



## THE INFLUENCE OF ISLAMIC COUNSELING ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF VIRTUOUS CHARACTER IN STUDENTS

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### ABSTRACT

The development of virtuous character in students is influenced by discipline, integrity, educational environment, and Islamic counseling, which fosters morality, responsibility, empathy, and religious awareness comprehensively. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of Islamic counseling in enhancing virtuous character among vocational high school students, including honesty, discipline, responsibility, tolerance, empathy, and the application of Islamic values in daily life. The research employed a quantitative approach with a One-Group Pretest-Posttest experimental design, collecting data through questionnaires and observation. The results indicate that the regression test showed a significance value (Sig.) for the Pretest coefficient of 0.000, which is smaller than 0.05, indicating a significant influence of the initial scores on the Posttest outcomes. In other words, the students' initial character conditions before counseling significantly affected the development of virtuous character after the intervention. These findings reinforce that Islamic counseling is effective in shaping virtuous character, assisting students in increasing awareness, motivation, and the application of values such as honesty, trustworthiness, and patience, thereby producing consistent positive behavioral changes post-intervention. Conclusion: Islamic counseling can significantly influence the formation of noble character in students.

**Keyword:** Islamic Counseling, Character, Students



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## **INTRODUCTION**

Good character in students is developed through discipline, integrity, and a supportive educational environment. Discipline, as a form of self-control, plays a crucial role in instilling positive moral values through structured activities such as communal prayers and extracurricular activities (Pusvitasari, 2023). The ability to adapt and exercise self-regulation has a positive relationship with students' moral behavior (Hidayah, 2021). However, research indicates a gap between moral reasoning and moral motivation, highlighting the need for a comprehensive moral education approach (Mosavi et al., 2025). Integrity also serves as a fundamental basis in the process of socialization and character formation (Zhang, 2018). Moral values and prosocial behavior contribute to enhancing students' social responsibility (Reig-Aleixandre et al., 2024). Teachers play a significant role through modeling and cross-cultural understanding (Alhassan, 2022), while a multicultural environment reinforces universal virtues (Trofimova et al., 2021). The integration of ethics in learning further deepens students' moral competence (Kong, 2024).

Character education plays a vital role in developing virtuous character and Islamic personality in students through learning activities, teacher role modeling, and a religious and ethical school environment (Baidowi & Putri, 2024). The instillation of Islamic values forms a moral and spiritual foundation that emphasizes the importance of virtuous character, fostering strong religious awareness in students (Maulana et al., 2025). Educational institutions contribute by embedding morals, ethics, and discipline from an early age, shaping responsible and balanced Islamic personalities (Sari et al., 2025). Teachers utilize habituation methods, systematic guidance, and exemplary behavior to instill moral values, cultivate student character, and prevent negative behavior (Anggraeni et al., 2024). Additionally, Islamic Religious Education emphasizes noble character traits such as honesty, discipline, harmony, and ethical conduct, preparing students to face academic and social challenges wisely and responsibly (Maulana & Purba, 2024). Thus, character education serves as the primary foundation for developing students' virtuous character and Islamic personality.

Counseling plays a critical role in guiding the moral development of students, particularly during periods of rapid social change. Counselors assist students in understanding moral values, navigating ideological trends, and avoiding the influence of new ideological challenges through timely guidance (Teng, 2021). Group counseling techniques, such as value clarification, sociodrama, and modeling, effectively foster respect and empathy, shaping students' thoughts and behaviors (Nuraeni et al., 2026). At the elementary school level, bibliotherapy techniques enhance prosocial behavior by teaching moral values through literature (Chitra & Noor, 2019). Challenges in delivering counseling services, such as conflicting schedules and diverse platforms, can be addressed with more organized systems, including mobile or web applications (Arcilla et al., 2021).

