

Strengthening Religious Character through Blended Learning in Islamic Education: A Case Study at Muhammadiyah 16 Surabaya

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study describes the strategies for strengthening religious character through Blended Learning in the subject of Al-Islam and *Kemuhammadiyah*, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the reinforcement of students' religious character in the teaching of Al-Islam and *Kemuhammadiyah*.

Methods – This study employed a qualitative method with data collection techniques including interviews, observations, and documentation. Data condensation was applied by interpreting the collected data to derive meaning, from which conclusions could be drawn.

Findings – The results showed that the school had implemented various strategies, including the formation of a special team to prevent bullying. The implementation of anti-bullying programs through learning activities, and cooperation with external parties such as the health department and the police. In addition, the programs such as anti-bullying chants and claps, as well as the implementation of the Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project (P5), have proven effective in instilling positive values and creating an inclusive school culture.

Limitations – This research is limited to literature studies and field data obtained from a single school context.

Value – This study recommends strengthening anti-bullying policies through deeper curriculum integration, enhanced teacher training, and increased parental involvement to foster a safer and more supportive educational environment for students.



Article History

Received: 28-03-2025

Revised: 23-06-2025

Accepted: 14-07-2025

Published: 16-07-2025

Keywords

Blended Learning, Islam, Kemuhammadiyah, Religious Character, Strengthening,

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21274/taalum.2025.13.1.48-61>

Introduction

One of the fundamental needs in human life is education, as it is expected to serve as an effective means for character development. Education aims to cultivate individuals who are intellectually competent, skillful in practice, and exhibit well-rounded moral conduct. In early 2019, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic not only disrupted various aspects of life but also compelled the education sector to rapidly adapt to the demands of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. The educational system was thus expected to respond promptly to these complex challenges by fostering students to think critically, generate solutions to emerging problems, collaborate effectively, and, most importantly, maintain strong moral character and virtuous behavior.

During the pandemic, the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud) introduced several adjustments to the teaching and learning process. These efforts included the implementation of simultaneous and significant educational reforms, such as curriculum engineering, teacher training, and institutional development. Educators were no longer solely expected to fulfill curriculum targets; instead, they were also entrusted with the responsibility of preserving and nurturing students' character, particularly emphasizing five core values deeply rooted in life principles (Maulia et al., 2021).

Religious character serves as the foundation upon which other character values are built (Fahrudin & Arif, 2024). In Islamic teachings, character is synonymous with *akhlaq* (moral conduct). Character theory in Islam means the formation of an exemplary attitude for oneself that can have an influence on others. Islamic character education is grounded in the Qur'an and Hadith, as religious character is intrinsically linked to obedience to the Almighty, the Creator of the universe (Fadhurrahman et al., 2022). This religious foundation is considered essential due to its internalized nature within individuals, which influences their behavior and daily actions (Bahiroh, 2021). Some experts also map out, such as Thomas Lickona in his book *Educating for Character* explains that good character is a character that is filled with moral knowledge, then raises good feelings about goodness, until finally it is finalized by doing good.

In response to the pandemic, Kemendikbud issued Circular Letter No. 2 of 2020 concerning the prevention of COVID-19 within the Ministry's environment, and Circular Letter No. 3 of 2020 regarding COVID-19 prevention in educational institutions. These regulations required the suspension of conventional face-to-face learning in schools and mandated a transition to home-based learning (*Belajar dari Rumah, BDR*) for both teachers and students (Hidayah et al., 2021).

Kemendikbud emphasized that BDR should still provide students with meaningful learning experiences. The concept of home-based learning involves the delivery of instruction at students' residences through the optimal use of technological and communication tools (Misdi et al., 2023). One of the key strategies to support students' learning during the pandemic is the integration of both online and offline learning modalities. Among the models suitable for such integration is Blended Learning (BL), which combines face-to-face instructional strategies with digital learning facilitated through personal electronic devices (Kumar et al., 2021). According to (Pramono Adi et al., 2024) technology in education is also able to change the learning style of students so that it is not boring, but also pays attention to the suitability of technology to the portion of each student's education level (Salsabila et al., 2022).

