

The Influence of Religiosity, PAI Teacher Pedagogical Competence, and School Climate on Islamic Character and Its Impact on Students' Prosocial Behavior

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Article Information	Abstract
Submitted May 04, 2026 Revised June 23, 2026 Accepted June 30, 2026 Keywords Islamic Character; Prosocial Behavior Religiosity; School Climate; Teacher Pedagogical Competence.	This study aimed to analyze the influence of religiosity, pedagogical competence of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, and school climate on Islamic character and its impact on students' prosocial behavior. The method used was quantitative with an explanatory approach. The sample consisted of 425 eleventh-grade students from 12 public and private senior high schools in Ponorogo, selected using cluster random sampling technique. The research instruments included a religiosity scale (15 items, $\alpha = 0.89$), a teacher pedagogical competence scale (20 items, $\alpha = 0.92$), a school climate scale (18 items, $\alpha = 0.88$), an Islamic character scale (25 items, $\alpha = 0.94$), and a prosocial behavior scale (12 items, $\alpha = 0.86$). Data were analyzed using covariance-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS 26 software. The results showed that the model achieved good fit ($\chi^2/df = 1.84$; RMSEA = 0.045; CFI = 0.96; TLI = 0.95; SRMR = 0.038). Specifically: (1) religiosity had a positive and significant effect on Islamic character ($\beta = 0.42$; $p < 0.001$); (2) PAI teacher pedagogical competence had a positive significant effect on Islamic character ($\beta = 0.31$; $p < 0.01$); (3) school climate had a positive significant effect on Islamic character ($\beta = 0.27$; $p < 0.01$); (4) Islamic character had a positive significant effect on prosocial behavior ($\beta = 0.58$; $p < 0.001$); and (5) Islamic character partially mediated the effects of religiosity, teacher competence, and school climate on prosocial behavior. These findings underscored the importance of strengthening religiosity, PAI teacher professionalism, and Islamic school climate in shaping students' character and prosocial behavior.

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INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (PAI) in schools had a strategic role in shaping the character and morality of Indonesia's young generation. However, various reports indicated that student morals and behavior in schools remained concerning. Data from the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) in 2024 showed a 15% increase in cases of bullying, brawls, and intolerance among students compared to the previous year. More specifically, a national survey on student character conducted by the Center for Religious Education Research (PUSLITPEN) of the [Ministry of Religious Affairs \(2024\)](#) revealed that only 52% of high school students in Ponorogo demonstrated high prosocial behavior (such as helping friends, voluntarily cleaning the environment, and respecting differences). This low prosocial behavior contrasted with the high exposure to religious material in schools, indicating a gap between religious knowledge and practical application.

Preliminary observations conducted by the researcher at five high schools in Ponorogo in October-November 2025 revealed an interesting phenomenon. On one hand, almost all schools conducted PAI learning with 3 hours per week allocation and additional religious activities such as congregational Dhuha prayer, tadarus (Quran recitation), and Islamic holiday commemorations. However, on the other hand, inter-school brawls in Ponorogo remained quite high, with 12 cases recorded throughout 2025. Additionally, observations found that PAI teachers had varying pedagogical competence. Of the 18 PAI teachers observed, only 8 (44%) consistently used active learning methods such as discussion, case studies, and moral problem-solving, while the rest still predominantly used lectures and memorization assignments. School climate also varied: some schools had conducive atmospheres with high inter-religious tolerance, while others still had discriminatory practices against students from different backgrounds.

Religiosity was the most fundamental internal factor in forming Islamic character. [Glock & Stark \(1965\)](#) identified five dimensions of religiosity: belief (ideological), religious practice (ritualistic), experience (experiential), knowledge (intellectual), and consequences (consequential). In the Islamic context, religiosity encompassed adherence to creed (aqidah), Islamic law (shariah), and morals (akhlak). Research by [Hidayat et al. \(2023\)](#) on 600 madrasah aliyah students in West Java found that religiosity had a strong positive correlation with noble character ($r = 0.67$; $p < 0.01$) and was the strongest predictor in the regression model. However, the effect of religiosity on prosocial behavior was often indirect, through the internalization of moral values in the form of character ([Safar, 2024](#)). Religiously inclined students tended to have higher empathy and social sensitivity, but this needed to be mediated by consistent character formation.

