' learning experience, so they can more easily understand the material. In terms of social aspects, students expect positive interactions between teachers and peers to create a conducive and supportive learning environment. In terms

<sup>29</sup> Yeguang Qin and others, 'Differentiated Federated Reinforcement Learning Based Traffic Offloading on Space-Air-Ground Integrated Networks', *IEEE Transactions on Mobile Computing*, 2024 <<https://doi.org/10.1109/TMC.2024.3389011>>.

<sup>30</sup> Nicole Barnes, Helenrose Fives, and Charity M. Dacey, 'Teachers' Beliefs about Assessment', *International Handbook of Research on Teachers' Beliefs*, 2014, 284-300 <<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203108437-25>>.

<sup>31</sup> Loredana Perla and Viviana Vinci, 'Enhancing Authentic Assessment in Higher Education: Leveraging Digital Transformation and Artificial Intelligence', *CEUR Workshop Proceedings*, 3605 (2023).

of reaction principles, students expect teachers to provide motivation and positive reinforcement when they have difficulty understanding the material. SMK students also want more work simulations that teach how Islamic values can be applied in professional life. For example, training on business communication based on Islamic values, honest and fair negotiation practices, and how to manage finances in a sharia manner. In addition, students also expect PAI learning to provide greater insight into the role of Islamic ethics in the global world of work. In addition, supporting systems are also indispensable as technology integration such as the use of digital media and educational games are also considered important to increase the interest and effectiveness of learning.

Students' expectations toward the learning process reveal that the essential components of instructional design—as proposed by Joyce and Weil (2003), including syntax, social system, reaction principle, and support system—have not been fully realized in their classroom experiences. Learners express a clear demand for educational practices that are more engaging, responsive, and personalized, particularly in relation to individualized learning paths, effective integration of digital tools, and a supportive, inclusive classroom environment. When these instructional elements are implemented holistically and optimally, learning becomes more meaningful, adaptive, and student-centered. Educators can respond by designing learning structures that strike a balance between flexibility and coherence, allowing students to participate both actively and independently. A socially inclusive learning environment promotes collaboration and mutual respect, while the reaction principle—through empathetic feedback and motivational reinforcement—plays a critical role in sustaining learner interest and emotional engagement.

Based on field findings and inductive reflection, the researcher proposes a contextual instructional model named Sabilul Akhlak, designed to strengthen students' character (akhlak) in preparation for entering the workforce. The name Sabilul Akhlak, meaning "The Pathway of Character," captures the model's essential purpose—guiding students in moral development not only through instruction but through experiential processes involving collaboration, problem-solving, and self-reflection. This model is particularly relevant for vocational education, where the integration of Islamic values with professional competencies is crucial. It offers a systematic approach comprising five instructional phases or syntax elements:

1. **Problem Identification:** This initial phase engages students in analyzing and interpreting real-life issues or scenarios relevant to their future work environment. Working collaboratively in groups, students dissect a case presented by the teacher, identify key elements, collect relevant information, and propose initial interpretations. The teacher facilitates this process by encouraging diverse perspectives, critical thinking, and analytical reasoning, setting a foundation for deeper moral inquiry.
2. **Solution Formulation:** In this phase, students collaboratively formulate potential solutions to the identified problem. This process encourages the development of critical thinking and decision-making skills grounded in rational and realistic considerations. The collaborative nature of the activity fosters communication, leadership, and cooperative values essential for workplace readiness.

3. **Prophetic Exemplification:** Once students have analyzed the problem and discussed possible solutions, they are introduced to stories and teachings from the life of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). These narratives serve as moral reinforcement and illustrate ideal behavior in contexts analogous to modern professional challenges. Teachers also present related *dalil naqli* (Qur'anic verses and hadiths) to strengthen students' internalization of Islamic ethical principles.
4. **Practical Implementation:** The fourth phase bridges theory and practice. Students are encouraged to implement their understanding through practical activities such as socio-drama performances or short video content creation. These activities simulate workplace environments and reflect Islamic character traits, as outlined in Indonesia's Ministry of Manpower Regulation No. 3 of 2023 on workplace ethics. Students are expected to demonstrate attitudes such as service orientation, accountability, competence, loyalty, adaptability, harmony, and collaboration—key traits of *berakhlak* (morally upright) individuals in the workplace.
5. **Reflective Evaluation:** The final phase involves structured reflection facilitated by the teacher. Students are guided to contemplate the learning process, assess the moral lessons drawn, and evaluate how their thinking and behavior have evolved through the experience. This stage fosters metacognitive awareness and moral maturity, essential for ethical professionalism.

