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The Religious Habits Program's Implementation as an Attempt to Mould Students' Islamic Character

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: Developing students' Islamic character is one of the primary objectives of religious-based education, yet religious habituation programs frequently struggle with implementation and consistency. This study examines the implementation of the religious habituation program at Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School and its function in fostering students' Islamic character.

Methodology: The principal, homeroom teachers, Islamic education teachers, and a few chosen students served as informants in this descriptive qualitative study. Miles and Huberman's interactive approach, which consists of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, was used to examine the data gathered through documentation, in-depth interviews, and observation. Triangulation of sources and methods was used to guarantee the veracity of the data.

Main Findings: The results demonstrate that organised practices, such as communal Dhuha prayer, Qur'anic recitation, group prayers, and disciplinary training, are used to practice religious habituation. These activities effectively uphold religious principles and aid in developing students' character. Limited facilities, the' lack of discipline among confident pupils, and differing parental support are among the difficulties. The school's institutional dedication, an intense religious atmosphere, and faculty involvement are all supporting aspects.

Novelty/Originality of this study: The study concludes that Islamic character is effectively shaped by religious habituation. It is innovative in that it maps the characteristics that facilitate and hinder the boarding school setting and provides a contextual approach to enhancing religious culture in Islamic secondary schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Fundamentally, education seeks to mould students' personalities and character in line with cultural and religious beliefs, in addition to fostering their academic growth [1]. The younger generation faces a number of difficult issues in the current globalised world, such as the quick dissemination of knowledge, popular culture, and contemporary lifestyles that frequently go against Islamic values [2]-[4]. This fact has led to a moral crisis, a deterioration in discipline, and a drop in religious consciousness among teenagers [5]-[7]. This circumstance shows that Islamic religious education in schools and Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) should focus on establishing religious principles in everyday life rather than only imparting knowledge [8], [9]. Strengthening

character education programs based on religious customs in schools and Islamic boarding schools is therefore essential.

Consistent religious behaviour is one tactic seen to be successful in fostering Islamic character. Recurring religious practices, including congregational prayer, reciting the Quran, group prayer, and other Islamic activities, are examples of these habits [10]-[12]. Students acquire Islamic teachings both conceptually and practically through organised routines. Numerous earlier studies have demonstrated that religious practices help improve moral principles, promote discipline, and create a sense of responsibility [13], [14]. Thus, in the context of formal education and Islamic boarding schools, the phenomenon of religious habits is a crucial topic for further research [15]-[17].

As an Islamic institution, Nurul Hikmah Junior High School has put in place a program of religious habits to help its pupils develop their Islamic character. According to preliminary observations, the school holds religious events every day, including congregational prayer, reciting the Quran, conducting the Dhuha prayer, and reciting the Asmaul Husana (Asmaul Husana). There are also yearly celebrations of Islamic holidays and weekly religious sermons following Friday prayers. The goal of this curriculum is to help kids develop religious ideals so they can be incorporated into their everyday life at home and at school. However, there are still a number of challenges in putting it into practice.

A tiny percentage of pupils do not participate in events with complete discipline, such as being late, not paying attention during group prayer, or not taking the Quran recitation seriously [18]-[20]. Furthermore, keeping regular religious practices is significantly hampered by the effects of digital media and the surroundings outside of schools. Positive shifts in student attitudes, however, were noted, including a habit of greeting, greater devotional practice, and civility towards teachers [21]-[23]. This fact suggests that, while it still has to be reinforced and assessed, Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School religious habituation curriculum has a great deal of potential to mould students' Islamic character. This is the research's main focus.

From a practical standpoint, research on the religious habituation program's execution at Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School is crucial since it has a direct bearing on the character development of the students. Habituation builds Islamic character, which not only improves accountability and discipline but also cultivates social values like compassion, teamwork, and respect for peers and teachers [24]-[26]. Teachers can utilise this information as a foundation for assessment and introspection to better manage religious activities [27]-[29]. The research findings can be used as a guide for educational institutions to create more methodical and long-lasting habituation techniques. As a result, this study significantly raises the standard of character education in Islamic schools.

