Strategies for Fostering Prosocial Behavior: A Mixed Methods Study in Indonesian Islamic Schools

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This article aims to analyze the influence of the Islamic school environment on students' prosocial behavior, with an emphasis on the integration of religious values in learning strategies and school policies.

Design/methods/approach – This study used a sequential explanatory mixed-method design involving 445 students, four principals, and eight teachers from four Islamic junior high schools. The quantitative stage used structured questionnaires to assess prosocial behavior, school climate, and classroom learning practices. The qualitative stage involved interviews with principals and teachers to provide contextual understanding.

Findings – Quantitative results show that the school atmosphere explains 27.2% of the variation in students' prosocial behavior (R^2 = .272). The most influential factors are peer relationships (β = .173), sense of belonging (β = .148), and interpersonal justice (β = .123). For classroom practices, positive teaching (β = .353) and teacher encouragement (β = .113) made significant contributions. Qualitative findings support these results, with teachers and principals citing programs such as 5S, study groups, and Friday donations as effective ways to foster empathy, cooperation, and concern among students.

Research implications/limitations – This study highlights the importance of an Islamic-based environment in encouraging prosocial behavior, although the findings may not be generalized to non-Islamic educational contexts.

Originality/value – This study offers valuable insights into the intersection between religion and education, and contributes to strategies for developing prosocial behavior in Islamic school.

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Introduction

Prosocial behaviors such as helping, sharing, and cooperating are important aspects of students' social development and academic success. Amid the complexities of school life, students' ability to show empathy and social responsibility can strengthen interpersonal relationships and improve psychological well-being. Research shows that prosocial behavior is positively correlated with learning engagement and a supportive classroom atmosphere (Arslan, 2021; Saodi, 2024; Wikman et al., 2022). Attitudes such as compassion, tolerance, and helpfulness are essential in creating a positive learning community. Unfortunately, many educational institutions are still focused solely on cognitive achievement, so the development of social character has not become a systemic priority. Therefore, schools need to design strategies that not only shape academic skills but also foster students' social sensitivity through policies, school climate, and learning approaches centered on human values and social responsibility.

Islamic schools have a special mandate to shape students' character through the integration of knowledge and religious values (Cahyadi et al., 2025). Islamic teachings emphasize compassion, solidarity, and care for others, which are reflected in the concepts of *rahmah, ukhuwah islamiyah*, and charitable practices such as *zakat* and *shadaqah* (Awad, 2023; Fadhli & Sirait, 2019). These values are not only taught theoretically in the curriculum, but also instilled through daily routines such as communal prayers, social activities, and the habit of polite behavior. In the context of this study, the Islamic schools studied are formal Islamic-based secondary institutions that combine the national curriculum with the strengthening of religious character education. This context provides an important foundation for understanding how Islamic values are integrated into the formation of students' prosocial behavior through a holistic education system.

Studies on prosocial behavior in schools have mostly focused on secular contexts and have not systematically addressed religion-based approaches. Research shows that a warm classroom climate and supportive teaching styles can encourage prosocial behavior in students (Cuadra-Martínez, 2020; Huda, 2024; Liu, 2021). Other studies emphasize the importance of community-based interventions and social projects as a means of developing empathy. However, there has been little research highlighting how Islamic values are integrated into the school environment to foster empathy and social cooperation. In Islamic schools, moral and spiritual principles are the main foundation for character building (Saidi et al., 2025). Therefore, an in-depth exploration of religious-based educational practices is important to understand the dimensions of prosociality in a more contextual and comprehensive manner.

Research on prosocial behavior in schools can be categorized into three main areas: intervention strategies and programs, the role of teachers and the classroom environment, and individual factors. The first area explores practical approaches such as project-based learning and community service to develop prosocial behavior (Kanacri, 2020; Sünbül, 2021). The second area examines how teacher training, classroom management, and constructive feedback influence prosocial behavior (Bos, 2018; Cheon, 2023; Pun, 2023). The third area focuses on individual factors such as empathy and peer influence, which also

affect students' prosocial behavior (Chávez, 2022; Maiya, 2020; McKeown, 2018). Based on these areas, this study specifically focuses on how the role of teachers and the classroom environment in Islamic schools shape prosocial behavior, with particular attention to the integration of religious values.

