

INTERNALIZATION OF NOBLE MORAL VALUES THROUGH CONTINUOUS HABITUATION AT MTs MUHAMMADIYAH 1 PONOROGO

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Abstract :

Moral character formation lies at the heart of Islamic education, yet sustaining it among adolescents facing constant behavioral and social pressures demands more than occasional moral instruction. Madrasah Tsanawiyah institutions are positioned to address this need through structured, ongoing habituation programs, and this study analyzes how such continuous habituation internalizes noble moral values at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo, identifies the resulting changes in student behavior, and examines the factors that support or hinder that process. Employing a qualitative case study design with a phenomenological perspective, data were gathered through observation, semi structured interviews with the headmaster, Islamic education teachers, and students, and documentation, then analyzed using the interactive model of data reduction, display, and conclusion drawing. Findings show that habituation practices including the 5S culture of smiling, greeting, and courteous conduct, congregational Duha prayer, Qur'anic recitation, memorization of daily prayers and hadith, and routines of discipline and responsibility measurably strengthened students' discipline, social concern, and habitual worship, driven primarily by teacher exemplarship, a religious school culture, program consistency, and family support, while uneven student awareness and external environmental influence constrained the process. These results position sustained habituation as a practical mechanism for character education that schools can replicate, extending the theoretical understanding of value internalization beyond isolated instructional moments toward institutionalized daily practice.

Keywords : Value internalization; noble moral character; sustained habituation; character education; Madrasah Tsanawiyah

Abstrak :

Pembentukan akhlak mulia menjadi inti pendidikan Islam, namun mempertahankannya di tengah tekanan perilaku dan sosial yang terus dihadapi remaja membutuhkan lebih dari sekadar pengajaran moral sesekali. Madrasah Tsanawiyah memiliki posisi strategis untuk menjawab kebutuhan tersebut melalui program pembiasaan yang terstruktur dan berkelanjutan, sehingga penelitian ini menganalisis bagaimana pembiasaan tersebut menginternalisasi nilai-nilai akhlak mulia di MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo, mengidentifikasi perubahan perilaku peserta didik yang dihasilkan, serta mengkaji faktor pendukung dan penghambat prosesnya. Dengan pendekatan kualitatif jenis studi kasus berperspektif fenomenologis, data dihimpun melalui observasi, wawancara semi terstruktur dengan kepala madrasah, guru Pendidikan Agama Islam, dan peserta didik, serta dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa praktik pembiasaan meliputi budaya 5S (senyum, salam, sapa, sopan, santun), salat Duha berjamaah, tadarus Al-Qur'an, hafalan doa harian dan hadis, serta rutinitas kedisiplinan dan tanggung jawab secara nyata memperkuat kedisiplinan, kepedulian sosial, dan kebiasaan beribadah peserta didik, dengan keteladanan guru, budaya madrasah yang religius, konsistensi program, dan dukungan keluarga sebagai pendorong utamanya, sementara perbedaan tingkat kesadaran peserta didik dan pengaruh lingkungan eksternal menjadi penghambatnya. Temuan ini menegaskan pembiasaan berkelanjutan sebagai mekanisme praktis pendidikan karakter yang dapat direplikasi oleh sekolah, sekaligus memperluas pemahaman teoretis internalisasi nilai dari momen pengajaran

yang terisolasi menuju praktik harian yang terlembagakan.

Kata Kunci: Internalisasi nilai; akhlak mulia; pembiasaan berkelanjutan; pendidikan karakter; Madrasah Tsanawiyah

INTRODUCTION

Noble moral character stands as the central aim of Islamic education, yet stating that aim is far easier than sustaining it once adolescents face the accelerating pressures of digital life. An educational process succeeds only when religious knowledge translates into lived conduct, since akhlak mulia is itself the indicator by which the success of Islamic education as a whole is judged (Ma'arif et al., 2024). In practice, however, junior secondary schools increasingly report declining discipline, diminishing respect toward teachers, weaker accountability for assigned tasks, and eroding social concern symptoms that expanding digital access and shifting patterns of social interaction have made harder, not easier, to contain (Hidayat & Hasibuan, 2022). These symptoms point to a structural problem: transmitting religious knowledge is no longer sufficient without a mechanism that installs it into daily conduct.