Islamic counseling plays a vital role in shaping students' virtuous character by integrating moral guidance and spiritual intelligence, helping students develop a high-quality Islamic personality, preventing negative influences, and improving academic achievement (Harisa, 2019). Programs implemented in Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 2 Kutai Kartanegara emphasize values such as honesty, discipline, respect, and responsibility through theoretical discussions and practical activities, despite challenges related to time constraints and differences in religious understanding (Saidi et al., 2025). Integrating Islamic values into the curriculum through analogies, dialogue, and exemplary behavior facilitates the actualization of students' virtuous character (Listyono et al., 2018). Extracurricular activities in Islamic boarding schools, such as scouting, martial arts, and calligraphy, cultivate discipline, leadership, and empathy (Huda et al., 2024). Collaboration between teachers and parents

ensures consistent internalization of Islamic values (Aminudin & Hasan, 2025), while a holistic approach including effective planning, recruitment of teachers based on specific principles, and integration of moderate values supports tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for diversity (Ma`arif et al., 2024).

Research on the influence of Islamic counseling on the formation of virtuous character in students at SMK As-Shiddiqiyah Lempuing Jaya, Ogan Komering Ilir, highlights a gap in previous studies that rarely examine the specific effectiveness of Islamic counseling in shaping students' character at the vocational high school level using an experimental quantitative approach. Prior research has also not systematically assessed moral changes through pretest-posttest designs. The novelty of this study lies in the use of a One-Group Pretest-Posttest method, which directly measures the impact of Islamic counseling on virtuous character through questionnaires and observation at each stage of counseling, providing concrete empirical evidence. The aim of this study is to determine the extent to which Islamic counseling can enhance students' virtuous character, including honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, justice, humility, patience, gratitude, generosity, forgiveness, and careful speech. The results indicate a significant improvement in moral quality, spiritual awareness, and the application of Islamic values in students' daily lives.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in the 10th grade at SMK As-Shiddiqiyah Lempuing Jaya, Ogan Komering Ilir, using a quantitative approach with a One-Group Pretest-Posttest experimental design. The population consisted of all 50 students in grade 10, from which a sample of 20 students was selected using a quota sampling technique. Data were collected through questionnaires to assess virtuous character and observation sheets to monitor the implementation of Islamic counseling, as described below:

Table 1. Questionnaire on Virtuous Character for Grade X (Sastra et al., 2025)

| No. | Indicator                | Statement / Question  | Response Options                                   |
|-----|--------------------------|---|--|
| 1   | Honesty (Shidq)          | I always tell the truth even in difficult situations.<br>I do not hide the mistakes I make.             | 1. Never 2. Rarely 3. Sometimes 4. Often 5. Always |
| 2   | Trustworthiness (Amanah) | I strive to keep the promises I make.<br>I keep secrets entrusted to me.                                |  |
| 3   | Responsibility           | I carry out tasks assigned to me sincerely.<br>I complete work on time.                                 |  |
| 4   | Justice                  | I treat everyone equally regardless of status.<br>I remain impartial when making decisions.             |  |
| 5   | Humility (Tawadhu')      | I am not arrogant despite having advantages.<br>I respect others' opinions even if they differ.         |  |
| 6   | Patience                 | I remain calm when facing problems.<br>I control my emotions when angry.                                |  |
| 7   | Gratitude                | I always express gratitude for the blessings I receive.<br>I do not complain easily about my situation. |  |
| 8   | Generosity               | I like helping others in need.<br>I willingly share my wealth with those in need.                       |  |
| 9   | Forgiveness              | I easily forgive those who wrong me.<br>I do not hold grudges against others' mistakes.                 |  |
| 10  | Guarding Speech          | I speak politely to everyone.<br>I avoid speaking ill of others.  |  |