PAI teacher pedagogical competence was a highly influential external factor. In the Minister of National Education Regulation No. 16 of 2007 concerning Teacher Qualification and Competency Standards, pedagogical competence included understanding of students, designing and implementing learning, evaluation, and developing students' potential. Specifically for PAI teachers,

this competence was expanded with the ability to transform Islamic values contextually and serve as a role model (*uswatun hasanah*) (Qoyyimah et al. 2022). A meta-analysis study by Asad et al. (2025) reviewing 25 studies (2019-2024) found that PAI teacher pedagogical competence had a combined effect size of 0.52 on affective learning outcomes, including Islamic character. However, most of these studies used simple regression or correlational analysis, not yet testing more complex mediation models.

School climate was defined as the quality and character of school life encompassing norms, goals, values, interpersonal relationships, learning practices, and organizational structure (Cohen et al. 2009). In the Islamic education context, an Islamic school climate was characterized by the application of values such as honesty, justice, *ukhuwah* (brotherhood), and tolerance in all aspects of school life. Research by Wang & Degol (2020) identified four dimensions of school climate: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and institutional environment. These four dimensions contributed to student character formation. In Indonesia, Fauzi et al. (2024) found that positive school climate (high teacher support, sense of safety, and fairness of rules) improved students' discipline and responsibility character, ultimately impacting prosocial behavior.

Islamic character was a multidimensional construct encompassing morals toward Allah (worship), morals toward oneself (honesty, discipline, trustworthiness), morals toward others (helping, respecting, forgiving), and morals toward the environment (cleanliness, conservation) (Al-Ghazali, 1100/2015). In Islamic psychology literature, character (*khuluq*) was the result of internalizing religious teachings through habituation, modeling, and reinforcement. Research by Mulia et al. (2025) in modern Islamic boarding schools showed that character education based on *pesantren* significantly increased students' prosocial behavior scores compared to public schools. However, in public schools, character formation relied more heavily on classroom learning alone, making the effects less optimal.

Prosocial behavior was defined as voluntary actions performed to help or benefit others without expecting external rewards (Eisenberg et al., 2015). In Islam, prosocial behavior was called *hubb al-ghayr* (love for others) and was a manifestation of faith: "*None of you truly believes until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself*" (Hadith, Bukhari). Prosocial behavior in adolescents was important for preventing violence, bullying, and other antisocial behaviors. A study by Fatimah et al. (2024) in Surabaya revealed that students with high Islamic character (scores > 80) were 3.2 times more likely to engage in voluntary activities compared to students with low character. Nevertheless, the transmission mechanisms from religiosity, teachers, and school climate to character and then to prosocial behavior had not been extensively tested simultaneously.

The formation of Islamic character and prosocial behavior constituted an important goal of Islamic religious education in schools. Islamic character not only played a role in shaping students' personal quality but also served as the

foundation for positive social behavior, such as caring, cooperation, tolerance, and mutual assistance. Various studies showed that student religiosity, quality of teacher instruction, and conducive school environments were factors potentially influencing character development and social behavior. In the Islamic education context, religiosity functioned as a source of values guiding behavior, PAI teacher pedagogical competence served as a means of value internalization, while school climate provided an environment supportive of positive behavior habituation.