That mechanism, within Islamic pedagogy, is habituation the deliberate repetition of positive behavior until it becomes second nature. Madrasah Tsanawiyah institutions operationalize this through recurring religious routines the 5S culture of courteous greeting, congregational Duha prayer, Qur'anic recitation, and memorization of daily prayers and hadith. Yet the same body of practice shows that habituation's success is never guaranteed by routine alone; it depends on teacher exemplarship, consistent implementation, a genuinely religious school culture, and family support operating together (Amalia et al., 2022). This conditionality is what turns habituation from a simple administrative checklist into a phenomenon that warrants analytical, not merely descriptive, attention.

A first cluster of prior studies confirms that habituation reliably shapes observable conduct, though each also flags a limit. Aisyah and Anshori (2022) found that daily routine based habituation strengthens positive behavior but still runs up against limited instructional time and uneven student awareness, while Misbah and Jamal (2023) showed that consistently implemented habituation through religious extracurricular activity contributes to internalizing spiritual values through sustained practice. Haris and Anshori (2024) extend this by showing that the surrounding school environment itself functions as a shaping force, inseparable from the habituation occurring within it. Together, these studies establish habituation's behavioral effectiveness beyond reasonable doubt what none resolves is how a given value moves from repeated external practice into an internalized part of a student's personality.

A second, complementary cluster shifts attention from whether habituation works to what makes it work. Yugo (2024) found that the effectiveness of habituated Duha prayer on worship discipline hinges on teachers' capacity for interpersonal

communication and exemplary conduct that students are inclined to imitate echoing the enabling role of teacher modelling already implicated by Amalia et al. (2022). Read together, these two clusters answer "does habituation work" and "what enables it," yet they still treat teacher exemplarship, religious culture, and specific activities as separate variables studied in isolation; qualitative case studies tracing how these components interact as one integrated process, particularly at the Madrasah Tsanawiyah level, remain scarce.

This study's contribution lies precisely there: rather than isolating teacher modelling, school culture, or a single religious activity, it traces how strategy, habituation form, religious culture, and student response interact as a single continuous process of value internalization at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo an integration the studies above have not yet attempted at this level.

Accordingly, this study aims to (1) analyze the process of internalizing noble moral values through sustained habituation at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo, (2) identify the resulting changes in student behavior, and (3) examine the factors that support and hinder that internalization process objectives directly aligned with the integrative gap this review has identified.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a case study design with a phenomenological perspective to examine the internalization of noble character values through continuous habituation at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo. The qualitative approach was appropriate for exploring participants' experiences, meanings, and interpretations within their natural educational context, while the case study and phenomenological perspectives supported an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon within its specific setting (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Creswell & Poth, 2023).

The study was conducted at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo during the implementation of continuous character habituation activities. Participants comprised the principal, two Islamic Religious Education teachers, and three eighth-grade students. Informants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement and relevance to the research focus, with snowball sampling used when additional relevant information or informants were required. Data were obtained through participatory observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. The researcher served as the primary instrument for data collection and interpretation (Creswell & Poth, 2023).

Data analysis followed an interactive qualitative framework involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data were organized and interpreted thematically to identify patterns related to the internalization of noble character values through continuous habituation. Data credibility and trustworthiness were supported through prolonged engagement, source and technique triangulation, and

member checking. These strategies strengthened the credibility and confirmability of interpretations by enabling findings to be cross-checked across different sources and data-collection techniques, while member checking provided participants with an opportunity to review the accuracy and relevance of the interpretations (González-Salgado et al., 2024).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Continuous Habituation as a Mechanism for Internalizing Noble Character Values

The findings indicate that the internalization of noble character values at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo occurs through continuous habituation embedded in the daily life of the madrasah. Activities such as the 5S culture (smile, greeting, salutation, politeness, and courtesy), congregational Duha prayer, Qur'anic recitation, memorization of prayers and hadith, discipline routines, and responsibility practices are not positioned as isolated religious programs but as repeated experiences within the school culture. This pattern suggests that habituation functions as a mechanism through which abstract moral values are transformed into observable and repeatedly practiced behaviors. The finding is consistent with Ma'arif et al. (2024), who found that Islamic character internalization through habituation involves the development of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Similarly, Afifah et al. (2023) found that 5S culture becomes effective when supported by routine activities, teacher modeling, conditioning, and supervision. The present study extends these findings by showing that the effectiveness of habituation is strengthened when religious practices and social conduct are integrated into a single institutional routine rather than implemented as separate activities. Thus, continuous habituation at the madrasah can be understood as a cultural mechanism that connects moral understanding with repeated moral practice (Ma'arif et al., 2024; Afifah et al., 2023).