Table 2. Observation Sheet for the Implementation of Islamic Counseling (Hikamawati, 2010, p.197)

| No. | Stage of Islamic Counseling      | Observed Aspect  | Observation Indicator  | Observation Result      |
|-----|----------------------------------|--|--|-------------------------|
| 1   | Building harmonious relationship | Openness and trust between counselor and client              | Client is willing to speak honestly, shows trust, and establishes good communication | 1. Poor 2. Fair 3. Good |
| 2   | Problem identification           | Counselor's ability to help client identify the main problem | Client is able to clearly state the problem they face                                |                         |
| 3   | Offering repentance              | Client's awareness of mistakes and willingness to improve    | Client shows remorse, readiness to repent, and motivation to change                  |                         |
| 4   | Teaching religious values        | Client's understanding of teachings and syari'ah values      | Client is able to explain Islamic values and apply them in behavior                  |                         |

The data analysis techniques in this study used descriptive statistics to illustrate the characteristics and distribution of the data. Data validity was tested to ensure that the questionnaire and observation instruments accurately measured virtuous character. Normality tests were conducted to determine whether the data distribution followed a normal pattern. Furthermore, a paired-sample t-test was used to compare pretest and posttest scores, in order to determine the effect of Islamic counseling on the development of students' virtuous character.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Pretest Results

Table 3. Results of Students' Virtuous Character Questionnaire Before Islamic Counseling

| No | Student Name | Honesty | Trustworthiness | Responsibility | Fairness | Humility | Patience | Gratitude | Generosity | Forgiveness | Guarding Speech | Total Score | Average |
|----|--------------|---------|-----------------|----------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
| 1  | S-01         | 3       | 3               | 3              | 2        | 3        | 2        | 3         | 3          | 3           | 2               | 27          | 2.7     |
| 2  | S-02         | 2       | 3               | 3              | 2        | 3        | 3        | 3         | 2          | 2           | 2               | 25          | 2.5     |
| 3  | S-03         | 3       | 3               | 2              | 3        | 2        | 2        | 3         | 3          | 2           | 3               | 26          | 2.6     |
| 4  | S-04         | 2       | 2               | 3              | 2        | 2        | 3        | 3         | 2          | 2           | 2               | 23          | 2.3     |
| 5  | S-05         | 3       | 3               | 3              | 3        | 3        | 3        | 3         | 3          | 3           | 3               | 30          | 3.0     |
| 6  | S-06         | 3       | 2               | 2              | 3        | 3        | 2        | 3         | 2          | 2           | 3               | 25          | 2.5     |
| 7  | S-07         | 2       | 3               | 3              | 3        | 3        | 3        | 2         | 3          | 2           | 3               | 27          | 2.7     |
| 8  | S-08         | 3       | 3               | 3              | 3        | 3        | 2        | 3         | 3          | 3           | 3               | 29          | 2.9     |
| 9  | S-09         | 2       | 2               | 2              | 2        | 2        | 3        | 2         | 2          | 2           | 2               | 21          | 2.1     |
| 10 | S-10         | 3       | 3               | 3              | 3        | 2        | 3        | 3         | 3          | 3           | 3               | 29          | 2.9     |
| 11 | S-11         | 3       | 3               | 3              | 3        | 3        | 3        | 3         | 3          | 3           | 3               | 30          | 3.0     |
| 12 | S-12         | 2       | 3               | 2              | 3        | 2        | 3        | 3         | 2          | 2           | 2               | 24          | 2.4     |
| 13 | S-13         | 2       | 3               | 2              | 3        | 2        | 3        | 2         | 2          | 2           | 2               | 23          | 2.3     |
| 14 | S-14         | 3       | 2               | 3              | 3        | 3        | 2        | 3         | 3          | 2           | 3               | 27          | 2.7     |
| 15 | S-15         | 3       | 3               | 3              | 3        | 3        | 3        | 3         | 3          | 3           | 3               | 30          | 3.0     |
| 16 | S-16         | 2       | 2               | 3              | 2        | 2        | 3        | 3         | 2          | 2           | 2               | 23          | 2.3     |
| 17 | S-17         | 3       | 3               | 3              | 3        | 3        | 3        | 3         | 3          | 3           | 3               | 30          | 3.0     |
| 18 | S-18         | 3       | 3               | 3              | 2        | 3        | 2        | 3         | 3          | 2           | 3               | 27          | 2.7     |
| 19 | S-19         | 2       | 3               | 3              | 3        | 2        | 3        | 2         | 3          | 2           | 2               | 25          | 2.5     |
| 20 | S-20         | 3       | 3               | 3              | 3        | 3        | 3        | 3         | 3          | 3           | 3               | 30          | 3.0     |

