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## **Parenting Style and Religious Character: The Mediating Role of Worship Discipline**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates the influence of parenting styles on students' religious character, with worship discipline as a mediating factor. It addresses a research gap by integrating parenting and religious habituation into a single model of character formation. Using a quantitative approach with correlational-verification design, the study surveyed 200 junior high school students in Cianjur, Indonesia. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that parenting style has a significant effect on both worship discipline and religious character, with worship discipline acting as a partial mediator. The model demonstrates good fit and predictive relevance ( $Q^2 > 0.5$ ), highlighting the crucial role of family-based religious routines. These findings suggest that religious character can be strengthened through consistent parental involvement and structured spiritual practices at home. The study offers a novel empirical contribution by positioning worship discipline as a behavioral bridge between parenting and religious values in youth development.

**Keywords:** Parenting, Worship Discipline, Religious Character

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## INTRODUCTION

Religious character is one of the fundamental components in shaping an individual's overall personality, encompassing moral reasoning, ethical behavior, and spiritual awareness. It reflects the extent to which a person internalizes religious teachings and applies them in everyday life. According to recent research, religious character is defined as a person's thoughts, words, and actions based on religious understanding and divine values, which foster obedience in worship, tolerance, and harmonious relationships with others (Ali et al., 2023). Developing this character requires intentional effort through education and consistent daily practices. Teachers play a critical role in this process by serving as educators, mentors, and role models, guiding students in religious practices and instilling values such as honesty, discipline, and empathy (Primandini & Sunarso, 2025). Furthermore, Rosadi et al., (2024) emphasized that school policy plays a strategic role in shaping students' religious character. Additionally, parenting also contributes significantly to early character formation, especially through democratic styles that integrate religious values into daily life routines (Izzatunnisa & Mutiawati, 2024). Research also supports the use of theoretical construction models in measuring religious character based on intellect, belief, rituals, and moral actions to systematically build educational strategies (Hajaroh et al., 2023).

Despite the acknowledged importance of religious character, a significant decline in religious attitudes among children and adolescents is observable. The Ministry of Religious Affairs in Indonesia reported that while the national religious moderation index stands at 74.9, the tolerance dimension scored the lowest at 60.6, revealing a lack of mutual respect in religious life (Triono, 2023). Additionally, the SETARA Institute recorded 155 violations of religious freedom across 26 provinces in 2017 (Naipospos, 2018). These figures indicate ongoing challenges in fostering a religiously tolerant and morally upright generation. Furthermore, previous studies have generally explored the role of either parenting or religious practices in isolation, often neglecting how these variables might interact. There is a clear gap in understanding how religious character develops within the family context through both parenting styles and consistent religious discipline. Literature also reflects inconsistencies in findings—some studies report a strong influence of parenting on children's religiosity, while others find weaker or non-significant correlations.

Although social data indicate a decline in religious attitudes among younger generations, numerous studies affirm that teachers continue to hold a strategic role in shaping students' religious character. Teachers serve as role models who demonstrate religious values through daily behavior and interactions with students, making exemplary conduct a cornerstone of character education (Cohen-Malayev, Schachter, & Rich, 2014; Wasehudin et al., 2024). This role is not confined to formal instruction but also includes integrating religious values into non-religious subjects, such as physical education, which has been shown to foster faith, piety, and tolerance (Muhtar, Supriyadi, Lengkana, & Hanifah, 2019). Moreover, teachers are involved in the development of religious education materials based on religious moderation to prevent intolerance and radicalism (Maemonah, Zuhri, Masturin, Syafii, & Aziz, 2023). In addition, teachers' personal beliefs and spirituality influence their pedagogical approaches, including in interfaith contexts, as observed in Catholic schools in Ireland and South Korea (Cho & Heinz, 2025). However, other studies highlight the challenges teachers face in balancing personal beliefs with professional responsibilities, thereby emphasizing the need for continuous professional development to enable them to integrate religious values effectively into the curriculum (Nelson & Yang, 2023; Zakiyyah, 2024). Overall, teachers have been found to significantly foster positive student behaviors such as honesty, environmental concern, and tolerance (Harisa, 2019; Sastra Negara, Hidayat, & Mulkhan, 2024), although most studies remain focused on the formal school setting without sufficiently linking this role to family factors or parenting practices.