This study is significant from a theoretical standpoint as well since it closes a research vacuum on the use of religious habituation at the secondary school level in Islamic countries, namely at Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School. Prior studies have mostly concentrated on Islamic elementary and high schools (madrasah ibtidaiyah), with very few studies conducted at the Islamic junior high school level [30], [31]. Additionally, prior studies have tended to concentrate on a particular element, like collective prayer or the 3S exercises, without thoroughly analysing how the full religious habituation program is integrated. As a result, this study will likely contribute to the body of knowledge and offer a fresh viewpoint on how religious habituation shapes students' Islamic personalities.

Education fosters academic achievement and shapes students' character in line with cultural and religious values [32]-[34]. In the era of globalisation, the rapid spread of information, popular culture, and modern lifestyles often contradict Islamic values, contributing to moral crises, declining discipline, and weakening religious awareness among youth [35]-[37]. These conditions indicate that Islamic education in schools and pesantren should focus on strengthening religious principles in daily life rather than merely transferring knowledge [38], [39].

One practical approach to building Islamic character is habituating religious practices such as congregational prayer, Qur'an recitation, Dhuha prayer, and other structured routines [40], [41]. Prior studies confirm religious habituation promotes discipline, responsibility, and moral values [39], [42], [43]. However, most existing research has concentrated on Islamic elementary or senior high schools [44], or examined only specific activities like collective prayer, Qur'an recitation, or the 3S program [45], [46]. Few studies comprehensively analyse religious habituation programs at the Islamic junior high school level [47], [48].

Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School represents a critical case, as it integrates daily, weekly, and annual religious routines, from congregational prayers and Qur'an recitations to Islamic holiday celebrations. Preliminary observations show positive impacts on students' attitudes, such as increased devotion, politeness, and social interaction. Nevertheless, challenges remain, including limited facilities, inconsistent discipline, and external influences of digital culture [18], [23].

The novelty of this study lies in its holistic examination of religious habituation at the Islamic junior high school level. Unlike prior works that focused on a single activity or educational tier, this research analyses the whole program, explores supporting and inhibiting factors, and highlights the collaborative role of teachers, principals, students, and parents. The study therefore contributes fresh theoretical and practical insights, offering

a contextual model for strengthening Islamic character education through religious habituation in Islamic secondary schools.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

2.1. Design of Research

A descriptive qualitative technique was used in this study [49]-[51]. A qualitative design was selected since the study's goal was to thoroughly examine and comprehend the implementation of religious habituation programs at Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School and their function in forming students' Islamic character. Descriptive research focuses on describing occurrences as they happen in authentic settings and presenting data in a narrative fashion [52], [53]. With this method, the researchers could fully document teachers' and students' experiences, interpretations, and viewpoints.

2.2. Research Participants

Purposive sampling was used to choose the research participants based on their direct participation in the program. The principal, homeroom teachers, Islamic education instructors, and students were among the informants [54]. Since these groups are the most pertinent participants in religious habituation and were anticipated to offer rich and varied data, the sample size was restricted to them. This selection guaranteed contextual accuracy and data depth, even though the sample might not represent all potential viewpoints.

2.3. Methods and Tools for Gathering Data

Three primary methods were used:

1) Observation: Close observation of religious habituation practices, including group prayers, Dhuha prayer, reciting the Qur'an, and discipline practices. Activity, participation, and orderliness metrics were the main emphasis of an observation sheet.
2) Interviews: Semi-structured, in-depth interviews with students, teachers, and principals to examine objectives, activity kinds, strategies for implementation, and difficulties. Open-ended questions allowed probing of unexpected insights.
3) Documentation: Gathering program schedules, diaries, administrative papers, and photos about habituation activities.

Several tools were used to help guarantee relevant and thorough data.

2.4. Methods of Data Analysis

Data were analysed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model [55], [56], consisting of:

1) Data reduction: picking and concentrating on pertinent data.
2) Data display: organising data into narrative summaries and matrices to identify emerging themes.
3) Drawing and verifying conclusions: creating interpretations and ensuring data sources are consistent [57].