Prosocial behavior includes concrete actions such as helping and sharing, as well as affective dimensions such as empathy, compassion, and responsibility that motivate these actions (Hodge, 2021; Raaper, 2022). Schools play an important role in fostering both of these aspects through a supportive general climate and meaningful classroom activities. A positive school atmosphere, characterized by healthy social norms and close relationships between students and teachers, fosters a sense of belonging and mutual respect that encourages engagement in prosocial behavior (Inagaki, 2020; Kolavarambath, 2020). Activities such as group projects, role-playing, and social discussions provide students with hands-on experiences to build cooperation and understand other people's perspectives (Bentley-Edwards, 2020; González-Moreno, 2023). Thus, schools that are able to integrate relational dimensions and contextual learning have great potential in shaping students' social character holistically.

Islamic schools face unique challenges and opportunities in cultivating prosocial behavior among students, as they must integrate religious obligations, such as daily prayers, *zakat* education, and community service, into the demands of a modern curriculum (Baharun et al., 2022; Muhammad, 2024; Nur-Awaleh, 2022). This creates a distinct pedagogical challenge not typically encountered in secular schools. Integrating religious teachings with educational practices is essential for shaping students' moral and social development (Ikhrom et al., 2023; Mas'ud et al., 2019; Nurtawab, 2022). Although previous studies have examined prosocial behavior in the school environment in general (Mujahid, 2021; Suyatno et al., 2022a), research on the specific role of Islamic education in fostering such behavior is still limited.

This fills that gap by analyzing how the school environment influences prosocial behavior in Islamic schools, with a focus on school atmosphere and classroom strategies. In addition, differences in interpreting Islamic principles create inconsistencies in prosocial development. Although core Islamic values such as helping others and showing empathy are widely accepted, variations can arise in how schools operationalize these values—such as whether prosocial activities are formalized as a component of the curriculum or left to be part of extracurricular activities (Hasan, 2020; Ruslin et al., 2023). This study addresses this gap by analyzing how the school environment influences prosocial behavior in Islamic schools, identifying key factors in the school atmosphere and classroom strategies that shape students' social behavior.

This study aims to analyze how the Islamic school environment influences students' prosocial behavior through the school atmosphere and teaching practices that integrate Islamic values. A sequential mixed-methods design was used to obtain quantitative data from students and qualitative data from teachers and principals. The main focus is on student relationships, student-teacher interactions, interpersonal justice, and teaching methods that encourage empathy, cooperation, and social responsibility. This study also

evaluates how religious values are operationalized in classroom activities and school policies. With this approach, the study is expected to contribute to the development of a research-based Islamic character education model that is relevant to the social needs of students in the modern era.

Method

This section describes the methods used in this study, which consist of five main components: research design, research subjects and sampling techniques, research instruments, data collection procedures, and data analysis. Each component is described to provide clarity on how this study was conducted and how data were obtained and interpreted. The integration of quantitative and qualitative approaches aims to ensure the validity and depth of findings regarding students' prosocial behavior in the context of Islamic schools.

Research Design.

This study uses a sequential explanatory mixed-method design, which combines quantitative and qualitative data collection phases in sequence (Creswell, 2014). This approach was chosen because it provides a comprehensive understanding of students' prosocial behavior, both in terms of general tendencies and the underlying contextual meanings. In the context of Islamic schools, prosocial behavior is not only expressed in actions but is also influenced by internalized religious values. Therefore, quantitative data is needed to measure the relationship between variables broadly, while qualitative data is used to explore how Islamic values are implemented in teaching and student habits. The combination of these two approaches ensures that the research results are statistically valid and contextually relevant to the reality of Islamic education.