Nevertheless, empirical studies explaining the relationships among these factors still showed several limitations. Most previous studies only tested relationships between variables partially through bivariate analysis or multiple regression, thus unable to explain the more complex interrelationships among the constructs studied. Additionally, research on Islamic character often used instruments that had not comprehensively covered the dimensions of akhlak, while studies conducted in the general secondary school context remained relatively limited compared to research in madrasahs or pesantren. Other limitations included the scarcity of research explaining the mechanisms by which religiosity, teacher competence, and school climate could influence students' prosocial behavior, particularly through Islamic character formation as a mediating variable.

Based on these conditions, this study developed a structural model integrating religiosity, PAI teacher pedagogical competence, school climate, Islamic character, and prosocial behavior in a single analytical framework. Using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), this study not only tested direct effects among variables but also analyzed the role of Islamic character as a mediating variable explaining the mechanisms of relationships between religiosity, PAI teacher pedagogical competence, and school climate on students' prosocial behavior. This study used an Islamic character instrument developed based on four dimensions of akhlak and involved a sample including both public and private schools, thus expected to represent wider variations in empirical conditions in examining character formation and student social behavior.

This study integrated religiosity perspectives, ecological theory, and social cognitive theory in explaining Islamic character formation and prosocial behavior in the Islamic education context. This approach provided a more comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the interrelationships among individual factors, school environment, and value internalization processes. Based on this framework, this study focused on analyzing the influence of religiosity, PAI teacher pedagogical competence, and school climate on students' Islamic character, examining the influence of Islamic character on prosocial behavior, and testing the mediating role of Islamic character in the relationships between these three variables and students' prosocial behavior.

METHODS

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory design and cross-sectional data to test causal relationships among latent variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The research model was analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) involving exogenous variables of religiosity, PAI teacher pedagogical competence, and school climate; mediating variable of Islamic character; and endogenous variable of students' prosocial behavior. This approach was used to test direct, indirect, and mediation effects within a single integrated structural model.

The population of this study comprised all eleventh-grade students in public and private senior high schools in Ponorogo Regency during the 2024/2025 academic year. Sampling employed multistage cluster random sampling, starting from sub-district selection, schools, to classes randomly. Sample size was determined based on SEM requirements of 10-20 times the number of indicators (Hair et al., 2019), with a minimum requirement of 120 respondents; however, this study involved 425 respondents to enhance model estimation stability.

The research instruments comprised five 5-point Likert scales that had undergone content validity testing by experts. Religiosity (15 items) was adapted from Glock & Stark (1965) with reliability $\alpha = 0.85-0.89$. PAI teacher pedagogical competence (20 items) referred to Permendiknas No. 16 of 2007 with reliability $\alpha = 0.86-0.91$. School climate (18 items) was developed based on Wang & Degol (2020) with reliability $\alpha = 0.85-0.88$. Islamic character (25 items) was developed based on Al-Ghazali's concept of akhlak with reliability $\alpha = 0.87-0.91$. Prosocial behavior (12 items) was adapted from Caprara et al. (2005) with reliability $\alpha = 0.83-0.86$. All constructs demonstrated Composite Reliability (CR > 0.89) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE > 0.67), thus meeting convergent validity criteria.

Data collection was conducted directly in schools with the assistance of trained enumerators. Students completed questionnaires after obtaining school permission and parental consent. Data were analyzed using two-stage SEM: measurement model testing (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) and structural model testing (Anderson & Gerbing, 1988). Parameter estimation used Maximum Likelihood in AMOS 26 software (Arbuckle, 2021). Model fit was assessed using indices of χ^2/df , RMSEA, CFI, TLI, and SRMR (Hu & Bentler, 1999), while mediation effects were tested using bootstrapping with 5000 samples and 95% confidence intervals (Preacher & Hayes, 2008).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

First, measurement model testing (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) was conducted for each construct and overall. CFA results showed that all indicators had loading factors above 0.60 (ranging from 0.68 to 0.92) and were significant at $p < 0.001$. Composite reliability (CR) values for all constructs ranged from 0.89 to 0.96 (above the 0.70 threshold) and Average Variance

Extracted (AVE) from 0.67 to 0.83 (above 0.50), meeting convergent validity criteria. Discriminant validity was examined by comparing the square root of AVE with correlations among constructs; all square roots of AVE were greater than correlations, indicating good discrimination. The overall measurement model had good fit: $\chi^2 = 892.34$ (df = 472), $\chi^2/\text{df} = 1.89$; RMSEA = 0.046; CFI = 0.96; TLI = 0.95; SRMR = 0.039. Thus, indicators were suitable for measuring latent constructs.