2.5. Methods of Research

The research procedures followed sequential stages:

Table 1. Research Procedures: Stages, Activities, and Outputs

Stages	Activities	Output
Preparation	- Designing research instruments (observation sheet, interview guide) - Submitting research proposal and obtaining permission from Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School	Research permit and validated instruments
Data Collection	- Conducting classroom and school observations of religious habituation activities - Carrying out in-depth interviews with principal, teachers, and students - Collecting supporting documents (schedules, diaries, photos)	Primary and secondary data
Data Analysis	- Reducing and coding raw data - Displaying data in narrative summaries and matrices - Identifying emerging patterns and themes	Thematic categories and coded data
Validation	- Conducting source triangulation (principal, teachers, students) - Method triangulation (observation, interview, documentation) - Member checking with participants - Maintaining audit trail	Validated and trustworthy findings
Reporting	- Compiling research results - Drafting analysis and discussion - Drawing conclusions and recommendations	Research report / article manuscript

2.6. Data Validity and Trustworthiness

To ensure data validity, the study applied:

1) Source triangulation: comparing information from principals, teachers, and students.

2) Method triangulation: comparing results from observation, interview, and documentation.
3) Extended engagement and persistent observation: researchers spent sufficient time in the field to build trust and gain accurate insights.
4) Member checking: preliminary findings were confirmed with participants to avoid misinterpretation.
5) Audit trail: all data collection and analysis steps were documented to enhance reliability and accountability.

2.7. Limitations

The qualitative approach provided rich contextual insights but limited generalizability beyond Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School. While the purposive sample size ensured relevance, it may not represent all variations of student experiences. Future research could involve multiple schools to strengthen external validity.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

Based on observations, Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School conducts daily, monthly, and yearly activities as part of a planned program for religious habituation. The following table provides a summary of the information:

Table 2. Religious Habituation Activities at Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School

Type of Activity	Forms of Implementation	Purpose and Impact
Daily	- Asmaul Husna recitation - Collective Dhuha prayer - Qur'an recitation before lessons	Instill discipline, improve Qur'an reading skills, foster religious atmosphere, and habituate students to worship collectively.
Weekly	- "Kultum" (short Islamic talk) after Friday prayers - Basic Islamic study led by teachers	Build students' self-confidence, public speaking skills, and religious knowledge.
Annual	- Commemoration of Islamic holidays (Prophet's Birthday, Isra' Mi'raj, Hijri New Year, Nuzulul Qur'an)	Strengthen students' identity, foster teamwork, and encourage love for Islamic traditions.

According to observations, over 80% of students participate in the daily Dhuha prayer, which is conducted without incident. It is a powerful instrument for unity and discipline since teachers actively lead rows, perform prayers, and inspire kids. Every morning before class, the Qur'an is recited, which gives students more self-assurance and consistency when reading it.

Students can practice public speaking during the weekly "kultum." Despite their initial anxiety, the majority of pupils eventually adjusted and gained confidence. Instructors stated that this practice influenced students' self-esteem and communication abilities in addition to their understanding of Islam.

Students participate in the Prophet's Birthday and Nuzulul Qur'an celebrations, among other yearly Islamic holiday celebrations (PHBI), as organizers, Qur'anic reciters, young preachers, and Islamic art performers. According to interviews and documentation, students were glad to have participated since these activities improved their understanding of Islamic culture, promoted teamwork, and established social ties.

According to observations and interviews, pupils have improved their discipline, manners, and sense of responsibility. They now keep the classroom tidy, welcome teachers and peers more regularly, and participate in academic and religious events with more unity. Instructors agreed that these behaviours showed growth in students' Islamic character development.

However, there are still several difficulties. The Dhuha prayer is still missed by some students who arrive late. Distractions from social media also impair focus when praying or reciting the Qur'an. Furthermore, due to a lack of parental support, behaviours formed at school are not fully maintained at home.

This study offers a thorough mapping of daily, weekly, and annual activities at the Islamic junior high school level, whereas previous research on religious habituation frequently concentrated on particular practices like group prayer, Qur'anic recitation, or character outcomes in elementary or senior high schools. In contrast to other research, this study emphasizes the convergence of character education, worship, and life skills (such as teamwork, leadership, and public speaking). The results also demonstrate that students' organizational participation in yearly events and teachers' active participation are critical to maintaining the program. This aspect was not as prominent in previous research.

Overall, the program has proven successful in forming Islamic character; however, in order to be sustained, parental engagement must be increased, and digital distractions must be addressed. With these

enhancements, other Islamic secondary schools may find the Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School model useful for implementing comprehensive religious habituation programs.