Research Subject and Sampling Techniques

The quantitative phase involved 445 students as research samples from two junior high schools (MTs and Islamic junior high schools) and two senior high schools (MA and Islamic senior high schools). These four schools were selected purposively because they were considered to represent the spectrum of Islamic school types based on education level, institutional status (public and private), and geographical location (urban and rural). In addition, these schools were known to have active Islamic-based character building programs and provided full access to the data collection process. In the qualitative phase, 12 informants were interviewed, consisting of four school principals and eight teachers, two teachers per school. Informants were selected purposively based on their involvement in character building and the integration of Islamic values in teaching and school policies. Detailed profiles of the informants are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Demographic profiles of informants

No	Initials	Age	Gender	Experience	Role
1	RAA	54	Male	21 years	High School Principal

2	SMM	48	Male	16 years	High School Principal
3	ANN	48	Male	10 years	Civics Teacher
4	AMP	49	Male	12 years	English Teacher
5	AYC	40	Female	12 years	Math Teacher
6	AYS	45	Female	9 years	Chemistry Teacher
7	NSS	55	Female	22 years	Junior High School Principal
8	NDS	52	Female	18 years	Vice Principal of Junior High School
9	RMT	49	Female	10 years	Guidance and Counseling Teacher
10	AAH	48	Male	10 years	Social Studies Teacher
11	MBM	47	Male	11 years	Islamic Education Teacher
12	RSN	29	Male	6 years	Natural Sciences Teacher

Research Instruments

The quantitative phase used two main instruments that were structured with proven validity and reliability. The first instrument was a prosocial behavior scale adapted from Luengo Kanacri et al. (2021), which consisted of 16 items divided into two dimensions: 12 items measured prosocial activities and 4 items measured prosocial feelings. The second instrument is a multidimensional school atmosphere scale adapted from Grazia and Molinari (2020), consisting of a total of 49 items. The quantitative phase used two main instruments that were structured and proven to be valid and reliable. The prosocial behavior scale consisted of 16 items adapted from Luengo Kanacri et al. (2021), covering two aspects: 12 items to measure prosocial actions and 4 items to assess prosocial feelings. Meanwhile, the school atmosphere scale consists of two main dimensions: (1) general school atmosphere (22 items) and (2) classroom practices (27 items), adapted from Grazia and Molinari (2020). The general atmosphere dimension includes student relationships, student-teacher relationships, sense of belonging, interpersonal justice, and educational climate. The classroom practices dimension measures positive teaching, teacher support, student engagement, classroom rules, encouragement, and classroom management. All scales showed high reliability with Cronbach's Alpha values above .80. In the qualitative phase, semi-structured interview guides were developed based on initial quantitative findings to explore contextual insights and further explanations.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was conducted in two phases. During the quantitative phase, questionnaires were distributed to students and completed during scheduled class periods over a two-week period. After the data was initially analyzed, the qualitative phase began. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with selected informants, each lasting approximately 60 minutes and recorded for transcription purposes. The semi-structured interview guide included questions about strategies for promoting prosocial behavior, the role of Islamic values in teaching, and school policies related to character development. This two-phase approach provided a broad and in-depth understanding and strengthened the validity of the findings through methodological triangulation.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, median, standard deviation) to describe students' perceptions of school atmosphere and prosocial behavior. Linear regression analysis was then applied to examine the influence of indicators such as student-teacher relationships, interpersonal justice, and positive teaching practices on prosocial behavior. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis based on the framework of Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process included six main steps: (1) transcription and thorough reading of the data, (2) systematic initial coding, (3) search for meaningful themes, (4) review of themes against the data, (5) definition and naming of themes, and (6) integrative thematic narrative construction. The integration of both types of data was carried out to obtain a holistic understanding of the influence of the school environment on prosocial behavior.

Results and Discussion

This results and discussion section presents a detailed description of the research findings. First, we present the results of the descriptive demographic analysis of the research subjects in the next section. Then we discuss the quantitative results regarding the role of the school atmosphere and classroom learning practices in improving prosocial behavior, supplemented with data from teachers regarding the strategies they use to encourage this development. Finally, we explore the impact of classroom activities on prosocial behavior, supported by qualitative data from teachers regarding the specific strategies they implement.

