



# PAGAR NUSA AS A SPORTS AND CHARACTER EDUCATION INTERVENTION: EFFECTIVENESS ON STUDENTS OF RANTING NGRENGKET

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**Abstract.** This study analyzes the role of Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa in Ngrengket Branch as a medium for physical exercise and character building. Using a descriptive qualitative approach with phenomenological methods, data were gathered through interviews, observation, and documentation from 1 head coach, 2 elders, and 25 active students. Results indicate that physical activities significantly improve fitness and regulate youth sleep patterns by minimizing late-night loitering. Furthermore, strict behavioral conditioning, like maintaining ablution (wudu) and mandatory Quran recitation, systematically strengthens faith and practical worship. The study also reveals a pedagogical gap where fully delegating technical sessions to uncertified assistants triggers student boredom and generational errors in basic movements. However, the head coach's charismatic role reinforces "Al-Adabu Fauqal 'Ilmi" (attitude above knowledge), successfully transforming students into respectful and disciplined individuals at home.

**Keywords:** Pagar Nusa, Sports Medium, Character Education, Youth Behavioral Conditioning.

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## 1 Introduction

Prior research has consistently demonstrated that Pagar Nusa and pencak silat contribute substantially to character formation and religious education, although the emphasis of each study varies. (Riyaddussolihin, 2020) found that Pagar Nusa effectively promotes character education within school environments while protecting students from negative social influences. Similarly (Setiawan 2023) and (Wakib Kurniawan1, Lilik Susanti 2024) highlighted

the implementation of religious values through routine habituation, exemplary behaviour, and character-based educational practices. Complementing these findings, (Mufarriq 2021) and (Arinal Chusnah, Estalita Kelly and Mangestuti 2022) reported that pencak silat training contributes to the comprehensive development of adolescents' personalities, including discipline, responsibility, and moral awareness.

Beyond character development, numerous studies have emphasized the contribution of pencak silat to physical fitness and sports performance. Research conducted by (Setyawan Adi and Setiawan Ipang 2022) demonstrated improvements in practitioners' physical condition and biomotor abilities, while (Aldona Khairulloh, Moh. Nur Kholis 2024) confirmed that structured pencak silat training enhances physical fitness and technical performance. These findings indicate that pencak silat functions not only as a traditional martial art but also as an effective medium for improving health-related physical fitness.

Other scholars have explored the broader psychosocial impacts of martial arts. ((Muslih 2021) demonstrated that pencak silat activities implemented in Islamic boarding schools contribute to strengthening religiosity within rural communities. Likewise, (Erfian and Wathoni 2024) reported positive relationships between sports participation and mental health, whereas (Rahman and Madiun 2025) explained that behavioural conditioning methods implemented through structured activities encourage the formation of positive habits. Collectively, these studies suggest that sports participation may simultaneously influence psychological well-being, religious commitment, and behavioural development.

Several contextual studies have further illustrated the implementation of martial arts across diverse educational settings. Research by (Muhammad Shohibul Faza 2020); (Muhammad Nur ALIF, Komarudin, Tatang MUHTAR 2024); (Ciaccioni et al. 2024); and (Yuliastutik 2024) provides empirical evidence regarding the application of martial arts programmes in different educational institutions and local communities. Likewise, (Wisnu Sah Saputra, Alit Rahmat 2024) documented various instructional models and learning outcomes achieved through martial arts education. Furthermore, studies on value internalisation within martial arts organisations (Wakib Kurniawan1, Lilik Susanti 2024) and investigations into the integration of sports with religious education (Muhammad Syahdan Ridhani 2023); (Rony Mohamad Rizal, Akhmad Sobarna Ediansyah 2024) further support the potential relationship between structured physical training, faith development, and religious practice.

## 2 Method

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach using a phenomenological method to explore the lived experiences of participants regarding the role of Pagar Nusa as a sports medium and its contribution to strengthening students' faith and worship practices. A descriptive qualitative approach aims to describe social phenomena systematically and factually, while phenomenology seeks to understand the meaning of participants' lived experiences from their own perspectives (Sugiyono 2010).

