COLLABORATION OF SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS
IN CHARACTER EDUCATION OF TEENAGERS

Rohman[1], Ismiati Irzain[2], Ahmad Asrin[3], Kholidah Nur[4]
[134]Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Negeri Mandailing Natal; Indonesia
[2]Kementerian Agama Sijunjung; Indonesia
Correspondence Email: rohman@stain-madina.ac.id

Abstract	This study aims to explore and analyze the collaboration between three key social institutions the Neighborhood Chief, the Tolong Menolong Union (STM), and the Mosque Prosperity Board (BKM)—in shaping youth character in Neighborhood VIII, Panyabungan City. The main objective is to understand how institutional synergy fosters moral awareness, social responsibility, and helps prevent juvenile delinquency through community-based approaches. Using a qualitative approach and a case study method. The research data for this study comes from collaborative activities between three main social institutions: the Head of the Neighborhood Association (RT), the Mutual Aid Association (STM), and the Osque Prosperity Body (BKM)—in shaping the character of adolescents. Primary data sources include field interviews and observations, while secondary data consist of institutional records and relevant literature. Data collection used triangulation, combining interviews, observation, and documentation. Data analysis followed the interactive model by Miles and Huberman: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Findings show that active communication, deliberation, and religious activities such as recitations, mutual cooperation, and youth discussions are effective strategies in instilling positive values. Direct involvement of community leaders strengthens social ties and reduces immoral behavior and crime among youth. The study concludes that this collaborative model functions not only as social supervision but also as a key instrument for community-based character education.
Keywords	Character Education, Social Institution Collaboration, Panyabungan City Youth.

INTRODUCTION

Character building is an important aspect in forming a moral and responsible individual (Ikhram et al., 2023). In the context of society, education character not only becomes a task of formal education institutions but also requires the roles of the community, social, and family (Alfarikh et al., 2021). Panyabungan City, especially in Environment VIII, is facing social problems in the form of immoral and criminality teenagers. To overcome this problem, three social institutions—Head Environment, STM, and BKM—work the same to form the character of teenagers through various social and religious programs.

Character building is an essential component in shaping individuals who are morally upright, socially responsible, and emotionally mature (Jakandar et al., 2025). While schools play a central role, effective character education also requires synergy with the wider community, including families, religious groups, and local organizations (Ramadhani & Febriani, 2023). In environment III, Kota Panyabungan, the increasing incidence of juvenile delinquency—ranging from moral deviation to criminal acts—signals a critical need for collective action. This study focuses on the collaborative efforts of three local social institutions: the Head of Environment, the Tolong Menolong Union (STM), and the Mosque Prosperity Board (BKM), in addressing this issue through character-based interventions. These institutions serve as informal agents of education, implementing value-based programs such as communal prayer (pengajian), youth forums, mutual cooperation (gotong royong), and mentoring sessions.

The mechanisms of collaboration observed in Environment VIII are characterized by shared leadership, joint program planning, and resource mobilization(Ahmed, 2022). The Head of Environment acts as a coordinator, aligning schedules and policy directions. STM, as a local youth and social solidarity group, contributes by organizing communal work activities and engaging youth through cultural and social events. BKM facilitates religious engagement by hosting weekly religious studies, sermons, and Qur'an recitations specifically tailored for adolescents(Diningsih & Yusuf, 2023). Collaboration occurs both formally—through scheduled meetings and community forums—and informally, via regular communication through WhatsApp groups and direct community outreach. These mechanisms show that while institutions operate within distinct roles, they also create intersecting spaces where character values such as honesty, discipline, empathy, and spiritual awareness are actively instilled.

Despite the positive initiatives, the collaboration faces both supporting and inhibiting factors. On the supporting side, the strong commitment of community leaders, the cultural value of gotong royong, and the presence of religious motivation serve as foundational strengths. However, several challenges hinder the optimal functioning of the collaboration. These include inconsistent youth participation, limited funding for sustained programs, generational gaps between leaders and teenagers, and a lack of structured evaluation mechanisms. Based on interviews with 10 adolescents, five parents, and three school representatives in Environment VIII, many acknowledged that the collaboration has a meaningful influence on shaping youth behavior, especially in increasing attendance at religious events and reducing instances of vandalism and late-night loitering. Nevertheless, they also highlighted that the programs are often reactive rather than preventive, and suggested greater involvement of schools and structured youth leadership training (Yusnita, 2018). These findings indicate that while the collaboration is directionally effective, it requires institutional strengthening, broader stakeholder engagement, and continuous monitoring to maximize its long-term impact on youth character development.