Beyond the role of teachers in schools, other studies demonstrate that parenting styles are also a crucial factor in shaping children's religiosity. Previous research shows that parental religiosity often correlates with parenting practices, though the relationship is not always consistent. For example, a study in the Netherlands found a weak relationship between parental religiosity and parenting goals such as fostering children's autonomy (Vermeer, 2011), while another study revealed that religiosity was positively associated with adaptive parenting styles and conservation-oriented goals (Duriez, Soenens, Neyrinck, & Vansteenkiste, 2009). Furthermore, the quality of the parent-child relationship significantly influences the transmission of religious values, where warmth and closeness enhance religiosity, while conflict—particularly in father-son relationships—can also strengthen religious commitment in adolescents (Stearns & McKinney, 2018, 2020). Gender differences have also been documented, with maternal interactions having a stronger effect on daughters' religiosity, especially when parental behavioral problems are present (Stearns & McKinney, 2018). In addition, authoritative parenting, characterized by warmth and support, has been shown to effectively enhance children's religiosity and social skills, whereas authoritarian parenting tends to produce negative outcomes, such as poor mental health and increased delinquency (Caputo, 2004; Eti, 2023). Other studies emphasize the significance of the overall religious family climate, including spousal agreement on religious matters, as part of the complex process of religious socialization (Grob, Morgenthaler, & Käppler, 2009). Thus, although the influence of parenting on children's religiosity has been widely studied, most research remains limited to the domestic sphere and does not adequately consider external factors such as school policies or teacher interactions.

In addition to the roles of teachers and parenting, several studies have focused on developing theoretical models and measurement instruments to systematically assess religious character. Hajaroh et al. (2023) proposed a six-indicator model—including intellect, belief, commitment, ritual, experience, and behavioral consequence—that demonstrated strong reliability through CFA and SEM analysis. On the other hand, philosophical approaches explore religiosity through metaphorical and phenomenological frameworks, highlighting the distinctive nature of religious thought and language (Konacheva, 2015). In the educational context, Marini et al. (2018) stressed the importance of school culture, including worship facilities and religious routines, which positively contribute to students' religious character. Several instruments have also been developed, such as the technology-based SERINTERON self-reflection tool designed to help students identify their strengths and weaknesses (Paksi et al., 2025), the Attitudes Related to Spirituality Scale (ARES) with high reliability (Braghetta et al., 2021), and the Religious and Spiritual Struggles (RSS) Scale, which measures six domains of religious struggle (Exline, Pargament, Grubbs, & Yali, 2014). Nevertheless, some limitations persist, including overlaps with measures of positive emotions, concerns about contextual and theological relevance, and challenges of cross-cultural validity (Koenig, 2008; Nabi, Shah, & Seh, 2023). Accordingly, although these studies have provided important conceptual and methodological contributions, most remain centered on individual and ritual dimensions, without fully integrating environmental factors such as parenting and school culture into the holistic measurement of religious character.

Despite the growing body of research on teachers' roles, parenting styles, and theoretical models for measuring religious character, significant gaps remain. Most studies examining teachers' contributions have been confined to the formal school context, without considering how these efforts interact with parenting practices at home. Conversely, research on parenting has largely been restricted to the domestic sphere, overlooking the potential synergy between family upbringing and school-based religious education. Similarly, while theoretical models and instruments have advanced the measurement of religiosity, they often emphasize individual and ritual dimensions in isolation, neglecting the environmental

influences of family dynamics and school culture. These limitations reveal a lack of integrated approaches that simultaneously account for the roles of teachers, parents, and systemic educational strategies in fostering children's religious character. Addressing this gap is essential for developing a more holistic understanding of how religious character is formed and sustained within the interconnected ecosystems of family and school.

To address this gap, this study proposes a more comprehensive approach by analyzing both parenting styles and worship discipline as intertwined elements in shaping religious character. Parenting, whether authoritarian, permissive, or democratic, can significantly influence children's understanding and adoption of religious values (Lasut et al., 2023). On the other hand, discipline in religious practice, such as consistent prayer, recitation, and participation in religious rituals, may reinforce internalization of religious principles and spiritual habits (Manik et al., 2024; Siska et al., 2024). By conceptualizing worship discipline as a mediating variable, this study seeks to uncover the mechanisms by which parenting impacts religious character through the habituation of religious practices.