Table 3 presents the results of the students' virtuous character questionnaire prior to Islamic counseling. The assessment covers ten aspects: honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, fairness, humility, patience, gratitude, generosity, forgiveness, and guarding speech. Each student was scored between 2 and 3 for each aspect. The total scores and averages per student vary, with the highest total score being 30 (average 3.0) and the lowest total score 21 (average 2.1). Most students achieved an average score above 2.5, indicating that, in general, their virtuous character was fairly good before the counseling intervention. This data serves as a baseline for comparing changes in character following the intervention.

### Islamic Counseling Intervention

Table 4. Observation Results of Islamic Counseling Implementation

| No | Islamic Counseling Stage | Observed Aspect  | Observation Indicators  | Observation Result   |
|----|--------------------------|--|---|--|
| 1  | Building a Relationship  | Harmonious Openness and trust between counselor and client | Client is willing to speak honestly, demonstrates trust, and maintains good communication | Good: The client appeared comfortable speaking, open to the counselor's questions, and demonstrated high trust throughout the session. |

|   |                           |  |   |  |
|---|---------------------------|--|---|--|
| 2 | Problem Identification    | Counselor's ability to help the client identify the main problem | Client is able to clearly state the problems faced                  | Fair: The client could express most of their problems but still seemed hesitant to discuss personal matters.                           |
| 3 | Offering Repentance       | Client's awareness of mistakes and willingness to improve        | Client shows remorse, readiness to repent, and motivation to change | Good: The client recognized their mistakes, felt remorse, and committed to improving through worship and better social interactions.   |
| 4 | Teaching Religious Values | Client's understanding of religious teachings and Sharia values  | Client can explain Islamic values and apply them in behavior        | Good: The client was able to explain values such as honesty, trustworthiness, and patience, and attempted to apply them in daily life. |

Table 4 illustrates that Islamic counseling has a positive impact on students' character development. Prior to the intervention, the students' overall character was in the fairly good category, though variations existed and some aspects needed reinforcement. During counseling, students demonstrated openness, awareness of mistakes, and motivation to change. They were able to understand and implement Islamic values such as honesty, trustworthiness, and patience in daily life. This indicates that Islamic counseling is effective in guiding students to increase self-awareness, positive behavior, and the application of virtuous character values.

## Posttest Results

Table 5. Results of Students' Virtuous Character Questionnaire After Islamic Counseling