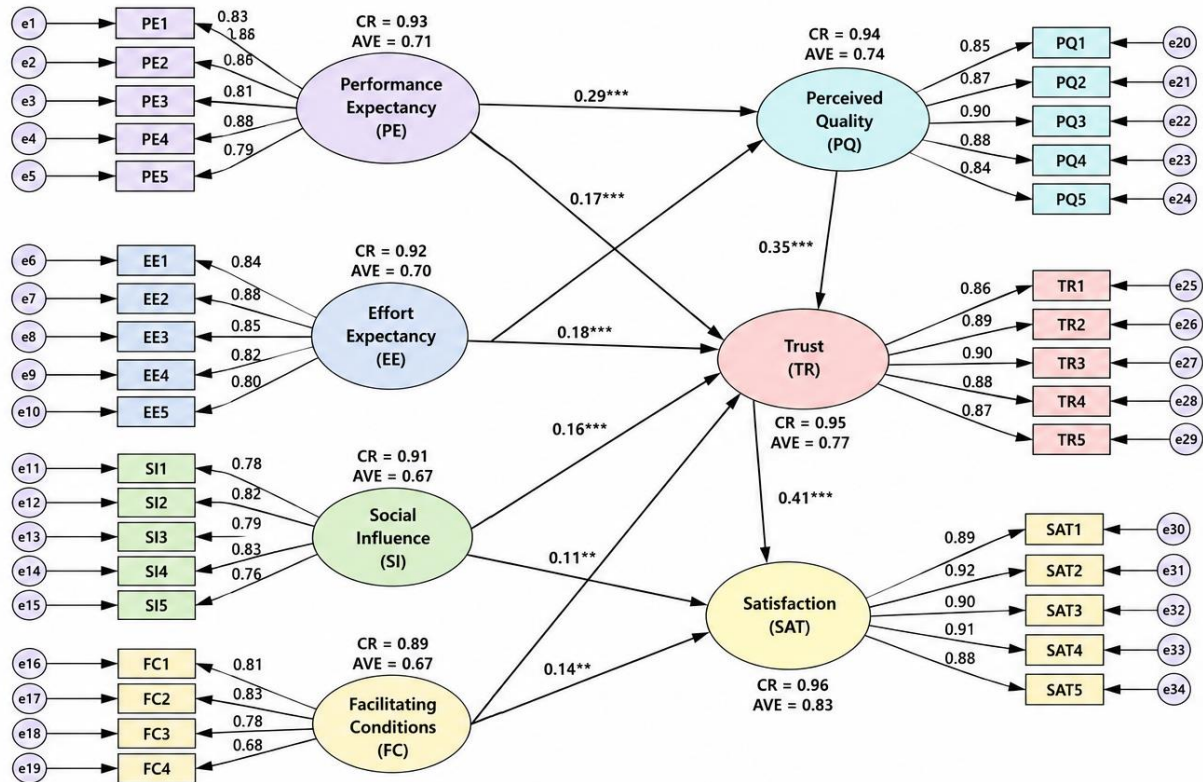


Figure 2. Structural Research Model (Path Diagram with Path Coefficients)

After the measurement model was validated, structural model testing proceeded. Table 2 presents standardized path coefficients (β), standard errors, critical values (CR), and significance.