Over the past five years, several studies have explored the relationship between social institutions and character education in adolescents. Dewantara & A highlighted the effectiveness of community-based approaches in developing adolescent character (Sugiarti et al., 2022). Their findings showed that community engagement strengthens moral awareness, yet their study still positioned the school as the central mediator of character formation, without examining how non-school social institutions independently contribute to this process. Khodijah found that organizational involvement—such as youth and religious groups—positively impacts adolescent social behavior. However, this research lacked an in-depth analysis of structured and systematic collaboration between various social institutions, which is critical for sustainable outcomes (Elsayed, 2024).

Hermino & Arifin emphasized the importance of religion in character education and its role in preventing deviant behavior in youth. While their research confirmed the value of religious teachings, the focus remained on the individual role of parents within the family, leaving unexplored the collective influence of broader community institutions (Fatimah & Sumarni, 2024). Wagner (2020) explored the influence of the social environment on teenage behavior, finding that a positive environment reduces delinquency (Fatimah & Sumarni, 2024). However, his work did not detail how coordination between institutions—such as religious organizations, neighborhood

leaders, and community-based youth groups—can be leveraged to shape character in a structured and sustainable way. Meanwhile, Fathoni (2024) examined informal education networks and their role in complementing school-based character programs. Though it showed the benefit of synergy between schools and informal study groups, it did not investigate the involvement of grassroots community leadership, such as the Neighborhood Chief, or the potential of broader social institution alliances (Hamka, 2023).

Based on the limitations of these studies, the current research addresses a significant gap by examining how collaboration between multiple social institutions—the Head of Environment, the Tolong Menolong Union (STM), and the Mosque Prosperity Board (BKM)—can become an effective model for character education among adolescents in Environment VIII, Panyabungan City. This study explores not only the forms and mechanisms of this collaboration but also identifies the supporting and inhibiting factors and assesses its effectiveness through the perspectives of youth, parents, and school representatives. Unlike prior research that focused on individual institutions or informal groups, this study introduces a novel approach: a localized, inter-institutional collaborative framework for community-based character development. This adds a new dimension to the field by demonstrating how structured synergy among community actors can lead to more impactful and sustainable outcomes in youth moral formation.

Building on the findings and previous research gaps, this study is strongly supported by both national education policies and contemporary theoretical discourses. The National Character Education Framework by the Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemdikbud, 2017) continues to serve as a foundational reference, emphasizing that character education must not be limited to formal education settings but should involve community participation, family support, and religious institutions. This is in line with Law No. 20 of 2003 on the National Education System, which affirms that education is a shared responsibility among schools, families, and communities. These policy directives provide a normative foundation for encouraging the active involvement of grassroots institutions—such as the Head of Environment, STM, and BKM—in adolescent character formation. The purpose of this research is to examine how collaboration between multiple social institutions—specifically the Head of Environment, the Tolong Menolong Union (STM), and the Mosque Prosperity Board (BKM)—contributes to character education among adolescents in Environment VIII, Panyabungan City. This study aims to explore the forms, mechanisms, and strategies of inter-institutional collaboration in addressing moral and behavioral challenges faced by

local youth. It also seeks to identify both the supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the effectiveness of these efforts, as well as to assess the perceived impact from the perspectives of adolescents, parents, and school representatives. By focusing on structured, community-based collaboration rather than isolated institutional efforts, this research addresses a significant gap in existing literature and offers a localized model for character development that integrates cultural, religious, and social values.

METHOD

This research is qualitative with a case study approach on the Collaboration of Social Institutions in Character Education for Adolescents in Environment VIII, Panyabungan City (Khan, 2022). The research data for this study comes from collaborative activities between three main social institutions: the Head of the Neighborhood Association (RT), the Mutual Aid Association (STM), and the Mosque Prosperity Body (BKM)—in shaping the character of adolescents. The data sources include institutional actors such as the Head of Environment, administrators of STM (Serikat Tolong Menolong), BKM (Badan Kemakmuran Masjid), local community leaders, and adolescent residents actively involved in related programs. Data collection techniques were carried out through interviews, observations, and documentation (Cheong et al., 2023).