| No | Student Name | Honesty | Trustworthiness | Responsibility | Fairness | Humility | Patience | Gratitude | Generosity | Forgiveness | Guarding Speech | Total Score | Average |
|----|--------------|---------|-----------------|----------------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------|---------|
| 1  | S-01         | 5       | 5               | 5              | 4        | 5        | 4        | 5         | 5          | 5           | 5               | 48          | 4.8     |
| 2  | S-02         | 4       | 4               | 4              | 4        | 4        | 4        | 4         | 4          | 4           | 4               | 40          | 4.0     |
| 3  | S-03         | 4       | 5               | 4              | 4        | 4        | 4        | 4         | 4          | 4           | 5               | 42          | 4.2     |
| 4  | S-04         | 4       | 4               | 4              | 4        | 4        | 4        | 4         | 4          | 4           | 4               | 40          | 4.0     |
| 5  | S-05         | 5       | 5               | 5              | 5        | 5        | 5        | 5         | 5          | 5           | 5               | 50          | 5.0     |
| 6  | S-06         | 4       | 5               | 4              | 4        | 5        | 4        | 5         | 4          | 4           | 4               | 43          | 4.3     |
| 7  | S-07         | 5       | 5               | 5              | 5        | 5        | 5        | 5         | 4          | 5           | 5               | 49          | 4.9     |
| 8  | S-08         | 5       | 5               | 5              | 5        | 5        | 5        | 5         | 5          | 5           | 5               | 50          | 5.0     |
| 9  | S-09         | 4       | 4               | 4              | 4        | 4        | 4        | 4         | 4          | 4           | 4               | 40          | 4.0     |
| 10 | S-10         | 5       | 5               | 5              | 5        | 5        | 5        | 5         | 5          | 5           | 5               | 50          | 5.0     |
| 11 | S-11         | 5       | 5               | 5              | 5        | 5        | 5        | 5         | 5          | 5           | 5               | 50          | 5.0     |
| 12 | S-12         | 4       | 4               | 4              | 4        | 4        | 4        | 4         | 4          | 4           | 4               | 40          | 4.0     |
| 13 | S-13         | 4       | 4               | 4              | 4        | 4        | 4        | 4         | 4          | 4           | 4               | 40          | 4.0     |
| 14 | S-14         | 5       | 5               | 5              | 5        | 5        | 5        | 5         | 5          | 5           | 5               | 50          | 5.0     |
| 15 | S-15         | 5       | 5               | 5              | 5        | 5        | 5        | 5         | 5          | 5           | 5               | 50          | 5.0     |
| 16 | S-16         | 4       | 4               | 4              | 4        | 4        | 4        | 4         | 4          | 4           | 4               | 40          | 4.0     |
| 17 | S-17         | 5       | 5               | 5              | 5        | 5        | 5        | 5         | 5          | 5           | 5               | 50          | 5.0     |
| 18 | S-18         | 4       | 5               | 4              | 4        | 4        | 4        | 4         | 4          | 4           | 4               | 41          | 4.1     |
| 19 | S-19         | 5       | 5               | 5              | 5        | 5        | 5        | 5         | 5          | 5           | 5               | 50          | 5.0     |
| 20 | S-20         | 5       | 5               | 5              | 5        | 5        | 5        | 5         | 5          | 5           | 5               | 50          | 5.0     |

Table 5 shows the results of the students' virtuous character questionnaire after Islamic counseling. Each character aspect including honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, fairness, humility, patience, gratitude, generosity, forgiveness, and guarding speech was scored between 4 and 5. All students experienced a significant improvement compared to the pretest. The average scores increased to a range of 4.0–5.0, with the highest total score of 50 and the lowest of 40. This indicates that Islamic counseling was effective in improving and enhancing students' virtuous behavior. Overall, students demonstrated higher awareness, motivation to act positively, and the ability to implement Islamic values in daily life after counseling.

## Data Validity

Table 6. Data Validity

|          |                     | Pretest | Posttest |
|----------|---------------------|---------|----------|
| Pretest  | Pearson Correlation | 1       | .834**   |
|          | Sig. (2-tailed)     |         | .000     |
|          | N                   | 20      | 20       |
| Posttest | Pearson Correlation | .834**  | 1        |
|          | Sig. (2-tailed)     | .000    |          |
|          | N                   | 20      | 20       |

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the validity test with a sample size of  $n = 20$ , the table value of  $r$  was 0.444 at a 5% significance level. The calculation of the data ( $r$ -count) yielded a value of 0.834. Since  $r$ -count is greater than  $r$ -table ( $0.834 > 0.444$ ), the instrument used can be considered valid. This indicates that each questionnaire item or indicator effectively measures the intended variable. In other words, respondents' answers reflect the characteristics or attributes being studied. Establishing validity is important to ensure that the collected data are accurate, relevant, and reliable for research purposes.