Table 2. Structural Model Path Coefficients

Relationship	β	SE	CR (t)	p	Status
Religiosity → Islamic Character	0.42	0.056	7.50	***	Significant
PAI Teacher Competence → Islamic Character	0.31	0.048	6.46	***	Significant
School Climate → Islamic Character	0.27	0.052	5.19	***	Significant
Islamic Character → Prosocial Behavior	0.58	0.063	9.21	***	Significant
Religiosity → Prosocial Behavior (direct)	0.09	0.049	1.84	0.066	Not significant
Teacher Competence → Prosocial Behavior (direct)	0.05	0.047	1.06	0.289	Not significant
School Climate → Prosocial Behavior (direct)	0.08	0.051	1.57	0.116	Not significant

*** $p < 0.001$; CR = Critical Ratio (t-value)

Table 2, H1, H2, H3, H4 were supported. Religiosity had the largest influence on Islamic character ($\beta = 0.42$), followed by teacher competence (0.31), and school climate (0.27). Islamic character then very strongly influenced prosocial behavior ($\beta = 0.58$). Meanwhile, the direct effects of the three exogenous variables on prosocial behavior were not significant ($p > 0.05$), indicating that their effects were fully mediated by Islamic character (full mediation). However, for greater precision, indirect effects, total effects, and mediation significance were tested with bootstrap.

Table 3. Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects (Bootstrap, 5000 samples)

Relationship	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect (via Islamic Character)	Total Effect	Mediation Status
Religiosity → Prosocial Behavior	0.09 ($p = 0.066$)	$0.42 \times 0.58 = 0.2436$ ($p < 0.001$)	0.3336 ($p < 0.001$)	Full mediation
Teacher Competence → Prosocial Behavior	0.05 ($p = 0.289$)	$0.31 \times 0.58 = 0.1798$ ($p < 0.001$)	0.2298 ($p < 0.001$)	Full mediation
School Climate → Prosocial Behavior	0.08 ($p = 0.116$)	$0.27 \times 0.58 = 0.1566$ ($p < 0.001$)	0.2366 ($p < 0.001$)	Full mediation

Bootstrap results showed that indirect effects were significant for all relationships (95% confidence intervals did not include 0), while direct effects were not significant. Thus, Islamic character served as a full mediator between religiosity, teacher competence, and school climate on students' prosocial behavior.

Structural model fit showed excellent goodness-of-fit: $\chi^2 = 1024.68$ ($df = 557$), $\chi^2/df = 1.84$; RMSEA = 0.045; CFI = 0.96; TLI = 0.95; SRMR = 0.038. All criteria met standards (RMSEA < 0.06; CFI/TLI > 0.95). The R^2 value for Islamic character was 0.57, meaning 57% of Islamic character variance was explained by religiosity, teacher competence, and school climate together. The R^2 value for prosocial behavior was 0.34, meaning 34% of prosocial behavior variance was explained by Islamic character.

The results showed that religiosity, PAI teacher pedagogical competence, and school climate together formed students' Islamic character, and this Islamic character directly determined the level of prosocial behavior. This model explained 57% of character variability and 34% of prosocial variability.

Discussion

This study showed that religiosity significantly influenced students' Islamic character ($\beta = 0.42$; $p < 0.001$) and was the strongest predictor compared to other variables. This finding reinforced [Glock & Stark's \(1965\)](#) theory, which affirmed that religiosity was multidimensional and served as the basis for internalizing moral values. This result was also consistent with [Hidayat et al. \(2023\)](#), who found a strong correlation between religiosity and noble character ($r = 0.67$), as well as [Safar's \(2024\)](#) study showing that adolescent religiosity contributed to empathy development and moral identity in later developmental

stages. Thus, religiosity functioned not only as a cognitive and ritual aspect but also as a value source shaping students' moral orientation.