The program is operating smoothly; however, there have been a few issues. First, some children continue to exhibit poor discipline, as evidenced by their tardiness, which causes them to miss the Dhuha prayer. Second, social media and technology can occasionally divert students' attention, causing them to become less attentive during group prayer or tadarus (reciting the Quran). Third, the habits formed at school are not entirely transferred to the home since parental engagement is still below ideal. This barrier makes it difficult for the school to keep enhancing the efficacy of the curriculum.

Overall, the study's findings show that Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School religious habituation program was successfully implemented and positively influenced the growth of the students' Islamic character. Students learn to live out religious principles on a daily basis through regular daily, weekly, and annual events. Although more parental support is still required, the program's success is mostly due to the participation of the kids, the principal, and the teachers. The religious habituation program has the potential to become a successful model of Islamic character education in Islamic secondary schools by enhancing discipline, uniformity, and collaboration between families and schools.

3.2. Discussion

Through regular activities like congregational Dhuha prayer, Quran recitation, group prayers before and after classes, and the practice of greeting and smiling, the research findings show that the religious habituation program is implemented at Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School methodically and consistently. This program is seen as a calculated attempt by the school to mould the Islamic character of its students, rather than just a ceremonial practice. Although there are differences in the degree of discipline and sincerity, this is consistent with observational studies showing students actively participating in religious events.

Religious habituation is viewed as the cornerstone for cultivating noble character, according to interviews with the principal and teachers. Teachers of Islamic education have stressed that character development is not just cognitively taught; rather, it must be internalised via repeated practice in order for pupils to incorporate it into their everyday conduct. This supports the idea of habituation-based character education, which holds that values are easier to internalise when they are applied regularly and in authentic situations. These results are consistent with Abbas and Abidin study, which shows that religious instruction in schools can enhance students' worship discipline and cultivate a religious mindset in their everyday life [15], [41]. In a similar vein, Hasnadi and Khoir study demonstrates that religious education in elementary schools has a major role in fostering Islamic values in children from a young age [14], [38]. The emphasis on the value of religious activities in helping kids develop their character is where the similarities lie.

Nevertheless, this survey also discovered that student participation varied, especially when it came to extracurricular activities. While some pupils were quite enthusiastic, others were more formal. This stands in slight contrast to the findings of Karnoto dan Komariah study, which found that nearly all students participated in religious activities with no discernible distinctions [12], [24]. As a result, this study offers a more accurate picture, indicating that students' internal drive and family support continue to impact the success of religious practices. The school has a rather well-structured administrative framework in place to support the curriculum in terms of documentation, which includes daily schedules, attendance records for activities, and photo documentation. In contrast to the results of Maryam study, which showed that poor management of religious activities hampered character development, this shows good program management[19]. Thus, this study highlights how crucial school governance is to facilitating the execution of religious habituation initiatives.

This study is unique since it focuses on Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School, an Islamic junior high school with a pesantren foundation. Combining religious habituation with pesantren culture ensures that activities are not just formal but also culturally sensitive. In contrast to earlier research that mostly concentrated on public schools or Islamic elementary schools (madrasah ibtidaiyah), this study offers a fresh viewpoint on how religious habituation might be applied more thoroughly in a semi-pesantren setting. This study also adds a new dimension to the differences in student participation by showing that parental support, the role of the homeroom teacher, and internal student characteristics all significantly impact the results of religious habituation programs. This is a significant finding that has not received much attention in earlier studies.

This study's contribution is to offer schools useful suggestions for enhancing methods for internalising religious values, such as more individualised teacher mentoring, improved parent-teacher communication, and the incorporation of religious values into general education classes. In terms of academic research, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on religiously orientated character education in Islamic junior high schools, which is comparatively understudied in comparison to primary or Islamic elementary schools. This study demonstrates that religious practices have been found to be significant and successful in moulding kids' Islamic character, even though their success still necessitates the cooperation of families, students, teachers, and schools. These results support the idea that character education must be ingrained in daily life through tangible and long-lasting programs rather than just being taught.