At the observation stage, field visits were conducted over a one-month period, starting from April 1, 2025, to April 30, 2025, focusing on social and religious activities such as community meetings, youth mentoring sessions, and religious study groups organized by BKM, STM, and the neighborhood management (Rustamana et al., 2024). For the interview, data were obtained from 12 respondents, consisting of the Head of Environment VIII, 3 STM administrators, 3 BKM administrators, two community religious figures, and three adolescent participants. Interviews were conducted using a semi-structured format, allowing for open-ended responses and in-depth exploration of each participant's experience and perspective.

The questionnaire instrument was not used in this study, as the qualitative nature of the research prioritized dialogical and contextual data through interviews and observation. However, an interview guide was developed containing main thematic questions related to collaboration practices, moral education strategies, and perceived impact on youth behavior. In terms of documentation, data were obtained from various internal institutional documents, including meeting minutes, program implementation reports, religious activity schedules, and standard

operating procedures (SOPs) related to character development initiatives. These documents serve to support, confirm, and triangulate the information gathered through interviews and observations. For data analysis, the researcher used thematic analysis techniques consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification (Tomaszewski et al., 2020). (1) In the data reduction phase, the researcher organized and condensed data related to collaboration practices, recurring patterns of character education efforts, and forms of youth engagement in Environment VIII. (2) In the data presentation phase, the researcher displayed the data using descriptive narratives and matrices that show the linkages between institutional roles, activity types, and value outcomes in adolescents. (3) In the conclusion drawing and verification phase, the researcher conducted a critical analysis of the collaboration model using theories such as Lickona's Character Education Framework, Social Capital Theory (Putnam, 2000), and the 21st Century Life Skills Model. Furthermore, findings were compared with several related studies to highlight similarities, differences, and contributions to the academic discourse. For data analysis, the researcher used thematic analysis techniques consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This study aims to analyze the collaboration of social institutions in the character education of adolescents in Environment VIII, Panyabungan City. The research was conducted through field observations, interviews with community figures, and document analysis. The findings reveal how previously fragmented institutions—such as the Union Help Menolong (STM), the Mosque Prosperity Agency (BKM), and the Neighborhood Head—managed to establish a synergistic partnership. This collaboration was built through structured strategies, including digital communication, religious strengthening, community empowerment, and persuasive-preventive efforts. The following table summarizes the core research findings, highlighting how social issues were addressed through inter-institutional collaboration, the strategies employed, and the resulting social transformation.

Table 1. Collaboration of Social Institutions in Character Education for Adolescents in Environment VIII, Panyabungan City

No	Social Problems	Social Institution Collaboration	Collaborative Strategy	Impact Social Change
1.	Immoral behavior and social deviance	STM, BKM, and Neighborhood Head coordinated to monitor youth activities	WhatsApp group for fast reporting and follow-up; direct intervention by institution leaders	Significant reduction in adolescent immoral acts and free association; youth are more responsive to social norms
2.	Youth disengagement from religious life	BKM initiated joint programs supported by STM and the Neighborhood Head	Weekly mosque and home-based study sessions; rotation among families to host events	Increased teen participation in religious study groups and mosque prayers
3.	Criminality and theft among adolescents	Inter-institutional response led by the Neighborhood Head with community watch involvement	Persuasive and preventive visits to hotspots; digital coordination; reporting via WA groups	Sharp decline in reported theft and criminal incidents among teenagers
4.	Institutional distrust and lack of synergy	Leadership restructuring in STM, BKM, and the Head of Environment improved communication and trust	Cross-institutional meetings, role integration (leaders involved in multiple institutions)	Trust was rebuilt between institutions and the public, and increased community involvement in character supervision
5.	Weak community participation in youth guidance	Citizens are encouraged to actively participate via digital media and reporting mechanisms	Community empowerment through WA groups; moral counseling by public figures; collaborative environment supervision	Strengthened social capital; higher public vigilance and responsibility toward youth behavior

(Source: Field Data from Interviews, Observations, and Institutional Documents, 2025)