Previous studies have significantly contributed to understanding the development of children's religious character and can be grouped into three major thematic categories. First, the influence of parenting, where active parental involvement has been shown to strengthen moral and religious values (Romanto et al., 2024), and daily worship routines combined with parental role modeling enhance children's religious identity (Izzatunnisa & Mutiawati, 2024). Conversely, permissive parenting is associated with lower religious sensitivity and a rise in behavioral issues among children (Guchi & Sunarti, 2021). Second, the role of religious discipline, where authoritative and democratic parenting styles foster meaningful engagement in religious practices (Kumaidi et al., 2024; Mumtaz et al., 2024), and consistent self-discipline helps internalize religious values, while permissive or authoritarian parenting may hinder spiritual development (Faidah et al., 2024). Third, the educational environment, particularly Islamic schools, plays a significant role in shaping disciplined and structured religious behavior in students (Pranoto et al., 2025). However, these studies tend to examine variables in isolation and have not integrated parenting, religious discipline, and school environment into a unified conceptual framework. Moreover, the limitations of previous research such as fragmented approaches, the absence of longitudinal analysis, and weak theoretical synthesis have not been clearly addressed. This study seeks to bridge these theoretical and empirical gaps by proposing a more comprehensive and integrative model.

The significance of this study is anchored in the urgent need to cultivate a generation that is not only intellectually capable but also morally and spiritually grounded. In today's fast-paced digital era, children are increasingly exposed to influences that may distance them from religious values. This research contributes theoretically by presenting an integrated model of religious character development and offers practical value by informing parenting practices, educational policies, and character education programs. By focusing on family-based religious development, the study aligns with broader efforts to strengthen social harmony, reduce intolerance, and support children's holistic development.

The primary objective of this study is to examine the influence of parenting styles on children's religious character, with worship discipline acting as a mediating variable. This research seeks to deepen our understanding of how structured religious upbringing within the home contributes to shaping children who are morally upright, spiritually aware, and socially responsible in a pluralistic society. While previous studies have identified the individual effects of parenting and religious discipline on character development, few have integrated these variables into a unified framework. Building upon both theoretical assumptions and empirical findings, this study clearly formulates the following hypotheses:

H1: Worship discipline has a significant positive effect on children's religious character.

H2: Parenting style has a significant positive effect on children's religious character.

H3: Parenting style has a significant positive effect on worship discipline.

H4: Worship discipline mediates the relationship between parenting style and children's religious character.

H5: There is a significant total effect of parenting style on children's religious character, both directly and indirectly through worship discipline.

## METHOD

This study applied a quantitative approach with a descriptive and correlational-verification design to investigate the relationship between parenting style, children's worship discipline, and their religious character. According to Nazir (2011), descriptive research seeks to examine current conditions of individuals, groups, or phenomena in a factual and systematic manner. The verification component was used to test hypotheses concerning the causal relationship among the studied variables.

The target population comprised junior high school students in Cianjur Regency, Indonesia. A total of 200 students were selected using a stratified random sampling technique, ensuring proportional representation by school type (public and private) and grade level (7th to 9th grade). The sample size was determined following Ghazali's (2006) recommendation for SEM analysis. The participants were between 12 and 15 years old, with both male and female students included, all of whom were enrolled in schools offering integrated Islamic religious education.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire measured three main variables: parenting style (10 items), worship discipline (8 items), and religious character (10 items). Instrument validity was evaluated through convergent validity (loading factor and AVE) and discriminant validity (HTMT), while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, with all values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70.