Muhammadiyah, as an Islamic organization with a vast network of educational institutions across Indonesia, has responded to the COVID-19 pandemic with prudence and strategic foresight. One of the distinguishing features of Muhammadiyah schools is the inclusion of ISMUBA subjects—*Al-Islam*, *Kemuhammadiyah*, and Arabic Language which serve as the core identity and educational foundation of these institutions. Ismuba is part of Islamic education, the definition of Islamic education from Abuddin Nata which contains that Islamic education is the practice of teaching with Islamic values as stated in the Qur'an and As-Sunnah and according to Islamic scholars and practitioners (Lestari, 2021). Amid ongoing debates surrounding national character education, ISMUBA plays a harmonizing role, bridging general educational theories with religious principles (Marantika, 2021).

The ISMUBA curriculum is designed to strengthen students' faith through the internalization and practice of Islamic teachings. It aims to nurture individuals who are not only intellectually competent but also religiously observant and morally upright students who are pious, disciplined, and culturally engaged in promoting Islamic values within the school environment, in accordance with the teachings of the Qur'an and Sunnah. As such, ISMUBA is considered the spiritual and philosophical backbone of Muhammadiyah schools.

SMP Muhammadiyah 16, one of the leading Muhammadiyah secondary schools in Surabaya, has adopted the Blended Learning model in its instructional approach (Waliyuddin & Rushd, 2023). The implementation began with the planning of the blended learning model, followed by a series of workshops aimed at enhancing teachers' knowledge before full-scale adoption. However, research into the implementation of blended learning, particularly in the context of religious education, remains limited especially in relation to the reinforcement of subject matter comprehension.

Several studies related to blended learning and strengthening religious character have been conducted. (Suyadi, 2022) examined the role of PAI teachers during the pandemic, emphasizing the importance of integrating Islamic values in online learning. However, this research has not focused on post-pandemic strategies. Meanwhile, (Komarudin, 2021) emphasized the importance of teacher professionalism in shaping madrasah character, but has not integrated the context of digital technology. (Rahman et al., 2023). Therefore, this research fills the gap by exploring how post-pandemic blended learning can be used systemically to strengthen religious character in Muhammadiyah junior high schools. Thus, although many studies have discussed character education or blended learning separately, not many have examined the integration of religious character building strategies through blended learning in the context of post-pandemic Islamic education. This research is here to answer that gap.

Accordingly, it is considered appropriate to conduct this research at the selected school under the theme *Blended Learning as a Medium for Instilling Islamic Educational Values in Secondary Schools: A Case Study at SMP Muhammadiyah 16 Surabaya*. This study aims to explore the state of students' religious character in the post-pandemic period—pandemic "new normal" period, analyze strategies for strengthening religious character through the blended learning approach in *Al-Islam* and *Kemuhammadiyah* subjects, and identify the supporting and inhibiting factors involved in this process. Moreover, the study is expected to contribute to a broader understanding that technology-based blended learning can serve as a viable solution to overcome stagnation in current educational practices. It also offers an alternative instructional strategy that Islamic

education teachers can adopt to deliver more dynamic and character-oriented learning experiences (Sa'diah et al., 2024).

Methods

This study employs a qualitative research methodology with a descriptive analytical approach. The qualitative method was chosen to allow for an in-depth exploration and detailed description of specific individuals or groups, focusing on their conditions and the phenomena they experience. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, including references from relevant books and academic journals

The research was conducted over the course of one academic semester during the 2021/2022 school year, spanning from January 10 to June 20, 2022. The participants involved in this study included the school principal, the Vice Principal for ISMUBA affairs, the Vice Principal for Curriculum, teachers, students from classes 7A, 8A, and 9A, as well as representatives from the Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership (Pimpinan Cabang Muhammadiyah) of Semampir, specifically those from the Council of Primary and Secondary Education. To ensure the richness and credibility of the data, the researcher conducted three classroom observations during *Al-Islam* and *Kemuhammadiyah* learning sessions. These observations were intended to provide a nuanced understanding of the learning dynamics and character-building efforts within the blended learning framework.