Immoral Behavior and Social Deviance

From Table 1, it can be seen that one of the most pressing social issues identified in Environment VIII was the prevalence of immoral behavior among adolescents, including unregulated socializing, loitering in dark or abandoned areas, and engaging in early signs of delinquency. These behaviors created unease among parents and community members, as they feared for the moral development of the next generation. Through collaborative efforts, STM (Union Help Menolong), BKM (Mosque Prosperity Agency), and the Neighborhood Hea**d** established a more coordinated and responsive structure to monitor adolescent behavior (Kolouch, 2025). A WhatsApp group was formed as the central platform for real-time communication among institution leaders and community representatives (Permana et al., 2023). This group allowed for instant reporting of suspicious youth gatherings or potential violations of community norms. For example,

if residents spotted teenagers lingering late at night in risky spots like internet cafes, public alleys, or abandoned houses, they could immediately notify the group. In response, leaders from STM or BKM—sometimes joined by the Neighborhood Head—would visit the location, speak to the teenagers involved, and offer guidance in a calm and respectful manner. This preventive and persuasive approach, rather than punitive, made a significant impact. Adolescents gradually became more aware of being observed by a caring but firm community, resulting in marked behavioral changes. Community reports confirmed that immoral gatherings sharply decreased, and young people began showing greater respect for communal norms and values (Rosmalina et al., 2023).

Youth Disengagement from Religious Life

Another **prominent** issue was the low engagement of adolescents in religious activities, such as mosque attendance, religious studies, and faith-based community events (Rosyada et al., 2022). This spiritual disengagement contributed to a weakening of moral values and created a vacuum easily filled by negative external influences, including peer pressure and internet-based distractions. To address this, BKM initiated a structured program of religious strengthening. With the support of STM and the Neighborhood Head, they introduced two core activities: (1) weekly recitations (pengajian) held at residents' homes on a rotating basis, and (2) structured religious classes at the local mosque targeting teenagers. This model ensured that not only were the youth being engaged spiritually, but families were also drawn into the process of moral education (Sari, 2021). Home-based study sessions fostered a sense of religious ownership at the household level, creating an intimate and welcoming environment for youth to learn about Islam while also strengthening inter-family bonds. Meanwhile, mosque-based sessions offered a more formal space where adolescents could listen to lectures, participate in discussions, and bond over shared values with peers (Beckwith et al., 2024). Over the course of one year, observations and attendance logs revealed a substantial increase in youth participation in religious programs. Teenagers who once avoided religious environments became more involved, even volunteering for mosque cleaning, call-to-prayer duties, or organizing events. This marked an important shift toward internalizing religious and moral **values** as part of their daily lives (Hapni et al., 2024).

Criminality and Theft Among Adolescents

Prior to institutional collaboration, petty theft and criminal behavior among adolescents were frequent in Environment VIII. These incidents included stolen motorbike parts, missing household items, and youth involved in minor vandalism. Such acts not only harmed victims but

also instilled a sense of fear and distrust within the community. To counter this, a multi-institutional approach was implemented, combining the authority of the Neighborhood Head, the moral influence of BKM, and the social organizing power of STM. Together, they launched **preventive** visits to high-risk areas and maintained a real-time reporting system via the existing WhatsApp group. Leaders and community volunteers would regularly visit known hotspots, like dark alleys, vacant lots, and hangout corners. During these visits, they would engage directly with teenagers in a non-confrontational, advisory manner, explaining the risks of crime and promoting alternative positive activities. These interventions were often supported by discussions with the families of at-risk youth, ensuring that guidance extended into the home environment. The results were significant. Over a year of collaboration, reports of adolescent theft dropped dramatically (Tibo & Sembiring, 2024). While minor incidents (e.g., misplaced garden tools or household items) still occurred occasionally, organized or intentional criminal acts decreased sharply. Moreover, adolescents began to avoid locations previously associated with deviant behavior, signaling increased self-awareness and social responsibility (Elsayed, 2024).

Institutional Distrust and Lack of Synergy

Before 2020, a major barrier to youth character development in Environment VIII was the lack of synergy between key social institutions. STM, BKM, and the Neighborhood Head operated independently, often duplicating roles or conflicting over jurisdiction. This resulted in inefficiency, public confusion, and a lack of a coherent strategy to address adolescent issues. The turning point began **with** leadership changes: a new STM board in 2020, a restructured BKM in 2021, and a newly appointed Neighborhood Head in 2022. These fresh leadership teams were more open to communication and began to engage in cross-institutional dialogue. Crucially, several leaders took on multiple roles across institutions, such as the STM head also attending BKM meetings or the BKM secretary assisting the Neighborhood Head. This intentional role integration facilitated continuous communication and strategic alignment. Joint meetings were held monthly, collaborative programs were developed, and decisions were made through consensus rather than unilateral command. As trust increased, so did community confidence in these institutions. This process reestablished institutional credibility and allowed citizens to engage more actively, knowing their efforts would be supported by a united front. Institutional collaboration moved from mere coexistence to functional synergy, and community-based programs—such as parenting seminars and youth mentoring—became more impactful and sustainable.