The scheduled implementation of Duha prayer, Qur'anic recitation, and memorization activities further demonstrates that consistency is an important condition for habituation to develop into an educational culture. The findings show that these activities have become recognizable routines for teachers and students, while grouping students for recitation and memorization enables closer supervision and participation. This finding is comparable with Sari and Rohmah (2025), whose study found that religious culture develops through habituation activities supported by the involvement of the entire madrasah community. It also corresponds with Maela et al. (2023), who reported that consistent and directed habituation can strengthen discipline, responsibility, and other positive character traits. However, the present study adds an important contextual dimension the internalization process is not dependent merely on the frequency of activities but on their integration into the ordinary rhythm of institutional life. The contribution of this finding is therefore the identification of continuity and

institutional integration, rather than repetition alone, as a key condition for transforming religious activities into a sustained character-building process (Sari & Rohmah, 2025; Maela et al., 2023).

From Behavioral Compliance to Personal Awareness

A second substantive finding concerns the development of students' behavior following sustained habituation. The observed changes involve discipline, responsibility, politeness, religiosity, social interaction, and self awareness. Students increasingly participate in religious routines, arrive on time, maintain personal and environmental cleanliness, complete responsibilities, and apply the 5S culture in their interactions. More importantly, some students reportedly begin to perform these behaviors without constant external prompting. This distinction is important because character formation cannot be adequately understood only from visible behavioral compliance the deeper issue is whether repeated behavior becomes personally meaningful and selfregulated. The finding is consistent with Sari (2023), who emphasized the role of Islamic Religious Education in strengthening disciplined character, and with Maela et al. (2023), who demonstrated the relationship between consistent habituation and the development of disciplined behavior. Nevertheless, this study goes beyond the behavioral dimension by indicating a movement from externally regulated conduct toward greater personal awareness, suggesting that habituation can become an initial pathway toward internalized character when repetition is accompanied by guidance and meaningful participation (Sari, 2023; Maela et al., 2023).

The development of politeness and social interaction through the 5S culture also indicates that habituation operates beyond individual religious observance. Greeting teachers, speaking politely, respecting peers, and maintaining positive communication provide repeated social situations in which moral values are practiced relationally. This finding supports Afifah et al. (2023), who identified routine activities, spontaneous practices, conditioning, role modeling, habituation, advice, and supervision as important components of 5S implementation. It is also compatible with Hidayat et al. (2022), who emphasized the role of Islamic education in developing students' social character in response to contemporary social conditions. The specific contribution of the present study lies in demonstrating that religious habituation and social-character habituation reinforce one another religious routines provide repeated opportunities for discipline and responsibility, while social routines provide opportunities to enact respect, courtesy, and empathy. Character internalization therefore appears as an interconnected process rather than a collection of separate moral traits (Afifah et al., 2023; Hidayat et al., 2022).

The reported transfer of positive behavior into students' family lives provides further evidence of this internalization process. Students described becoming more accustomed to helping parents, maintaining respectful communication, and carrying out religious responsibilities beyond the madrasah environment. Although these experiences

cannot be interpreted as proof of complete or permanent character transformation, they indicate that habituation may extend beyond the institutional setting when students begin to reproduce learned behaviors in other social contexts. This finding complements Ma'arif et al. (2024), who conceptualized character internalization as involving moral knowledge, moral feeling, and moral action, and is also consistent with recent research emphasizing the importance of sustained religious habituation in developing students' daily religious behavior. The present study contributes by highlighting behavioral transfer across contexts as an important indicator for interpreting internalization the stronger the connection between madrasah routines and students' everyday lives, the less character education becomes confined to formal school activities (Ma'arif et al., 2024).

Teacher Modeling and the Madrasah Social Environment

The findings demonstrate that habituation does not operate independently of teachers. Teachers function simultaneously as organizers, supervisors, guides, and behavioral models. Their punctuality, politeness, neatness, friendliness, and respect toward others provide concrete examples of the values that students are expected to practice. This finding is strongly consistent with Masinambow et al. (2025), whose study identifies teachers as strategic role models in character education, particularly for values such as honesty, discipline, responsibility, and tolerance. It also corresponds with Afifah et al. (2023), who found teacher modeling to be one of the principal methods for establishing 5S culture. The present study extends this perspective by showing that teacher modeling becomes more influential when it is embedded in repeated institutional routines students do not merely observe a teacher's example once, but encounter the same behavioral expectations across daily activities. The contribution is therefore the identification of consistency between teacher modeling and institutional habituation as an important mechanism connecting role modeling with sustained character practice (Masinambow et al., 2025; Afifah et al., 2023).