1. Student Demographic Profile

This section provides a comprehensive description of the subjects' demographic variables and conditions. These demographics include various factors, such as gender, which identifies whether the subject is male or female, and education level, which indicates the highest level of education the subject has achieved. In addition, grade level refers to the year or level the subject is currently enrolled in their educational program. Another important demographic factor is age, which details the age of the subjects to understand the distribution across different age groups.

Table 2. Subject Profile in Quantitative Research (N=445)

Subject profile	N	%	Prosocial		School climate		Class activities	
			Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Gender								
1. Male	144	32.4	63.9	9.4	86.8	12.4	100.4	13.7
2. Female	301	67.6	63.2	9.1	85.8	11.8	100.2	14.3
Educational level								
1. Junior High School	225	50.6	63.5	8.5	85.4	11.3	98.1	14.2

		N	%						
2.	Senior High School	220	49.4	63.4	9.8	86.9	12.7	102.5	13.7
Grade									
1.	Grades 7-8	111	25	64.6	8.8	89.6	11.8	105.1	12.1
2.	Grades 9-10	170	38.2	62.5	9.2	85.5	11.5	99.5	14.8
3.	Grades 11-12	164	36.8	63.4	8.9	84.6	11.5	97.6	13.3
Age									
1.	12 years	27	6.1	67.3	7.8	94.1	9.3	109.8	11.1
2.	13 years	54	12.1	63.2	9.9	87.1	13.2	102.2	13.5
3.	14 years	97	21.8	62.6	11.7	85.3	11.1	101.9	12.6
4.	15 years	77	17.3	63.3	8.8	85.6	11.3	99.5	15.2
5.	16 years	91	20.4	64.2	8.7	85.9	11.1	97.5	16.3
6.	17 years	82	18.4	63.2	9.3	86.1	12.1	97.6	12.2
7.	18 years	17	3.8	63.1	6.4	84.5	12.1	100.1	12.2

Table 2 shows the demographic distribution of students and their average scores for prosocial behavior, perceptions of school atmosphere, and classroom practices. In general, the differences in prosocial scores between genders and educational levels are relatively small. However, male students and senior high school students reported slightly higher perceptions of school atmosphere.

A more prominent pattern is seen in the variables of age and grade level. Students in grades 7–8 and those aged 12–13 years show the highest prosocial scores, along with more positive perceptions of the school atmosphere and classroom practices. This indicates that the younger the students are, the higher their tendency to exhibit prosocial behavior and positive perceptions of the learning environment. These findings provide initial indications that age development may be associated with a decline in the spontaneity of prosocial behavior, which needs to be further examined in the context of values education.

2. School Atmosphere and Students' Prosocial Behavior

The results of the regression analysis show a moderate relationship between school climate and prosocial behavior, with $R = .521$ and $R^2 = .272$. This indicates that approximately 27.2% of the variability in the dependent variable is explained by the model, while the remaining 72.8% is explained by factors outside the model. ANOVA analysis confirmed the statistical significance of the model ($F = 32.789$; $p < .05$), with the independent variables contributing significantly to the dependent variable. However, the Std. Error of the Estimate of 8.25745 indicates a deviation between the predicted and actual values. Although this model provides valuable insights, further exploration of additional variables is recommended to improve accuracy and predictive power.

Table 3. School Atmosphere and Prosocial Behavior

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		

1	(Constant)	25.984	3.223		8.063	.000
	Student Relationships	.479	.133	.173	3.598	.000
	Student-Teacher Relationship	.430	.193	.129	2.232	.026
	Learning environment	.358	.190	.112	1.882	.061
	Sense of Belonging	.500	.178	.148	2.813	.005
	Interpersonal Justice	.395	.169	.123	2.344	.020

Interpersonal relationships among students showed the strongest influence (β = .173, p < .001), followed by a sense of belonging (β = .148, p = .005), student-teacher relationships (β = .129, p = .026), and interpersonal justice (β = .123, p = .020). Meanwhile, the learning climate (β = .112, p = .061) was not statistically significant. These findings indicate that building healthy social interactions and strengthening a sense of belonging at school are effective strategies for encouraging positive social behavior among students. Therefore, character development programs in Islamic schools should prioritize activities that foster familiarity, empathy, and fairness in relationships among school members. School policies that instill values of fairness and strengthen positive communication between students and teachers are believed to contribute significantly to the formation of sustainable prosocial character.