The research was conducted at Pencak Silat Pagar Nusa, Ngrengket Branch, Sukomoro District, Nganjuk Regency, Indonesia. The study was carried out over approximately five months to allow sufficient time for observation, interviews, and documentation during the implementation of regular training activities. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique in which participants are chosen based on their knowledge, experience,

and relevance to the research objectives (Sugiyono 2010). The participants consisted of one head coach, two senior Pagar Nusa figures, and twenty-five active students.

## **2.1 Informants Characteristics and Data Saturation**

The 25 active students selected as informants were early to late adolescents aged 12–18 years who were formally pursuing their education at the junior high (SMP) and senior high (SMA/SMK) school levels. These students had been active members of the organization for a minimum of 6 months to over a year, ensuring they had undergone a full cycle of physical conditioning and behavioral routines within the branch.

Data collection was concluded at 25 students because the study reached the point of data saturation. During the semi-structured interviews and participatory observations across the 5-month period, the responses and observed patterns regarding physical fitness, sleep habits, religious conditioning (such as wudhu and Quran recitation), and instructional challenges began to repeat. No new conceptual codes, themes, or novel variations of information emerged from additional participants, indicating that the data had become comprehensive and redundant.

## **2.2 Data Collection Techniques**

Data were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Semi-structured interviews enabled the researcher to explore participants' perceptions and experiences while maintaining flexibility during the interview process. Participatory observation was conducted throughout training sessions to examine coaching practices, students' interactions, and the integration of religious activities into martial arts training. Documentation, including photographs, organizational records, field notes, and other supporting documents, was used to strengthen and verify the findings obtained from interviews and observations (Winarni 2023)

## **2.3 Interactive Data Analysis and Coding Strategy**

The collected data were analysed using the interactive qualitative analysis model proposed by (Sugiyono 2010), consisting of data reduction, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. To provide a systematic and rigorous interpretation, the operational stages were executed as follows: Data Reduction and Coding Process: All audio-recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim. The text was then processed through two sequential stages: Open Coding: Raw data were broken down and assigned initial labels based on explicit statements.

For instance, statements regarding improved sleep routines were labeled under [Physical-Sleep Pattern], while issues regarding delegated technical sessions were labeled under [Challenges-Instruction]. Axial Coding: These initial codes were compared, grouped, and cross-referenced to identify conceptual categories and the structural relationships between them (e.g., linking the absence of the head coach to student engagement levels). Thematic Formulation: Themes were derived inductively by clustering the conceptual categories generated during axial coding. Categories that shared substantial meanings were abstracted into overarching themes. This process successfully yielded four major themes: Physical Development, Internalisation of Faith, Behavioural Changes, and Challenges. Data Display: Subsequently, the data were systematically presented in descriptive narratives to facilitate interpretation. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Finally, conclusions were continuously verified throughout the

analysis process to ensure that the findings accurately reflected the participants' experiences and the observed phenomena.

## 2.4 Trustworthiness and Minimizing Subjectivity

To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings and strictly minimize the researcher's personal bias or subjectivity, four criteria of qualitative rigor were implemented: Credibility (Triangulation and Member Checking): This study employed source triangulation and technique triangulation by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. Member checking was also conducted by confirming interview results with selected participants to ensure the accuracy of interpretation. Transferability: Transferability was supported through detailed descriptions of the research context, participant characteristics, and localized branch dynamics (Sugiyono 2010). Dependability: Dependability was maintained by documenting each stage of the research process (Sugiyono 2010), creating a clear audit trail from raw transcripts to the final conceptual model. Confirmability: Confirmability was strengthened through systematic documentation and verification of all research findings (Sugiyono 2010) to ensure the final narrative is firmly rooted in the data rather than personal preconceptions.

## 3 Result

The findings of this study revealed four major themes concerning the implementation of the Pagar Nusa training programme, namely physical development, the internalisation of religious values, behavioural changes and worship practices, and challenges in integrating sports and religious education. Each theme is presented below. Pagar Nusa functions as an effective medium for students' physical development by improving students' physical fitness through regular physical conditioning, endurance exercises, flexibility training, and martial arts techniques. Participants reported increased physical endurance, reduced fatigue, better overall health, and improved sleep quality after participating in routine training. Regular attendance also encouraged students to spend their leisure time in more productive activities and develop greater discipline in their daily routines.