The data analysis process employed Johnny Saldaña's concept of data condensation. Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the raw data gathered during the research. In qualitative studies, not all information obtained is equally relevant to the research objectives; thus, condensation serves to distill essential insights. In this study, data condensation was primarily applied to the interview transcripts to identify core themes and eliminate extraneous details

Result and Discussion

1. Implementation of the Religious Character Strengthening Program in the Post-Pandemic New Normal

Based on the results of observations, documentation, and interviews with the Principal, Head of Curriculum Affairs and Educators of *Al-Islam* and Muhammadiyah subjects, the authors can describe the implementation of the new normal religious character strengthening program at SMP Muhammadiyah 16 as follows:

a. Strengthening Religious Character Before the Pandemic

According to the school principal:

“As for building the religious character of students before the pandemic at SMP Muhammadiyah 16 is by implementing a strategy for implementing religious character education which is carried out in 4 ways, namely: First, integrating into every subject. In normal times, every subject teacher must be able to integrate religious values during the face-to-face learning process. Both at the level of learning administration and in the learning process. For lesson plans in the KI and KD components of the subject is preceded by verses of the Qur'an as a theoretical basis. In the learning process, students read the Qur'an according to the theme to be studied. The second is the development of school culture. The strengthening of

religious character through school culture by means of the mile, greet, and salute (3S) program, dhuha prayer, praying every time starting and ending learning, congregational prayer, tahajud hut, mobile recitation, Friday infaq al-ma'un, and muhadlarah. The third is through extracurricular activities, as well as religious character strengthening activities, including tahsinul qur'an, keputrian, and imamah activities. and the fourth is daily activities at home. The daily activities at home are by monitoring student worship at home through the worship evaluation book. In the evaluation book there are records of five-time prayers, reciting the Koran, memorizing prayer prayers, and juz 30 material. At the end of each month the worship evaluation book is signed by the parents and checked by the AIK teacher." (Interview with Principal of SMP 16 Muhammadiyah Surabaya)

From this statement, it can be concluded that before pandemic there were 4 activities carried out by SMP Muhammadiyah 16 Surabaya to strengthen the religious character of its students, all through a face-to-face system. The first is that every teacher must be able to incorporate character education into all subjects, the second is the preservation of school culture, including smiles, greetings, greetings then dluha prayers and others (Sylvia et al., 2023). Furthermore, the third, through extracurricular activities tahsinul qur'an, keputrian, and imamah. Then, the last is religious activities at home with a worship monitoring book containing five daily prayers, reciting the Koran, memorizing prayers and memorizing Juz 30. Later, the book must be collected by students every month to get a signature from the Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah teacher.

b. Strengthening Religious Character During the Pandemic

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, the strategy to strengthen religious character was implemented online. Every morning, streaming sessions were conducted containing prayer material, morning dhikr, and tadarus then continued with online learning by subject teachers. In the month of Ramadan, every afternoon a pre-breakfast cultum is streamed by all teachers and employees on a scheduled basis. The application of school culture and daily activities at home are carried out by means of AIK teachers reminding prayer times via whatsapp, students send photos of prayer activities, reading the Qur'an, meal times for sahur and breaking the fast." (Interview with Vice Principal for Curriculum)

From the interview with him, it was noted that strengthening religious character during the pandemic was carried out online. Every day the AIK teacher conducts monitoring activities for students' worship, then in the morning before lessons, streaming morning prayers and dhikr are carried out (Dalimunthe et al., 2022). Furthermore, during the month of Ramadan there is an afternoon cultum before breaking the fast (Murtafiah et al., 2021).

c. Religious Character Building in the Post-Pandemic New Normal

"When entering the new normal period, strengthening religious character is carried out with a blended learning model, starting from learning, school culture, and daily activities at home. Students enter face-to-face only 50% while the remaining 50% are online. Students can access learning videos through the school web, meeting zoom, and live." (Interview with Vice Principal for Curriculum)

In the post-pandemic period-pandemic period, paralyzed sectors began to revive, including the education sector. SMP Muhammadiyah 16 Surabaya implements a blended

learning model, which is a mixed learning method. In this method, the implementation of one class is divided into 2 study groups, namely 50% of students participate in classroom learning and the other 50% follow online. This strategy is in line with the Ministry of Education and Culture's policy regarding the implementation of Distance Learning (PJJ) and Blended Learning during the new normal period, which emphasizes the importance of maintaining character strengthening, especially religious values, despite the transition in learning methods due to the pandemic.

2. Strategy for Strengthening Religious Character through Blended Learning in Al-Islam Kemuhammadiyah Subjects of the New Normal Period.