In addition to the syntax, the model emphasizes a collaborative social system. Classroom interactions are organized to promote mutual support and peer dialogue. Students are encouraged to share personal experiences and construct shared meaning through small-group discussions. Teachers act as facilitators who manage classroom dynamics, allocate sufficient time for group activities, and ensure that every student feels valued and included. A psychologically safe learning climate is cultivated to build self-confidence and foster a readiness to learn and grow.

The reaction principle of this model is grounded in the reinforcement of positive values. Teachers are expected to provide consistent, constructive feedback that affirms students' efforts and encourages ethical self-expression. This principle goes beyond cognitive correction, aiming to nurture affective engagement and moral commitment. By fostering a culture of empathy and encouragement, students become more proactive, resilient, and willing to engage in morally grounded learning experiences.

The support system required for the successful implementation of *Sabilul Akhlak* includes physical, pedagogical, and institutional components. On the physical level, classrooms must be equipped with media technologies to support digital content creation and moral storytelling. On the pedagogical side, teachers should receive regular professional development on workplace ethics, character education, and instructional innovation. Institutionally, schools must collaborate with industry partners and religious scholars to contextualize Islamic values within professional domains. Administrative leaders are also expected to provide structural support by granting autonomy to teachers, endorsing curriculum innovation, and aligning school culture with the objectives of ethical-vocational education.

Finally, the instructional impact of this model can be observed in two key domains. First,

students exhibit improvements in personal character, specifically in traits aligned with Islamic moral values such as honesty, accountability, discipline, and teamwork. Second, the model enhances students' readiness for professional life by fostering an ethical orientation alongside technical competence. Through experiential and reflective learning processes, students internalize values that are not only doctrinally grounded but also pragmatically applicable. From a qualitative, inductive standpoint, the field data affirm the transformative potential of a spiritually anchored, contextually adaptive instructional model. Thus, Sabilul Akhlak stands as a viable educational strategy for producing vocational graduates who are both morally upright and professionally prepared to meet the demands of the modern workforce.

## CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to explore and analyze the perceptions of teachers and students regarding a contextual Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model based on workplace readiness in the vocational school context. The primary aim was to address the gap between the theoretical nature of PAI and the practical demands of the professional world, particularly in shaping students' character (akhlak) to complement their technical competencies. Findings revealed that the implementation of current PAI learning is still dominantly theoretical and insufficiently integrated with real-world industry expectations. Both teachers and students emphasized the importance of character education—such as honesty, discipline, and responsibility—as core values for entering the workforce, yet expressed concern about the lack of practical reinforcement in classroom settings. In response, the study introduced the Sabilul Akhlak model, an instructional design grounded in Joyce and Weil's theoretical framework, incorporating five learning syntax phases: problem identification, solution formulation, prophetic exemplification, practical implementation, and reflective evaluation. These phases are supported by a collaborative social system, value-based reaction principles, institutional and technological support systems, and a dual-impact focus on moral development and employability. The model represents a holistic educational strategy that harmonizes Islamic values with vocational realities, enabling students to internalize religious principles and translate them into workplace-relevant behaviors. The implications of this study suggest that vocational schools must adopt integrative learning models that not only address spiritual development but also foster contextual and experiential learning, thus contributing to the formation of ethically grounded, industry-ready graduates.

Despite its valuable contributions, this research acknowledges several limitations. First, the study was conducted in a single vocational school (SMK ICB Bandung), which may limit the generalizability of its findings to broader educational settings with differing demographic and institutional characteristics. Second, the qualitative nature of the study, while enabling deep contextual insights, does not provide measurable outcomes or comparative effectiveness of the proposed model. Third, although the Sabilul Akhlak model was developed from grounded empirical data, it has not yet undergone full-scale implementation or longitudinal evaluation to determine its long-term impact on student behavior and workforce readiness. Future research is encouraged to expand the sample scope by including multiple schools across different regions and

educational backgrounds to validate and refine the model. Moreover, a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative depth with quantitative metrics could be applied to measure improvements in students' moral attitudes and professional competencies. Longitudinal studies could also be conducted to track the sustained impact of the model on graduates' career trajectories and ethical performance in workplace settings. Finally, collaboration between vocational educators, religious scholars, and industry practitioners is recommended to co-design PAI learning strategies that are both pedagogically sound and contextually relevant.

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