### Data Normality

Table 7. Data Normality

|          | Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup> |    |                   | Shapiro-Wilk |    |      |
|----------|---------------------------------|----|-------------------|--------------|----|------|
|          | Statistic                       | df | Sig.              | Statistic    | df | Sig. |
| Pretest  | .155                            | 20 | .200 <sup>*</sup> | .913         | 20 | .074 |
| Posttest | .272                            | 20 | .056              | .720         | 20 | .051 |

\*. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Based on the normality test, the significance value (Sig.) for the pretest was 0.074 and for the posttest was 0.051. According to the Kolmogorov-Smirnov or Shapiro-Wilk criteria, data are considered normally distributed if  $\text{Sig.} > 0.05$ . In the pretest,  $\text{Sig. } 0.074 > 0.05$ , indicating that the pretest data were normally distributed. In the posttest,  $\text{Sig. } 0.051$ , although close to the threshold, was still greater than 0.05, so the posttest data were also considered normal.

### t-Test

Table 8. t-Test Results

| Model |            | Unstandardized Coefficients |            | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig. |
|-------|------------|-----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|-------|------|
|       |            | B                           | Std. Error | Beta                      |       |      |
| 1     | (Constant) | 9.179                       | 5.723      |                           | 1.604 | .126 |
|       | Pretest    | 1.374                       | .214       | .834                      | 6.408 | .000 |

a. Dependent Variable: Posttest

Based on the regression test, the significance value (Sig.) for the pretest coefficient was 0.000, which is less than 0.05. This indicates that the pretest coefficient significantly influenced the posttest. In other words, students' initial scores before counseling significantly affected their virtuous character scores after the intervention. These results reinforce the finding that Islamic counseling has a significant effect on shaping students' virtuous character. Counseling helps students improve awareness, motivation, and the application of character values such as honesty, trustworthiness, and patience, leading to consistent positive behavioral changes following the intervention.

Islamic counseling has a significant impact on developing virtuous character by integrating religious values into the counseling process, helping individuals develop a strong moral compass and character. This integration provides guidance and enlightenment, enhancing personal quality in accordance with religious teachings (Ifdil et al., 2023). Furthermore, this approach emphasizes holistic development including intellectual, spiritual, and physical aspects enabling individuals not only to act ethically but also to achieve overall well-being (Ogunbado et al., 2016; Rothman et al., 2024). Implementation in educational settings through structured programs including curriculum development, teacher training, and student engagement fosters Islamic values and mitigates negative influences, thereby improving students' personality quality (Muzayaroh, 2021).

A moderate approach in Islamic counseling also encourages tolerance, inclusivity, and respect for diversity, shaping students' attitudes and behaviors in line with peaceful Islamic teachings (Tobroni et al., 2020). Nevertheless, challenges such as limited resources require effective strategies, including the involvement of all school staff, routine evaluation, and careful planning (Nuranifah et



al., 2022). Consistent application of these principles in educational environments strengthens their effectiveness in forming students' virtuous character (Subiyantoro et al., 2026).

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the virtuous character questionnaire, the students' average score before participating in Islamic counseling was 2.75, classified as "fairly good." After receiving the counseling intervention, the score increased significantly to 4.70, categorized as "very good," representing an increase of +1.95 points. This indicates that Islamic counseling has a significant effect on shaping students' virtuous character. Improvements were observed across all character indicators, including honesty, trustworthiness, responsibility, fairness, patience, and generosity. Statistically, the pretest coefficient significantly influenced the posttest, with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , confirming the effectiveness of Islamic counseling in enhancing students' moral and ethical behavior. Observations revealed that Islamic counseling can foster a harmonious relationship between counselor and student, assist in problem identification, promote awareness of repentance, and effectively instill religious values.

The improvement in students' character aligns with literature findings emphasizing the importance of integrating religious values into character development based on Islamic ethics. A holistic approach encompassing intellectual, spiritual, and physical development has been shown to strengthen personal quality comprehensively. Moreover, implementing character development programs in educational settings encourages the application of moderation, tolerance, and inclusive attitudes. Thus, Islamic counseling has proven to be an effective method for cultivating virtuous character and enhancing students' overall character quality. These findings underscore the importance of integrating religious guidance into education to support the formation of students who are morally upright, ethically responsible, and possess significantly improved moral quality.

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