“The strategy of strengthening the character education of students is by including habituation, exemplary, monitoring, and continuous evaluation from the school. With the worship monitoring book and the achievement of students' muroja'ah and 12 sub-chapters of religious character. These are key strategies in AIK learning, supplemented by existing evaluations in each KI and KD contained in the existing AIK book from the Muhammadiyah regional leadership of the East Java Education and Culture Council. In it, there is already a dissemination of character values, Islamic values and the values of struggle in Muhammadiyah.” (Interview with AIK teacher)

From this statement, it can be seen that there are 4 strategies for strengthening student character, namely habituation, exemplary, monitoring, and evaluation (Ahmad et al., 2021). The form of evaluation and monitoring of this strategy is a book containing records of muroja'ah, mandatory prayers and others. All of these activities must fulfill 12 sub-chapters of religious character. The 12 sub-chapters are described in the following table.

Table 1. Sub-chapter Religious Character

No	Character Value	Learning Process	Habituation	Description
1	Confident	Working on questions online	Learners are expected to be confident in carrying out positive activities	Working through the link
2	Firm Establishment	Pray Right time	Always istiqomah in performing liam awakt prayers and on time	Performing fard and sunnah prayers
3	Can cooperate with people of other religions	Social Service ahead of Islamic holidays	Networking in cooperation and learning with other learners regardless of their religion.	Healthy networking on social media
4	Peace	Always maintain school security and order	Always keep the neighborhood safe and orderly	To be a member of the school and community who is always focused on safety and order
5	Tolerance	Respect adherents of other religions by not participating in blasphemy on social	Respect other religious adherents in practicing their religion	Making social media in upholding tolerance between religious

		media		communities
6	Respecting religious differences	Respect adherents of other religions to worship in accordance with the religion they believe in	Getting used to respecting and appreciating	Become a positive activist on social media
7	Anti-Violence and Anti-Bullying	Oppose any form of violence and bullying	Make a habit of respecting and appreciating everyone	Participate in school and agency programs to stop violence and bullying
8	Sincerely	Sharing Al Maun Friday rice	Helping each other without strings and rewards	Being a cadre of the association who always helps others
9	Be friendly	Be friendly with friends with mutual respect and honor	Mutual help and advice among friends	Never harass or bully
10	Not imposing your will	Deliberate to decide anything for the common good	Upholding consensus for the common good	Familiarize yourself to always deliberate to reach a consensus
11	Protecting the small and marginalized	Loving the younger and respecting the elder	Getting used to respecting and appreciating each other	Establishing friendships among students without seeing differences
12	Love the Environment	Doing community service in mutual cooperation	Getting used to throwing garbage in its place	Actively participate in activities in the neighborhood or village

Muhammadiyah 16 Surabaya Junior High School cannot be separated from continuing to progress and do something innovative, creative and beneficial. This school sees the need to maintain the manners, morals and character of students. So this school makes a program to strengthen the 5 main character buildings, especially religion.

"Our school has the motto SPEMNAS Moderen, Unggul and Berkemajuan. So the Superior indicator here is what we use in caring for the character of students through progressive programs such as Imamah, students are expected to foster the character of courage and responsibility to become imams of fardhu prayers. Jum'un, Al Maun's Friday blessing aims to revive the character of sympathy and empathy of students. They every Friday distribute packaged rice and do social service to the community around the school, both Muslim and non-Muslim. Everything is aimed at strengthening the religious character building of students to be able to appreciate the teachings of their religion and live tolerantly with adherents of other religions."
(Interview with Principal)

The results of the interview, the principal said that there are several programs that are part of the strategy to strengthen the religious character of students, including *Imamah, Jum'un, Sabamusu, Pengajian Keliling and Pesanta*. The explanation of these programs is in the table below.

Table 2. Programs Supporting the Strategy for Strengthening Religious Character

No	Activity name	Character Value Religious
1	<i>Imamah</i> , a character strengthening program by making students the leader of the fardhu prayer (prayer leader).	Confident, determined
2	<i>Jum'un</i> , Jum'at Al Maun program to hone empathy and sympathy for the suffering and difficulties of other people's lives	Sharing with the small and the marginalized
3	<i>Sabamusi</i> , Saturday fostering students' interests and achievements is expected to become a non-academic achievement class.	Be friendly, sincere, and not pushy
4	<i>Mobile recitation</i> , fostering togetherness and empathy among students in addition to preaching.	Anti-violence and bullying, friendly, sincere
5	<i>Pesanta</i> , Pesantrean Saturday ahad, in which there are tahfidzul Qur'an activities for hafidz hafidzah	Confident, determined