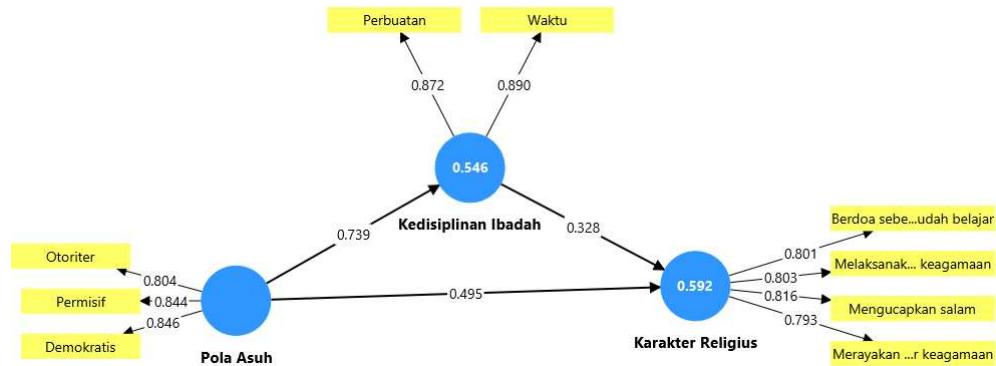
Data analysis was performed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0. The analysis procedure included three stages: (1) outer model evaluation, examining indicator validity and construct reliability; (2) inner model evaluation, assessing the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), effect size ( $f^2$ ), and predictive relevance ( $Q^2$ ); and (3) bootstrapping with 5000 subsamples to test the significance of the path coefficients. The research was conducted at several junior high schools in Cianjur, selected based on accessibility, the presence of religious programs, and institutional willingness to participate.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

#### 1. Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) is a variance-based method that serves as an alternative to covariance-based SEM, especially in studies with limited sample sizes. It enables simultaneous assessment of the measurement model (to test reliability and validity) and the structural model (to evaluate path relationships and test hypotheses). In this study, the PLS-SEM approach was applied using SmartPLS version 4.0.

**Figure 1. Structural Model**

The following is the structural model scheme of the PLS 4.0 program that was tested, which is as follows:

**Table 1. Convergent Validity Results**

	Outer loadings	CA	CR	AVE	Conclusion
Pray before and after studying <- Religious Character	0.801				Valid and Reliable
Carrying out religious worship <- Religious Character	0.803				Valid and Reliable
Saying < greetings - Religious Character	0.816				Valid and Reliable
Celebrating religious holidays <- Religious Character	0.793				Valid and Reliable
Democratic <- Parenting	0.846				Valid and Reliable
Permissive< Parenting	0.844	0.777	0.778	0.692	Valid and Reliable
Authoritarian <- Parenting	0.804				Valid and Reliable
Acts of <- Discipline of Worship	0.872				Valid and Reliable
Time <- Discipline of Worship	0.890	0.713	0.715	0.777	Valid and Reliable

All outer loading values exceed 0.70, meeting the convergent validity criteria. Additionally, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs are greater than 0.50—Religious Character (0.646), Parenting (0.692)—indicating that more than 50% of the variance in the indicators is captured by their respective latent constructs. Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA) values are also above the recommended threshold of 0.70(Ghozali, 2006) confirming internal consistency.

**Table 2. Fornell–Larcker Criterion**

Variable	Religious Character	Discipline of Worship	Parenting
Religious Character	0.804		
Discipline of Worship	0.694	0.881	
Parenting	0.737	0.739	0.832

The square roots of AVE (diagonal elements) exceed the inter-construct correlations, confirming discriminant validity. The constructs are statistically distinct and free from multicollinearity.

**Tabel 3. Cross loadings**

Indicator	Religious Character	Discipline of Worship	Parenting
Pray before and after studying	0.801	0.554	0.622
Democratic	0.604	0.623	0.846
Performing religious worship	0.803	0.590	0.630
Say hello	0.816	0.523	0.529
Celebrating religious holidays	0.793	0.557	0.578
Authoritarian	0.612	0.570	0.804
Action	0.601	0.872	0.616
Permissive	0.624	0.649	0.844
Time	0.621	0.890	0.684

Each indicator loads highest on its intended construct. For instance, “Pray before and after studying” loads higher on Religious Character (0.801) than on other constructs. This pattern is consistent across all indicators, satisfying the cross-loading criterion for discriminant validity.