Interviews with school principals and teachers reinforce these quantitative results. They explained that value-based approaches such as donation activities, social service programs, and the practice of Islamic manners are strategic ways to strengthen social relationships at school. For example, student involvement in socially oriented extracurricular activities is seen as an effective means of strengthening empathy and cooperation. This shows that Islamic values function not only as moral norms but also as social drivers in the school environment. The following are some statements that illustrate this view:

> "The school's policy in developing students' social awareness is implemented through educational programs to foster noble character. Our strategies include active student involvement in extracurricular activities such as scouting, community service, and charity events such as donations." (RAA interview)

> "As principal, I emphasize our commitment to developing students' prosocial behavior through comprehensive school policies. We have implemented routines and practices that instill religious and social values. Our policies support the integration of character education and social responsibility into daily activities, encouraging empathy, cooperation, and respect. In addition, our school fosters a culture of literacy and encourages students to engage in community service, strengthening their commitment to social and moral development." (SMM interview)

Statements of teachers indicate that they have fostered the development of prosocial behavior among students at school. Subjects 3 (ANN) and 4 (AMP) emphasized the importance of building strong relationships, while subjects 5 (AYC) and 6 (AYS) highlighted the importance of the academic environment.

> "We emphasize the importance of building strong interpersonal connections among students and creating an inclusive environment. By promoting a sense of

belonging and meaningful interaction, we aim to form a supportive school community where empathy and cooperation can flourish." (ANN interview)

"In creating a positive environment for developing prosocial behavior, we organize activities such as community service on the school's anniversary and maintain nearby places of worship such as mosques and prayer rooms, which are funded by the school. In addition, we encourage social involvement by visiting bereaved families in the community and strengthening social relationships through regular visits and social interaction." (AMP interview)

"Our school focuses on developing harmonious relationships among students and between students and teachers. We do this through programs such as community service projects, collaborative learning, and discussions on social issues." (AYC interview)

"We encourage students to work together in various activities to develop prosocial behavior. For example, high-achieving students are encouraged to help their peers through a peer tutoring program, which promotes mutual support and learning. In addition, group projects and practical assignments must be completed collaboratively, fostering cooperation, collaboration, and shared responsibility." (AYS interview)

3. Classroom Activities and Students' Prosocial Behavior

The regression analysis results show that classroom practices have a statistically significant, albeit moderate, relationship with students' prosocial behavior. The model is significant at $p < .001$ (F = 32.789; df = 5,.439), explaining approximately 27.2% of the variance (R^2 = .272). However, the adjusted R^2 value of .264 and the standard error of 8.257 indicate that there are other variables that have not been explored that may also contribute to the development of prosocial behavior. The complete data are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. Classroom activities and prosocial behavior

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	30.608	2.982		10.266	.000
Rules	.188	.117	.086	1.609	.108
Student support	.228	.158	.083	1.447	.149
Student involvement	-.050	.171	-.018	-.294	.769
Positive teaching	1.032	.179	.353	5.769	.000
Teacher encouragement	.524	.254	.113	2.063	.040
Classroom management	-.114	.110	-.046	-1.039	.299

Table 4 shows that the results of the regression analysis indicate that only two of the six classroom practice indicators significantly predict students' prosocial behavior, namely positive teaching (B = 1.032, p < .001) and teacher encouragement (B = .524, p =

.040). Meanwhile, other indicators such as classroom rules, student support, classroom management, and especially student involvement did not show a significant relationship with prosocial behavior (p > .05). In fact, student involvement had a small and insignificant negative coefficient. These findings indicate that a positive teaching approach and consistent encouragement from teachers play a key role in fostering healthy social behavior. Conversely, simply involving students actively in classroom activities does not automatically contribute to an increase in prosocial behavior, especially if it is not accompanied by a reflective and value-based approach.