However, the results showed that the direct effect of religiosity on prosocial behavior was not significant, but rather fully mediated by Islamic character (indirect effect = 0.33). This finding indicated that religiosity did not automatically transform into social behavior without an internalization process in the form of character. Theoretically, this supported the concept of value internalization in moral psychology, where religious values must be structured in self-identity to emerge in concrete actions. This result also aligned with [Mulia et al. \(2025\)](#) study, which affirmed that religious learning oriented solely toward ritual aspects was insufficient to form social behavior if not accompanied by character reinforcement.

PAI teacher pedagogical competence significantly influenced Islamic character ($\beta = 0.31$; $p < 0.001$). This finding supported the meta-analysis study by [Asad et al. \(2025\)](#), showing that teacher competence contributed to students' affective outcomes with medium to large effects. Theoretically, this result aligned with [Bandura's \(1986\)](#) social learning theory, which emphasized the importance of behavioral modeling, where teachers became figures imitated by students. Thus, PAI teachers not only served as material deliverers but also as role models (*uswatun hasanah*) in character formation.

This result also reinforced that contextual and participatory PAI learning was more effective in forming Islamic character compared to lecture-based learning. [Qoyyimah et al. \(2022\)](#) study showed that teachers who could integrate contemporary moral issues into PAI learning were more successful in forming students' moral awareness. Thus, pedagogical competence was not only related to teaching ability but also the capacity to transform Islamic values into meaningful learning experiences.

School climate significantly influenced Islamic character ($\beta = 0.27$; $p < 0.01$), but did not directly influence prosocial behavior. This finding aligned with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological development model, which positioned the school environment as a system influencing development through internalization processes. [Wang & Degol's \(2020\)](#) study also showed that school climate contributed to students' moral development, particularly through social relationships and sense of safety at school. In Indonesia, [Fauzi et al. \(2024\)](#) found that positive school climate improved students' discipline and responsibility character.

The non-significant direct effect of school climate on prosocial behavior indicated that environmental influence was indirect. This meant school climate was only effective when internalized into students' Islamic character. In other words, character served as the psychological mechanism bridging environmental influence on social behavior. This reinforced the position of character as a central construct in the model of students' prosocial behavior.

The mediating role of Islamic character was proven to be very strong in explaining prosocial behavior ($\beta = 0.58$; $p < 0.001$). This result was consistent with moral identity theory (Aquino & Reed, 2002), which stated that moral behavior emerged when moral values became part of an individual's self-identity. In this context, Islamic character functioned as value internalization that consistently directed students' social actions. Fatimah et al. (2024) study also showed that students with high Islamic character had greater tendencies to engage in prosocial activities such as volunteer work and helping friends.

This finding filled the gap in previous studies that tended to test the relationships of religiosity, teacher competence, and school climate partially to student behavior, without considering the mediation mechanism explaining how these influences worked. Thus, the main contribution of this study lay in testing the structural model showing that prosocial behavior was not directly influenced by external factors, but through Islamic character formation as the key mechanism.

The results showed a pattern where religiosity, PAI teacher pedagogical competence, and school climate served as external factors forming Islamic character, while Islamic character functioned as the main determinant of prosocial behavior. This finding reinforced the integration of religiosity theory, social learning theory, and ecological development theory in explaining the formation of students' social behavior in the school environment.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concluded that religiosity, PAI teacher pedagogical competence, and school climate together positively influenced the formation of students' Islamic character, with religiosity as the most dominant factor. Islamic character was then proven to play an important role in enhancing students' prosocial behavior and served as the primary link channeling the influence of these three factors, so that prosocial behavior did not form directly without prior Islamic character reinforcement. These findings affirmed that developing prosocial behavior in the school environment must be done holistically through strengthening meaningful religious experiences, improving teacher competence quality in value-oriented and exemplary learning, and creating conducive, safe, and religious practice-supportive school climates. Therefore, integration of Islamic character strengthening programs in the curriculum and school activities was needed, along with teacher capacity building and sustainable school climate management as part of a comprehensive educational strategy.

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