**Tabel 4. Collinearity statistics (VIF)**

Indicator	VIF
Praying before and after studying	1.666
Democratic	1.706
Performing religious worship	1.628
Saying greetings	1.859
Celebrating religious holidays	1.664
Authoritarian	1.497
Acts	1.443
Permissive	1.654
Time	1.443

All VIF values are below 5 (ranging from 1.443 to 1.859), indicating no issues with multicollinearity. The indicators are free from redundancy and can be used reliably in further analysis.

## 2. Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

**Tabel 5. R-Square Value**

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Religious Character	0.592	0.588
Discipline of Worship	0.546	0.544

Based on Hair ( 2010),  $R^2$  values are categorized as strong ( $\geq 0.75$ ), moderate (0.50–0.74), and weak ( $\leq 0.25$ ). The  $R^2$  values obtained indicate moderate predictive accuracy: 59.2% of the variance in Religious Character and 54.6% in Worship Discipline can be explained by the model.

**Tabel 6. Value f -Square**

	f-square
Discipline of Worship -> Religious Character	0.119 (weak)
Parenting -> Religious Character	0.273 (moderate)
Parenting Style -> Discipline of Worship	1.204 (strong)

These results suggest that Parenting has a strong influence on Worship Discipline, which in turn moderately influences Religious Character. This highlights the mediating role of Worship Discipline.

**Tabel 7. Model fit**

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.074	0.074

The SRMR value is below 0.08, indicating a good model fit. Hypotheses were tested using the bootstrapping procedure. According to Hair et al. (2010), T-statistics  $> 1.96$  and p-values  $< 0.05$  indicate statistical significance.

**Tabel 8. Q<sup>2</sup>predict**

	Q <sup>2</sup> predict	RMSE	MAE
Religious Character	0.538	0.686	0.535
Discipline of Worship	0.540	0.683	0.555

Since Q<sup>2</sup>predict values exceed 0, the model demonstrates satisfactory predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2019). The RMSE and MAE values also indicate low prediction error, supporting the model's reliability.

**Table 9. Predictive Comparison with Linear Models**

Tabel 10 Assess predict Sem PLS	PLS-SEM_RMSE	PLS-SEM_MAE	LM_RMSE	LM_MAE	IA_RMSE	IA_MAE
Pray before and after studying	0.810	0.697	0.817	0.703	1.030	0.874
Performing religious worship	0.760	0.649	0.764	0.646	0.975	0.795
Say hello	0.806	0.683	0.809	0.682	0.942	0.776
Celebrating religious holidays	0.829	0.704	0.836	0.709	1.010	0.845
Action	0.850	0.720	0.859	0.731	1.072	0.932
Time	0.744	0.628	0.751	0.628	1.015	0.826

Compared to the linear model (LM) and individual average (IA), PLS-SEM demonstrates more accurate predictive performance, as shown by consistently lower RMSE and MAE values.

### 3. Hypothesis Testing

**Tabel 10. PLS Results of Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing**

Immediately	Original sample (O)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values	Conclusion
Discipline of Worship -> Religious Character	0.328	4.555	0.000	accepted and significant

Parenting -> Religious Character	0.495	6.655	0.000	accepted and significant
Parenting Style -> Discipline of Worship	0.739	24.063	0.000	accepted and significant
Indirect	Original sample (O)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values	Conclusion
Parenting -> Religious Character	0.242	4.516	0.000	accepted and significant
Total	Original sample (O)	T statistics ( O/STDEV )	P values	Conclusion
Discipline of Worship -> Religious Character	0.328	4.555	0.000	accepted and significant
Parenting -> Religious Character	0.737	22.764	0.000	accepted and significant
Parenting Style -> Discipline of Worship	0.739	24.063	0.000	accepted and significant

Each hypothesis was supported by the data:

H1: Worship Discipline positively affects Religious Character.  
 H2: Parenting has a significant direct effect on Religious Character.  
 H3: Parenting significantly affects Worship Discipline.  
 H4: Worship Discipline mediates the effect of Parenting on Religious Character.  
 H5: Parenting exerts a total (direct and indirect) influence on Religious Character.

## Discussion

This study investigated the relationship between parenting styles, worship discipline, and religious character among junior high school students in a rural Indonesian context. The analysis confirmed that all hypothesized paths were statistically significant, providing strong empirical support for the conceptual framework.