Furthermore, to find out the extent of the comparison of strategies to strengthen religious character before, during and after the pandemic. So, the researcher presents the following table:

Table 3. Comparison of religious character strengthening strategies before, during and after the pandemic

No	Time	Strategy	Description
1	Before	Full face to face	During the pre-pandemic period, the implementation of religious character strengthening strategies was carried out in full face-to-face, so all student activities such as praying five times, reciting the Koran or muraja'ah were carried out directly at the school mosque.
2	During the pandemic	Fully Online	During the pandemic, learning is carried out online via zoom, meet, classroom and whatsapp (Fitria, 2021). All religious character strengthening activities must be documented, such as for example having to report to the mapel group whatsapp when performing prayers, reciting the Koran to breaking fast and sahur during Ramadan.
3	Post pandemic	Blended Learning (50% online, 50% face-to-face)	Post-pandemic is a transitional period, where things that were online are now starting to go offline again. Including learning activities, where 50% of the number of students in each class, go to school for face-to-face learning, while the remaining 50% take part in online learning from their respective homes. This system will be rolled out every week, so that everyone can feel the impact.

3. Factors that support and hinder the strengthening of religious character in Al-Islam and Kemuhammadiyah subjects with the blended learning method during the new normal period after the pandemic

- a. Supporting factors for the implementation of the religious character strengthening program

"It is inseparable from the supporting factors for the implementation of the program, namely the first, the school implements 2 curricula, namely the national curriculum and the Muhammadiyah curriculum. Muhammadiyah 16 Junior High School as one of the schools initiating various advancements in the academic and non-academic fields. The National Curriculum and the Muhammadiyah curriculum are the strengths of Muhammadiyah 16 Junior High School. As well as being included with various excellent programs. So this school has a character building guide for its students. second, the primary role of parents as the first and foremost educators for their children. So that when the role of parents is entrusted to the teacher, the teacher becomes a substitute parent while the children are at school. When the learning process takes place, the parents of students at school are the teachers and all the employees in it. They all fulfill their duties as parents in guiding as well as being teachers as facilitators of studying. The third is that school infrastructure is part of the national standard of education. Being one of the important factors of education. With adequate facilities, it will be easy to carry out the teaching and learning process. facilities and infrastructure that supports and adequately contributes to the success of the learning process. This includes learning media and school social media." (Interview with Principal)

From the results of the interview with the principal, there are 3 points of supporting factors for the strategy of strengthening religious character, namely:

1. Usage 2 Curriculum

SMP 16 Muhammadiyah Surabaya uses two curricula, the national curriculum and the Muhammadiyah curriculum. The national curriculum is followed because SMP Muhammadiyah 16 Surabaya is a national standard school (SSN). Then, the Muhammadiyah curriculum is used because Muhammadiyah is thick with Islamic values, in accordance with the religious character that is being developed (Salma & Mustofa, 2023).

2. The role of teachers as parents at school

As the saying "Al ummu Al Madrasatul Ula" which means that mothers are the first school for their children. The synergy between parents and teachers is one of the main factors supporting the strengthening of students' religious character (Wahyuni & Bhattacharya, 2021). When parents entrust their children to study at SMP 16 Muhammadiyah Surabaya, the teachers and all employees in this school automatically act as good parents (Diana et al., 2021).

3. School Facilities and Infrastructure

School facilities are also a supporting factor for children to increase comfort while learning. The existence of a mosque as a religious laboratory for children adds to their attractiveness so that they are more comfortable carrying out the learning process. Furthermore, there is a *tahsinul Qur'an* room that provides adequate Qur'ans for all children, so that they can all recite the Qur'an together.

b. Factors inhibiting the implementation of the character strengthening program

1. Environmental Background

The background of the community, family and the environment around students also influences the religious character strengthening program, which is an inhibiting

factor in instilling this character in students. As stated by the Vice Principal for Curriculum when interviewed:

"The social environment of students varies. There are those whose society is indifferent to religious character and there are also those whose families do not heed the building of children's religious character. Everything is actually left to the school without sustainable synergy. Meanwhile, students spend the most time in the family and community. This is a serious concern if there is no sustainable and continuous cooperation between the community and schools and families, then the religious character of students will look good at school but have no impact on society and family." (Interview with the vice principal for curriculum)

From the description above, it can be seen that the background of different students or whose environment is not supportive of children's character can cause obstacles to strengthening religious character in children. This is due to the inequality of the child's environmental foundation. Therefore, there are several reflective solutions that schools can apply, such as involving parents in the process of strengthening religious character by increasing parenting capacity, assigning daily minutes so that teachers always monitoring students' daily lives and emphasizing the role of counseling guidance teachers in communication and personal supervision of students.