Weak Community Participation in Youth Guidance

At the core of Environment VIII's early challenges was the passivity of the general public regarding youth issues. Many residents viewed adolescent misbehavior as the responsibility of institutions or individual families, rather than a shared social concern. This lack of collective ownership contributed to the persistence of social problems and weakened neighborhood solidarity. To transform this, the three institutions launched an empowerment-based approach rooted in community participation. Citizens were not only encouraged but trained to report deviant behaviors, participate in youth-focused programs, and engage in moral education initiatives. The WhatsApp group previously used for institution leaders was expanded to include RT (neighborhood unit) representatives, public figures, and concerned citizens. This empowered citizens to report issues directly and receive quick feedback, creating a feeling of responsiveness and transparency. Moreover, public figures—including religious leaders, retired teachers, and youth mentors—were mobilized to provide personal moral counseling and mentoring to teenagers. The results were profound. Citizens who once remained silent became active contributors to social order, participating in mosque events, supporting religious education, and even organizing community clean-ups with youth groups. This shift reflected a strengthening of social capital, where mutual trust, cooperation, and shared moral responsibility were revitalized (Adawiyah et al., 2021).

Identification of Social Problems in the Environment VIII

Next, aside from the table, the results of this study show that before institutional collaboration was formed, Environment VIII faced various youth-related social problems. These included immoral behavior, criminal activities such as theft, uncontrolled socializing, and low participation of adolescents in religious and social activities. The growing phenomenon of deviant behavior caused unrest among residents, especially parents who were increasingly concerned about their children's moral development (Rinaldo & Pradikta, 2021). One key factor contributing to these problems was the lack of coordination among social institutions, namely the Neighborhood Head, the Union Help Menolong (STM), and the Mosque Prosperity Agency (BKM). Each institution operated independently without a shared strategy or communication framework. This disunity led to ineffective interventions and further disengagement from residents, many of whom did not feel compelled or empowered to supervise or guide teenagers (Sugiarti et al., 2022).

According to an interview with Mr. Monang Pulungan, a respected community figure, this disconnect stemmed not only from communication gaps but also from certain parties seeking to dominate local social institutions. This power imbalance generated internal conflicts, eroded trust, and weakened the collective social leadership needed to guide and control youth behavior effectively.

The Formation of Social Institution Collaboration

Collaboration between social institutions in Environment VIII developed gradually through leadership changes and growing inter-agency communication. Key milestones included the appointment of new leaders in STM (2020), BKM (2021), and the Head of Environment (2022), which opened the way for stronger synergy. Each institution assumed distinct roles to avoid overlapping functions: STM focused on social solidarity, BKM on religious and moral education, and the Head of Environment on policy support and program supervision. Their collaboration was strengthened through shared leadership across institutions, joint program planning, and transparent decision-making, all of which fostered trust and more effective coordination in character education for adolescents.

Collaborative Strategy in Forming Character

Collaboration inter-agency social in Environment VIII is carried out through various strategies designed to increase communication, social supervision, as well as active public participation in preventing immorality and criminality. Among them is:

1. Communication Through Digital Media

Collaborative strategies carried out by three social institutions in the VIII area are to form a WhatsApp group consisting of administrators, social figures, and representative citizens (Gebremariam et al., 2024). This group becomes a means of discussion and coordination in design, as well as the evaluation of the programs that are running. With more communication fast and efficient communication, various social issues can be quick followed up without having to wait meeting to look at face (Nursida & Ismail, 2025) in an attempt to increase effectiveness in coordination between inter-agency social and citizen groups, a WhatsApp group consisting of the administrator of Union Help Menelong (STM), the Mosque Prosperity Agency (BKM), head environment, figures in society, and representative inhabitants from each RT. Group This becomes the main media in designing, implementing, and evaluating various social programs aimed at overcoming problems in Environment VIII.

Before the existence of this digital communication, inter-agency social often hampered because to wait for a meeting to look at a face that was not always done in a routine way. The lack of effective coordination previously led to delays in addressing social issues, allowing problems like teenage misconduct and immoral behavior to grow unchecked. However, the use of WhatsApp groups has improved communication and response times, enabling quick reporting and follow-up on incidents. These groups also serve as platforms for sharing information about religious, social, and educational activities, increasing community involvement, and fostering a stronger sense of environmental responsibility among residents (Tahir & Rahayu Rayhaniah, 2022).