The madrasah environment and students' social relationships also function as important reinforcing conditions. A religious school culture, parental support, and positive peer influence encourage students to maintain the practices established at school, whereas inconsistent support outside school can weaken continuity. This finding is consistent with Sari and Rohmah (2025), who identified institutional involvement and supporting conditions as important in developing students' religious culture. It also corresponds with Hidayat et al. (2022), who positioned Islamic education within a broader social environment rather than restricting character formation to classroom instruction. More recent research likewise identifies institutional commitment, teacher consistency, and a conducive environment as supporting factors in religious character formation. The present study therefore suggests that habituation is best understood ecologically teachers initiate and model the behavior, the madrasah normalizes it through routine, and family and peer environments either reinforce or weaken its continuation. Its specific

contribution is the emphasis on alignment among teacher behavior, institutional culture, and students' social environments as a condition for sustainable internalization (Sari & Rohmah, 2025; Hidayat et al., 2022).

Obstacles, Adaptation, and the Sustainability of Character Habituation

Despite the strong institutional commitment, the findings reveal that habituation does not automatically produce uniform outcomes among all students. Differences in self awareness, motivation, initial reluctance, family background, external influences, limited time, and technical interruptions can reduce the consistency of participation. This finding is important because it challenges an overly deterministic interpretation of habituation repeated activities may create opportunities for character formation, but repetition alone does not guarantee internalization. Similar challenges have been identified by Sari and Rohmah (2025), who examined supporting and inhibiting factors in the development of religious culture, and by Fajri and Hadi (2025), whose study reported differences in student discipline, parental support, and facilities as challenges in implementing religious habituation. Recent research also emphasizes that students' personal characteristics and the quality of school-family collaboration can influence the sustainability of religious character programs. Thus, the present study contributes a more conditional interpretation of habituation by demonstrating that continuity must be accompanied by adaptive support, particularly for students whose readiness for habituation differs from that of their peers (Sari & Rohmah, 2025; Fajri & Hadi, 2025).

The madrasah's response to these obstacles consists of coordination among teachers, monitoring, supervision, guidance, strengthening student independence, cooperation with parents, and reinforcement through rewards and sanctions. These responses indicate that character education at the research site is managed as an ongoing process rather than as a fixed program. Such adaptation is consistent with the findings of Ma'arif et al. (2024), which demonstrate that habituation-based character internalization requires systematic educational support, and with Masinambow et al. (2025), who emphasize the importance of institutional support and teacher modeling in character education. However, the present study provides a further insight when students do not yet demonstrate internal motivation, the madrasah does not abandon habituation but combines external regulation with guidance until students become more accustomed to the expected behavior. The specific contribution is therefore the recognition of adaptive continuity maintaining the consistency of character programs while varying the intensity of guidance according to students' needs as a practical strategy for sustaining internalization (Ma'arif et al., 2024; Masinambow et al., 2025).

Overall, the findings suggest that internalization of noble character at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo is best understood as an interconnected process involving repeated practice, teacher modeling, institutional culture, social reinforcement, and adaptive supervision. The study does not support the assumption that religious routines

alone are sufficient to establish stable character; rather, their educational significance emerges when routines are consistently modeled, socially reinforced, monitored, and gradually connected to students' personal awareness and everyday behavior. This interpretation strengthens recent research showing that religious habituation can support discipline, religiosity, politeness, responsibility, and Islamic character, while extending that literature by identifying institutional integration, contextual transfer, and adaptive continuity as three interrelated conditions that help explain why habituation can move beyond routine compliance toward deeper character internalization (Ma'arif et al., 2024; Sari & Rohmah, 2025; Masinambow et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the internalization of noble character values at MTs Muhammadiyah 1 Ponorogo is supported by continuous habituation integrated into the daily life of the madrasah through religious, social, disciplinary, and responsibility-oriented activities. Theoretically, the findings extend the understanding of habituation by demonstrating that character internalization is strengthened through the integration of repeated practice, teacher modeling, a supportive religious school culture, and reinforcement from family and peers, enabling positive behavior to develop from externally regulated compliance toward greater personal awareness. Practically, the findings indicate that madrasah-based character education should maintain consistent habituation while providing adaptive guidance for students whose levels of awareness and participation differ. The study is limited to a phenomenological investigation within a single madrasah context, which limits the transferability of its findings to other educational settings. Future research should examine similar habituation programs across multiple madrasahs and investigate how school–family collaboration can sustain the internalization of noble character values beyond the school environment.

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