However, field observations revealed several instructional challenges. During sessions led solely by assistant coaches, some students showed reduced motivation, lower concentration, and decreased participation. Repetitive teaching methods and the absence of a structured training programme occasionally resulted in boredom and inconsistencies in mastering basic pencak silat techniques.

The internalisation of faith and religious values was systematically implemented throughout every stage of the training process. Students were required to maintain *wudhu*, recite the Qur'an before practice, participate in collective prayers and *wirid*, and demonstrate respect (*adab*) toward coaches, elders, parents, and fellow members, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Integration of Religious Values in Pagar Nusa Training

Religious Practice	Implementation	Observed Impact
Maintaining <i>wudhu</i>	Ritual ablution throughout training	Strengthened self-discipline and spiritual awareness
Qur'an recitation	Before technical practice	Encouraged spiritual preparation
Collective prayer and <i>wirid</i>	Before and after training	Reinforced religious commitment and solidarity
Respect ( <i>adab</i> )	Respect for coaches, elders, parents, and peers	Improved discipline and interpersonal behaviour

Interview data indicated that these practices gradually developed into daily habits rather than merely organizational rules. Participants also perceived coaches as role models who consistently demonstrated responsibility, discipline, and religious commitment.

Participation in Pagar Nusa contributed to positive behavioural changes and improvements in worship practices among students. Participants reported becoming more disciplined, respectful toward parents and teachers, and better able to control their behaviour in social interactions. They showed improved self-control and more consistent worship practices in daily life. Students also reported improvements in daily worship practices, including more consistent prayer, participation in congregational worship, and mutual reminders to perform prayers on time. In addition, the training environment promoted confidence, responsibility, cooperation, and solidarity among members.

The integration of sports and religious education through the Pagar Nusa programme also encountered several challenges despite its positive physical and spiritual outcomes. Variations in instructional quality occurred when training was conducted without direct supervision from the head coach, reducing student engagement. Furthermore, while religious practices were consistently implemented during training sessions, maintaining these habits outside the organization remained dependent on individual commitment and family support. These findings indicate that strengthening coaching management and developing more structured training programmes are essential to optimize the integration of sports and religious education.

To provide a clearer overview of the findings, the main results of this study are summarised in Table 2, which presents the four major themes identified through interviews, observations, and document analysis.

Table 2. Summary of Research Findings

Theme	Main Findings	Supporting Evidence
Physical Development	Improved endurance, flexibility, physical fitness, better sleep quality, productive use of leisure time	Interview and observation data
Internalisation of Faith	Wudhu before training, Qur'an recitation, congregational prayer, wirid, respect (adab)	Interview and observation data
Behavioural Changes	Greater discipline, respect for parents and teachers, increased confidence, cooperation, responsibility	Interview data
Challenges	Inconsistent coaching quality, repetitive instruction, maintaining worship habits outside training	Interview and observation data

As presented in Table 2, the findings demonstrate that Pagar Nusa training contributes not only to students' physical development but also to the internalisation of religious values and positive behavioural changes. Nevertheless, several challenges related to coaching quality and programme implementation remain, indicating the need for continuous improvement to optimise the integration of sports and religious education.

To synthesise the findings presented above, Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual relationships among the major outcomes of the Pagar Nusa training programme.