### H1: Worship Discipline Positively Affects Religious Character

The results revealed that worship discipline significantly contributes to the development of students' religious character ( $\beta = 0.328$ ;  $T = 4.555$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This supports the notion that routine engagement in religious practices helps internalize moral values and ethical conduct. Bandura's *Social Learning Theory* explains how such habits are formed through modeling and repetition, reinforcing consistent behavioral norms.

Prior studies have also supported this pathway. King & Roeser (2009) emphasized that consistent religious practice enhances students' internal discipline. Kor et al. (2019) explained that spirituality fosters character strengths such as goodwill and well-being. Petro et al., (2018) underlined the importance of religious rituals in adolescent moral development. Rich et al., (2024) noted that religious belief influences both parenting practices and child character formation. Volling et al. (2009) also found that parents' religious commitment has a positive effect on children's religious discipline. Rosadi (2024) similarly identified that participation in religious practices acts as a key intermediary in the link between emotional intelligence and moral behavior among adolescents.

### H2: Parenting Has a Direct Effect on Religious Character

Parenting style demonstrated a significant direct effect on students' religious character ( $\beta = 0.495$ ;  $T = 6.655$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This underscores the parent's role not only as caregivers but

also as moral and spiritual educators. Baumrind's authoritative parenting concept, which balances warmth and discipline, aligns with these findings. Prior studies affirm this dynamic: Volling et al., (2009) and Aggarwal et al., (2023) documented that religious parenting supports moral development, while Rich (2024) and McLennan et al., (2023) showed that parental religious orientation shapes both parenting strategies and children's ethical behavior. Jiménez (2009) highlighted the role of family worship and expectation-setting in nurturing religious values.

### H3: Parenting Significantly Influences Worship Discipline

The strongest relationship observed in this study was between parenting and worship discipline ( $\beta = 0.739$ ;  $T = 24.063$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This confirms that consistent parental involvement is crucial in shaping children's religious routines. Bandura's theory again provides insight here, showing how children learn behaviors by observing consistent modeling. Volling et al. (2009) highlighted religious parenting as foundational for discipline. Kor et al. (2019) noted that spirituality reinforces prosocial and moral behavioral patterns. Aggarwal et al. (2023) demonstrated links between religiosity and adolescent moral regulation. Rich (2024) explained how religious values shape parental engagement and discipline practices. Petro et al. (2018) found that religiosity supports positive parenting practices, including ritual discipline.

### H4: Worship Discipline Mediates the Effect of Parenting on Religious Character

The mediating role of worship discipline was confirmed ( $\beta = 0.242$ ;  $T = 4.516$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that the influence of parenting on character formation is partially transmitted through the establishment of religious routines. This is consistent with Petro et al. (2018), who stated that daily worship fosters internalized moral development. Kor et al. (2019) also emphasized that spirituality helps build commitment to moral values. This mediating path illustrates the behavioral process by which values are embedded—not merely taught, but practiced regularly under parental guidance. This matches the conceptual model of Rosadi (2024), where religious behavior acts as a behavioral bridge between cognitive-emotional traits and ethical conduct.

### H5: Parenting Has a Total Effect (Direct and Indirect) on Religious Character

The total effect of parenting on religious character was substantial ( $\beta = 0.737$ ;  $T = 22.764$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ), affirming its central role. This finding reinforces the literature on religious socialization within families (Volling et al., 2009; Kor et al., 2019; Rich, 2024). Unlike studies that isolate direct influence, this research provides a comprehensive model showing both direct and indirect effects, offering a more complete picture of how character is formed.

The findings of this study confirm and extend previous research on the determinants of students' religious character by demonstrating that both parenting styles and worship discipline play a significant role, with worship discipline acting as a mediating pathway. These results resonate with the first category of literature that highlights the role of teachers in shaping students' religious character. Similar to teachers, parents function as role models whose consistency and exemplary behavior foster moral and spiritual growth (Wasehudin et al., 2024; Cohen-Malayev et al., 2014). While the literature on teachers emphasized the school setting, our study reveals that within the family context, parents assume an equally strategic role, indicating that character formation is most effective when both domains—school and family—are engaged.