2. Persuasive and Preventive

Persuasive and preventive efforts carried out by BKM, the Head of Environment, and the Head of STM play an important role in preventing immoral behavior among teenagers. This approach is realized with direct visits to places that often become negative locations for activity, such as internet cafes, village corners, or certain areas that are often made into places gathered by teenagers (Kusumawati, 2021). During a visit, the administrators institution, social and figures public give advice as well as direct the youth involved in deviant behavior. They are inviting teenagers to realize the negative impact of their habits and provide encouragement for them to be more active in positive and useful activities for the environment.

In addition, this also involves discussion with family and society around to create collective awareness to guide teenagers (Daud et al., 2022). With a persuasive and preventive approach, it is hoped that teenagers can transform to become more individual and responsible, answer as well as own their concern for moral and social values in life socialize.

3. Religious Strengthening

In a middle life dynamic society, religious studies are one of the most important means to instill religious values and strengthen social connections between citizens. This religious study is implemented in a routine twice a week with two main models, namely home study residents and mosques (Jamin, 2020). Study at home, inhabitant. Do it in a way that you take turns so that every family has a chance to host and contribute to making it a successful religious activity. With this method, the family atmosphere becomes more closely intertwined because every meeting not only becomes an event to learn religion but also strengthens social interaction between citizens (Hidayati, 2021).

Apart from that, recitation at the mosque is also the main strategy to instill religious values, especially for teenagers who are already active in performing prayers at the mosque. These activities are expected to form religious character since early on, at the same time, confirming the role of the mosque as a center of spiritual guidance for the young generation. Teenagers who are consistent in following religious studies at the mosque will become more used to the religious environment, so that they more easily absorb Islamic teachings and implement them in daily life (Karimullah, 2023). Religious study activities, attended by residents of all ages, serve not only to enhance spirituality but also to strengthen social bonds and community unity. These gatherings provide a space for sharing experiences, discussing life issues, and offering moral support, making them vital for both religious development and fostering harmony in social life (Hanifah et al., 2020).

4. Community Empowerment

Empowerment public is an effective strategy in the effort to prevent deviant behavior, especially in a vulnerable social environment to immoral action. In Environment VIII, empowerment is realized through active participation in creating a safe and conducive social environment. One of the forms of concrete effort is to push inhabitants to, in a way, directly report various action deviations that occur, especially among teenagers (Haris, 2022). To facilitate faster and more responsive communication, a WhatsApp (WA) group is the main medium for inhabitants to convey reports as well as share information related security environment.

Through this WA group, residents can quickly report various deviant behaviors that they observe, like socializing freely, abusing drugs, and immoral actions toward others (Situmorang et al., 2022). Approach this not only to increase awareness collectively but also to strengthen the sense of social responsibility and guard morality young generation. In addition, the involvement of active inhabitants in system reporting speeds up the handling process and enables the existence of step prevention before behavior deviates and develops further. Thus, the empowerment strategy becomes an important instrument in building an environment that is more socially safe, controlled, and appropriate with norms that apply in society.

Impact Collaboration to Social Change

After one year of collaborative strategy implementation in the empowerment society, significant change occurred in the behavior of teenagers in Environment VIII. This transformation can be seen from a number of indicators, the main thing that reflects improved social and religious awareness among the young generation.

a. The Decline Action is Immoral

One of the most significant impacts of the collaboration that was carried out is decreased action immorality among teenagers. Previously, the case of socializing disturbed freedom. Enough often happened, but now almost none. There is again an incident strikingly similar. This shows improvement in the teenager's awareness of the importance of moral values and social norms in life in society. The main factors that contribute to change are active support from citizens, who not only give moral education in sustainability but also build system supervision based on WhatsApp groups. With this existence system, society can more quickly detect and handle potential violations of social norms, which creates a more conducive environment for teenage development.

b. The Decline in Case Theft

A decrease in case theft in Environment VIII is one of the indicators of the success of this program. Previously, the case of theft was happening often enough and disturbing citizens, but in the last year, the number has decreased significant. Only a few cases are small, like lost stuff around the house, which is still found. This success is not far from increasing public awareness will emphasize the importance of supervision in the environment as well as active involvement of inhabitants in guard security together. In addition, understanding teenagers about the consequences of laws and social actions for crimes is also increasing, so that they are more cautious and reluctant to commit an act of violating norms, laws, and social actions.