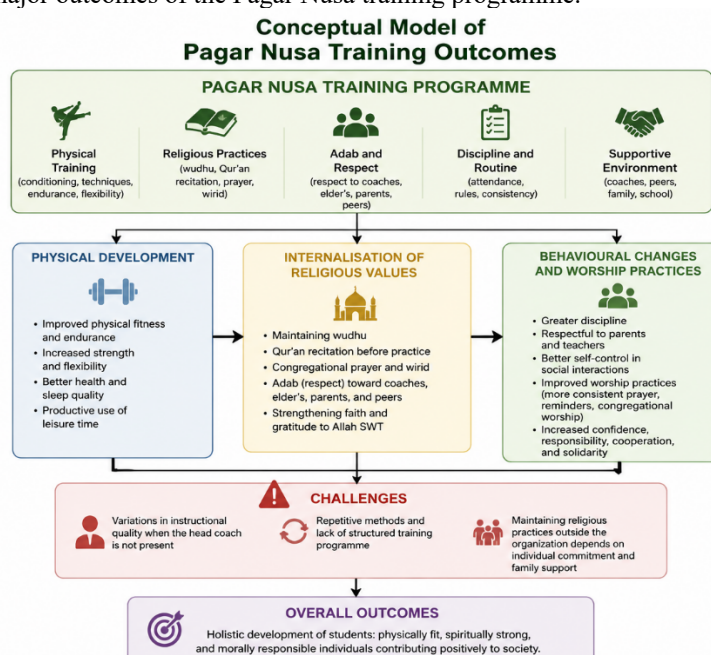


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Figure 1 demonstrates that the integration of structured physical training and religious practices contributes to students' physical development, religious value internalisation, and positive behavioural changes. The model also indicates that coaching consistency, instructional quality, and family support influence the sustainability of these outcomes.

## 4 Discussion

The findings indicate that regular participation in Pagar Nusa training contributes to students' physical fitness and the development of positive daily behaviours. Participants reported improved endurance, better physical condition, and increased discipline, suggesting that structured martial arts training functions not only as physical exercise but also as a medium for character development. These findings are consistent with those of (Aldona Khairulloh, Moh. Nur Kholis 2024), who reported that disciplined pencak silat training improves biomotor abilities, and with (Rahman & Madiun, 2025), who emphasized the role of structured physical activities in promoting positive behavioural change. The integration of physical exercise with religious discipline further strengthens the educational function of Pagar Nusa beyond conventional sports training.

However, this study also identified an important contextual finding that has received limited attention in previous research. While (Setiawan 2023) and (Wakib Kurniawan1, Lilik Susanti, 2024) highlighted the successful internalisation of values through routine habituation and coaches' role modelling, observations at the Ngrenget Branch revealed that the delegation of technical instruction to assistant coaches occasionally reduced student engagement and resulted in inconsistencies in the transmission of fundamental pencak silat techniques. These findings suggest that value internalisation may remain effective through established religious routines and community culture, whereas the quality of technical instruction depends largely on coaching competence and structured training management. This observation extends previous studies by demonstrating that successful integration of sports and religious education requires not only consistent moral guidance but also qualified coaching practices.

Despite these instructional challenges, students continued to demonstrate positive behavioural changes, including improved discipline, respect (*adab*), and religious commitment. The strong cultural and spiritual environment established within the organization appeared to compensate for some technical limitations in coaching. Nevertheless, because this study was conducted within a single local branch, the findings should not be generalized to the entire Pagar Nusa organization. Future studies involving multiple branches are therefore needed to examine whether similar coaching patterns and educational outcomes occur in different organizational contexts.

## 5 Conclusion

Participants reported improved endurance, better physical condition, and increased discipline, suggesting that structured martial arts training functions not only as physical exercise but also as a medium for character development. This finding is consistent with the review by (Vertonghen and Theeboom 2010) which concluded that martial arts practice generally contributes to positive psychosocial development among young participants, including improved self-regulation, psychological well-being, and prosocial behaviour, although the outcomes are influenced by coaching approaches and the training context. This study concludes that Pagar Nusa at the Ngrenget Branch functions as more than a traditional martial arts organization by serving as an integrated medium for physical development (Khairulloh, Kholis, and Setiawan 2024); (Rahman and Madiun 2025), character formation, and the internalisation of religious values among students. Regular training contributes to improved physical fitness, discipline, and healthier daily behaviours, while the integration of religious practices strengthens faith, worship habits, and *adab* through continuous habituation and coaches' role modelling. The findings also reveal that although the organization's spiritual and cultural environment effectively supports students' moral development, inconsistencies in technical instruction may arise when coaching is delegated without adequate pedagogical preparation. These findings extend previous studies by demonstrating that the successful integration of sports and religious education depends not only on value internalisation but also on effective coaching management. Therefore, strengthening coach training and developing standardized training programmes are recommended to optimise both physical development and religious education within Pagar Nusa at the grassroots level.

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