Interviews with teachers reinforced these findings, emphasizing the importance of role modeling, reinforcement of values, and empathetic communication over mere student activity. This suggests that the quality of interaction and the values conveyed in classroom activities are more important than the quantity of engagement itself.

> "One of the school programs to develop prosocial behavior in the classroom is by implementing the 5S slogan (Smile, Greet, Say Hello, Be Polite, and Be Courteous). This program is expected to create a friendly and harmonious classroom atmosphere." (NSS Interview)

> "As Vice Principal, we develop students' prosocial behavior starting in the classroom. We form study groups to encourage students to help each other and build strong bonds. We also promote a donation program every Friday to help friends in need. This practice helps students express their concern directly and naturally, and strengthens their social empathy." (NDS Interview)

Statements from four teachers also indicate that they are active in encouraging the development of prosocial behavior among students at school. Subjects 9 (RMT) and 10 (AAH) emphasize the importance of positive teaching, while subjects 11 (MBM) and 12 (RSN) highlight the important role of teacher support. The following statements illustrate this:

> "One strategy for developing prosocial behavior in students is to use positive teaching methods and provide strong support. We provide personal guidance, mentoring, and constructive feedback to foster students' self-confidence. By creating a classroom atmosphere full of empathy and mutual respect, we equip students with the skills and confidence to bring about positive change in society." (RMT Interview)

> "Creating an inclusive and respectful classroom is essential for fostering prosocial behavior in students and building meaningful relationships. We encourage open dialogue, embrace diversity, and cultivate acceptance to create a safe space for students. Collaborative projects and various activities build a sense of responsibility and empathy that extends beyond the classroom." (AAH Interview)

> "I develop prosocial behavior in students by setting a direct example. I often remind, encourage, and show students the importance of disposing of trash in its proper place. This method is effective because students tend to imitate real actions rather than just verbal instructions." (MBM Interview)

"An effective strategy for building students' social character is through teacher support, namely by instilling empathy from an early age, teaching tolerance, and encouraging group work." (RSN Interview)

Qualitative analysis results show that two school leaders and four teachers emphasized the importance of developing students' prosocial behavior. School leaders highlighted policies and programs such as the "5S" slogan to create a friendly classroom atmosphere. The vice principal discussed the formation of study groups and Friday donation programs as a means of showing direct concern. Teachers emphasized the importance of positive teaching methods, strong support, and an inclusive and appreciative classroom environment. They mentioned personal guidance, mentoring, and constructive feedback to foster students' self-confidence and encourage positive change in society. Instilling responsibility and empathy through collaborative projects and joint activities was also emphasized. Setting a direct example, such as disposing of trash properly, was considered effective. Teachers' support in instilling empathy from an early age, teaching tolerance, and encouraging group work is considered very important in the development of students' social character.

In general, the findings of this study indicate that the school atmosphere and classroom practices play an important role in supporting the development of students' prosocial behavior. Factors such as social relationships, a sense of belonging to the school, interpersonal justice, and positive teaching strategies appear consistently in both quantitative and qualitative data. In this context, the social relationships formed among students are the key to the growth of social awareness and responsibility. A sense of belonging to the school encourages students to become more emotionally involved, which in turn strengthens their desire to contribute positively to the surrounding community. González-Moreno (2023) and Ivanez (2023) emphasize that social attachment at school is an important factor in encouraging prosocial behavior, as it creates collective norms that encourage mutual assistance. In Islamic schools, this attachment is not only psychological but also spiritual, as students feel part of a faith community that emphasizes compassion and solidarity. This kind of social environment provides a solid foundation for character building.

However, student relationships cannot develop optimally without the active role of teachers in creating a supportive classroom climate. Teachers are not only learning managers but also role models who demonstrate how values are manifested in actions. Findings show that positive teaching and encouragement from teachers are important elements in triggering prosocial engagement. Lutfauziah (2024) states that a supportive and affirmative teaching approach can consistently foster empathy and social responsibility. In practice, teacher-student interactions in Islamic schools are framed by religious values that make pedagogical relationships more meaningful. This role becomes even more strategic when teachers are also involved in instilling religious values in daily activities.