c. Improvement in Religious Participation

Increased religious participation among teenagers is one of the positive impacts of the empowerment strategy implemented. If previously only a handful of active youth attended recitation and activities at the mosque, now lots more teenagers make it a part of their routine. Participation in religious activity not only helps deepen their understanding of religious teachings but also strengthens social bonds among them. In addition, involvement in religious activity directs teenagers into more positive and productive activities so that they reduce the possibility of falling into deviant behavior or not being useful enough. With existence change, this is a collaborative strategy that is implemented and proven capable of creating a more socially safe, religious, and harmonious environment.

Discussion

The results of this study reveal that social problems in Environment VIII—such as immorality, theft, and low youth participation in religious activities—were rooted in the lack of

coordination among social institutions. Before the collaboration, STM, BKM, and the Head of Environment worked separately without a clear joint framework. The formation of inter-institutional synergy has become a turning point in youth character education. These institutions aligned their roles: STM focused on social engagement, BKM on moral-religious development, and the Head of Environment on policy and governance. This is in line with previous findings by Zakiyah, who emphasized that effective character education requires a holistic approach involving family, school, and community (Zakiyah et al., 2024). Studies like the *Communities That Care* (CTC) model in the United States also highlight the effectiveness of structured, community-based coalitions in reducing youth delinquency. Through the collaboration in Environment VIII, social trust was rebuilt, communication channels became open, and social norms were reinforced through collective involvement (Khambali et al., 2022).

One of the most effective innovations in the collaborative strategy was the use of WhatsApp groups as a tool for digital coordination and environmental surveillance. This method allowed quick responses to behavioral deviations and helped bridge communication gaps between institutions and citizens. Reports of deviant acts could be followed up immediately, and program implementation was more consistent. This aligns with the concept of social capital, where community ties, trust, and participation act as strong instruments in monitoring and correcting behavior. In addition to digital communication, persuasive-preventive strategies—such as visits to vulnerable areas and direct dialogue with youth—served as soft control mechanisms. Community figures approached youth not with punishment but with guidance, building awareness and responsibility. This kind of moral mentoring reflects the affective and behavioral dimensions of character education, where emotional connection and practical action are key to value internalization (Suryana et al., 2022). Empowering the public to be involved in this process further increased collective responsibility and promoted shared moral values.

The implementation of collaborative strategies led to significant changes in youth behavior and community conditions. There was a visible decline in immoral behavior and theft cases, and a marked increase in youth participation in religious activities. These changes suggest that integrated character education—supported by consistent moral reinforcement, digital social control, and community empowerment—can effectively shift individual and collective behaviour. This success aligns with similar findings from the *Aban Aya Youth Project*, which demonstrated that community-supported interventions significantly reduce risk behaviors among adolescents. Furthermore, the

regular religious studies held at mosques and residents' homes not only deepened religious understanding but also strengthened social relationships, thus reinforcing both moral and social cohesion. In conclusion, the collaboration of social institutions in Environment VIII represents an effective community-based character education model. By combining institutional synergy, digital tools, persuasive-preventive action, and religious engagement, the community was able to build a supportive environment for adolescent development. This reinforces the importance of localized, inclusive approaches in shaping youth character and promoting long-term social harmony.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that collaboration among social institutions in Environment VIII, Panyabungan City—particularly STM (Union Help Menolong), BKM (Mosque Prosperity Agency), and the Neighborhood Head—has proven to be an effective strategy in improving the character of adolescents within the community. Prior to this collaboration, the environment was marked by worrying levels of juvenile delinquency, immoral behavior, theft, and minimal participation in religious and social activities. The lack of synergy between institutions further exacerbated these problems, leaving youth without adequate guidance or supervision. However, through a deliberate and structured collaboration model built on shared communication platforms (such as WhatsApp), persuasive and preventive field outreach, religious strengthening, and the empowerment of the local community, significant changes were achieved. These include a noticeable decline in immoral behavior and theft, as well as increased involvement of teenagers in religious activities. This shows that when local institutions cooperate harmoniously and utilize existing social capital, they can create an ecosystem conducive to moral development, strengthening the social control function that is essential for guiding adolescent behavior. The results support the idea that character education cannot rely solely on formal education institutions, but must be rooted in community-based efforts that involve multiple stakeholders in a mutually reinforcing network.

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