2. Diverse Parental Understandings

The family is the smallest and most important entity in a society and social fabric. Families play a very important role in sowing the best characters for their children. The classification of families in SPEMNAS can be categorized into 2 groups. The first is families who fully surrender to the school because the family does not have good educational standards for building the character of their children. The second group understands and has educational standards in the family including for the cultivation of their children's character but does not have a strategy to implement this so they need schools such as SMP Muhammadiyah 16 to help realize their standards (Silva, 2021).

In this case, all of them have the potential to cause problems. In the first category, the family environment could be potentially dependent on the school, unable to create a strong support environment for building children's character. In the second category, the family already has awareness, but without a good strategy, the character building environment will be less effective. A reflective solution that can be done is to provide seminars or intense discussions with parents about creating a good environment for children's character. In addition, the provision of daily modules is also necessary for parents, so that it can be one of the school's monitoring to parents to ensure a character strengthening environment for children. Finally, intensive communication between teachers and parents can also be implemented, for example the formation of a WhatsApp group so that teachers or homeroom teachers can always communicate with parents (Nopia et al., 2022).

3. Student Laziness

"The children's habit of lying down makes them a little lazy when they are first told to attend school. They prefer to be at home with their android phones but still be able to go to school. Some are happy to attend school but are constrained by cellphones, most of which do not support accessing various educational platforms or accessing Google Classroom, which includes the AL Islam and Muhammadiyah module. There are also those who have supported cellphones but do not have

enough data packages to access all digital learning. And it is also impossible to always ask parents for more money." (Interview with AIK Teacher)

From the above narrative, From the above narrative, it can be concluded that students have begun to feel unmotivated to go to school. They now prefer to prefer to stay glued to their phone screens, because of the online school habit for 2 years. In addition, there are also some problems related to their devices, there are some students' devices that do not support accessing Google Classroom, then there are also those who do not have data packages. Things like that also cause their own challenges in strengthening religious character. Some solutions that can be applied are providing a transition period for students so that they can adjust again from habits to school regulations. Furthermore, providing learning variations so that students can return to their learning mood again (Guanzon, 2024).

So far, the responses from some students have shown positive reviews regarding strengthening religious character with the blended learning method (Rahmawati et al., 2023). Some of them have understood the post-pandemic conditions that force them to study online for a week and then study offline for another week. In the midst of this recovery era, they have felt a little helped by the transition period provided by the school, restarting old habits that have been abandoned is not as easy as one might think, especially when faced with children. Therefore, unexpectedly they can understand a little about the learning outcomes that Spemnas is promoting (Pramita et al., 2022). They remain obedient to the commands from the teacher delivered, such as filling out an activity report book, providing photographic evidence via whatsapp when carrying out activities. Their level of religiosity is maintained even in the midst of limited conditions.

Conclusion

Religious character building for students at SMP Muhammadiyah 16 Surabaya before the pandemic, during the pandemic and after the pandemic has undergone significant changes. Before the pandemic, religious character strengthening was carried out in full face-to-face, during the pandemic everything shifted to digital platforms, then in the post-pandemic period it was divided into 2 sessions, 50% of students face-to-face and the remaining 50% online, also known as blended learning. The strategies used to strengthen religious character at SMP 16 Muhammadiyah Surabaya are habituation, exemplary, monitoring, and evaluation. supported by five key programs, namely *Imamah*, *Jum'un*, *Sabamusi*, *Mobile Recitation*, *Pesanta*. Furthermore, there are supporting factors which include the use of 2 curricula, the role of teachers as parents of students at school, and adequate school infrastructure. Finally, there are inhibiting factors, namely environmental background, various understandings from parents and the emergence of student laziness.

The theoretical contribution of this research lies in the reinterpretation of the concept of strengthening religious character within the scope of the blended learning model. Meanwhile, in the previous approach, strengthening religious character was more emphasized on face-to-face learning. So this study shows that collaboration between online and offline learning can also be one of the effective solutions in strengthening students' religious character, especially in Al-Islam and *Kemuhammadiyah* subjects in the new normal.

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