3.2.1. Factors that Support

The research findings demonstrate that the religious habituation program is carried out at Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School methodically and consistently through routine activities like congregational Dhuha prayer, Quran recitation, group prayers before and after classes, and the practice of greeting and smiling. Instead of merely a ceremonial exercise, this program is viewed as a deliberate effort by the school to shape the Islamic character of its students. Religious habituation is the cornerstone for developing noble character, as evidenced by observational studies that showed enthusiastic student participation backed by teachers and school administration.

According to interviews with the principal and teachers, for children to incorporate principles into their everyday behaviour, character development must go beyond cognitive instruction and be internalised via repeated practice. In contrast to earlier research indicating poor organisation hampered results, the established administrative framework—daily schedules, attendance records, and photo documentation—demonstrates strong program administration.

3.2.2. Difficulties

Despite general stability, this study found that student engagement varied, particularly in extracurricular activities. Some pupils participated more professionally, while others were quite excited. This result is in contrast to earlier research that found consistently high levels of engagement. The findings imply that homeroom teacher involvement, family support, and internal motivation are essential success factors. These difficulties show that habituation is influenced by contextual and individual factors rather than being automatically internalised.

3.2.3. Effects

Students' discipline in worship has improved due to the curriculum, which has also promoted the growth of an Islamic perspective in daily life. When religious habituation is combined with pesantren culture, the rituals become formal and culturally rooted, providing a more comprehensive approach than studies that merely look at public schools or basic Islamic institutions. The study also adds clarity by demonstrating how essential elements like teacher mentoring and parental support are in determining the extent of internalisation, which paints a more accurate picture of how adolescents develop their religious character.

3.2.4. Relevance to Other Islamic Schools in Practice

1) This study offers helpful insights for other Islamic institutions looking to improve religiously oriented character education. Schools can improve results by:
2) Parent-teacher communication should be strengthened to guarantee that family support is in line with school programs.
3) Supplying instructors or homeroom advisers with individualised mentorship to help less motivated pupils.
4) When religious principles are incorporated into general education courses, character education becomes inseparable from academic learning.
5) Establish systematic monitoring and document procedures to guarantee the long-term viability of religious habituation initiatives.

4. CONCLUSION

The results of this study show that Nurul Hikmah Islamic Junior High School follows a comprehensive and consistent religious habituation program. Along with weekly Islamic lectures and annual Islamic holiday celebrations, daily activities, including congregational Dhuha prayer, communal prayer, and Quranic recitation, have successfully formed students' Islamic character, especially in social values, discipline, responsibility, and etiquette. Teachers who serve as role models, the principal's guidance in enforcing policies, student encouragement, and organized paperwork contribute to the program's success. There are still issues, though, like uneven student involvement, the impact of digital media, and a lack of parental support at home.

Theoretically, this study bridges the gap between formal education and community-based religious traditions by demonstrating that spiritual practices are better internalized with pesantren culture. This helps to develop habituation-based Islamic character education. This research emphasises the importance of persistent practice in real-world settings as the foundation of internalising values and enhancing current ideas, primarily concentrating on cognitive training or ceremonial activities. The study suggests that to balance religious habituation at home and at school, schools and parents should work together more closely through frequent communication forums, seminars, and cooperative activities. To make habituation more interesting, teachers are urged to include religious beliefs in all disciplines, offer individualized mentoring to less motivated pupils, and employ various techniques such as group discussions, storytelling, and reflective journaling. On the other hand,

parents should consistently support their children's spiritual growth, control their exposure to digital media, and promote religious rituals at home.

One of the study's weaknesses is that it only looked at one school using a pesantren-based paradigm, which would have limited the findings' applicability to other settings like public or urban Islamic schools. Furthermore, because the study primarily relied on qualitative data, it was impossible to quantify the extent of students' internalization. To enable comparison, it is advised that studies be expanded to include public, private, urban, and rural school types in future research. Quantitative or mixed-method approaches may be employed to assess how well habituation programs work to improve particular character qualities. Furthermore, given how quickly the educational landscape is evolving, studying how digital media either facilitates or impedes religious habituation might be beneficial.

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Since the author admits that this research is far from flawless, helpful critiques and recommendations are greatly valued for future advancements. This study would help advance character education based on Islamic ideals, especially in Islamic junior high schools.

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