The instilling Islamic values does not only take place verbally, but also through habits formed in school routines. Values such as *rahmah, ta'awun, and amanah* are instilled through concrete practices such as social activities, mutual cooperation, and daily

manners. This experience-based approach allows students to internalize values not only as norms but also as part of their identity (Saripudin, 2015; Sujarwo, 2021). In line with this statement, Awad (2023) and Saepudin (2023) emphasize the importance of exemplary behavior and consistency in internalizing Islamic values. When these values are presented tangibly in the school environment, students have the space to practice them in their social lives. Therefore, the success of character education greatly depends on how schools present values in a lively and down-to-earth manner.

To compare broader literature, the results of this study show both consistency and added value. For example, studies by Paluck (2016) and Cheon (2023) emphasize the importance of classroom climate and social support in encouraging prosocial behavior in students. This study adds that the spiritual dimension, which occurs through the internalization of Islamic values, acts as a distinctive and profound moral reinforcement. Islamic schools Islamic schools do not only shape social habits but also reinforce religious orientation that gives spiritual meaning to prosocial actions. The results of this study do not only confirm previous findings but also broaden our understanding of how religious contexts enrich the character-building process in schools.

The implications of these findings are highly relevant to the development of character education in Islamic schools. There needs to be a strengthening of policies that emphasize the importance of a fair, inclusive, and value-consistent school climate. Teachers need to be supported through ongoing training to be able to integrate Islamic values into a reflective pedagogical approach (Hajovsky, 2020; Sangrà, 2019). In addition, experience-based character programs must be tailored to the age and background of students to be more effective. Tsani et al. (Tsani et al., 2024) show that successful value cultivation always depends on the synergy between institutional vision and daily practice. Therefore, building a system that consciously and continuously presents values in the learning space is an important agenda in Islamic education.

Finally, this study confirms that students' prosocial behavior develops through a combination of healthy social interactions, supportive teaching practices, and the internalization of religious values in school life. With a mixed approach, this study provides a holistic picture of the factors that shape students' social character in an Islamic context. The integration of structural and spiritual dimensions not only strengthens the effectiveness of character education but also deepens the meaning of students' social actions (Anam & Setyawan, 2019; Suriyadi et al., 2021). Therefore, schools need to develop contextual and adaptive value-based strategies. Further research is needed to design and test more specific and applicable educational interventions to strengthen the role of schools as agents in shaping an empathetic and responsible generation.

Conclusion

This study confirms that prosocial behavior among students in Islamic schools is shaped by a combination of a conducive school atmosphere, positive classroom practices, and the integration of Islamic values into daily life. Factors such as student relationships, a sense of belonging, interpersonal justice, positive teaching strategies, and teacher support

have been shown to play a significant role. Islamic values such as rahmah, ta'awun, and amanah are not only taught theoretically but are also embodied in habits that shape character. This demonstrates the importance of a holistic approach that combines psychosocial, pedagogical, and spiritual aspects to strengthen character education in Islamic schools.

As a result, religious-based schools need to develop policies and programs that encourage healthy social relationships, instill values, and strengthen teachers' capacity to build empathetic interactions. Activities such as social projects, study groups, and instilling good manners can be part of the school culture. However. This study was only conducted at four schools and used a cross-sectional design. Therefore further researches with a longitudinal approach and a more diverse context are needed, including Islamic boarding schools and madrasas. In addition, future research are also needed to test the effectiveness of Islamic value-based interventions more systematically so that the resulting character education is contextual, adaptive, and has a real impact.

Declarations

Author contribution statement

MSH was responsible for conceptualization and data collection; RA prepared the original draft; FLN contributed to the methodology; and MM and FN managed the review and editing; NIA proofreading and language review. All authors reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

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Data availability statement

The dataset obtained and analyzed during this study is available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

Declaration of interests statement

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this article. There are no financial or personal relationships that could influence the results of this study.

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