The second category of literature emphasized the significance of parenting in transmitting religious values, yet many of those studies examined parenting in isolation from

other processes such as worship discipline (Vermeer, 2011; Duriez et al., 2009; Stearns & McKinney, 2020). Our findings advance this line of research by empirically showing that parenting does not merely exert a direct effect on character development but also shapes the child's worship discipline, which in turn strengthens their religious character. This integrated model provides a more nuanced understanding of how values are both modeled and habituated within the family environment. It bridges the gap identified in earlier studies that tended to treat parenting as a stand-alone factor rather than a dynamic process mediated by religious practices.

The third category of literature focused on theoretical models and instruments for measuring religious character (Hajaroh et al., 2023; Marini et al., 2018; Braghetta et al., 2021). While those studies offered conceptual and methodological frameworks, they often lacked empirical testing that incorporated environmental variables such as parenting and worship discipline. By demonstrating statistically significant pathways between these factors, our study provides empirical evidence that supports the operationalization of religious character as a construct influenced not only by individual and ritual dimensions but also by relational and contextual factors. Thus, this research complements and extends existing models, showing that measurement frameworks should account for the interaction between family dynamics, religious routines, and broader educational environments.

Taken together, these findings reinforce the importance of adopting an integrated perspective that situates religious character formation at the intersection of parenting practices, daily worship discipline, and the broader school culture. This comprehensive view addresses the limitations of prior research, which often examined these factors in isolation, and offers a more holistic understanding of how religious character is cultivated in adolescents.

This study contributes to existing literature by introducing worship discipline as a mediating variable, an element often overlooked in prior research. While earlier studies focused heavily on direct effects, this research emphasizes the importance of behavioral mechanisms particularly in adolescence, where character formation becomes more deeply internalized. Additionally, the model demonstrated strong predictive relevance, with  $Q^2$  predict values of 0.538 (religious character) and 0.540 (worship discipline), and low RMSE and MAE scores. These results affirm the reliability of PLS-SEM over traditional linear models in capturing complex mediation processes (Hair et al., 2019). These strategies align with Rosadi's (2024) suggestion that an integrative effort between home and school is essential for developing adolescent morality in Islamic educational settings.

The findings reinforce that religious education begins at home, where parents play a central role not only in enforcing religious routines but also in serving as role models and facilitators. In an increasingly digital and pluralistic society, adaptive parenting is essential to balance external influences with strong internal values. Practical efforts to support this include implementing parenting workshops centered on religious values and authoritative guidance, integrating worship discipline into school-based character education programs, and utilizing digital platforms to foster interactive and engaging religious learning experiences for families. Furthermore, educators and policymakers should view parents as strategic partners in the moral and spiritual development of children. Collaborative programs that bridge home and school environments can ensure consistency in character-building efforts across both domains.

## CONCLUSION

This study provides empirical evidence that parenting styles significantly influence students' religious character, both directly and indirectly through worship discipline. Positive and consistent parenting fosters disciplined worship practices, which in turn strengthen adolescents' moral reasoning, ethical conduct, and spiritual awareness. The findings highlight

that worship discipline plays a crucial mediating role, showing that religious character is not only taught cognitively but also internalized through habitual practices within the family context.

The primary contribution of this study lies in its introduction of worship discipline as a mediating variable in the relationship between parenting and religious character. This offers a novel conceptual and empirical approach, particularly within the rural Indonesian junior high school context where family and school remain central to moral development. By employing PLS-SEM, the study demonstrates strong predictive relevance, with robust statistical support from  $Q^2$  predict, RMSE, and MAE metrics. Conceptually, the study extends the literature by integrating environmental factors—parenting, family worship routines, and school culture—into a more comprehensive framework of religious character formation.

Nonetheless, the study is not without limitations. The research was conducted in a single rural region, which may limit the generalizability of the findings across different cultural or urban contexts. The reliance on self-reported questionnaires also opens the possibility of social desirability bias. Future research should expand the scope to diverse populations, adopt longitudinal designs to track character development over time, and incorporate additional variables such as peer influence, digital media exposure, and school–family collaboration. Such efforts would provide a deeper and more holistic understanding of how religious character is shaped and sustained in contemporary society.

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