

INTERNALIZING RELIGIOUS VALUES THROUGH HABITUATION AND MODELING METHODS IN SEKOLAH RENDAH INTEGRITAS TERAS ISLAM (SRITI) AL-QAWWAM

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Abstract

The increasing exposure of students to digital influences has raised concerns about the weakening of religious character in elementary education. Grounded in Thorndike's learning theory and Bandura's Social Learning Theory, this study examines how habituation and modeling contribute to the internalization of religious values at Sekolah Rendah Integritas Teras Islam (SRITI) Al-Qawwam. Previous studies have mainly focused on routine practices without exploring the integration of habituation and modeling within a structured system adapted to students' developmental stages. This study employed a descriptive qualitative design involving a principal, two teachers, and two students selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using thematic analysis. The findings show that religious values are internalized through structured daily activities such as greetings, congregational prayers, *tahfidz*, cleanliness practices, and *qailullah*. These are implemented based on students' developmental levels and reinforced through teacher modeling. The integration of repetitive practices and observable behaviors fosters discipline, responsibility, and spiritual awareness. This study highlights the synergy between behaviorist and social cognitive approaches and emphasizes the importance of structured habituation supported by teacher modeling in developing sustainable religious character.

Keywords: Internalization of religious values, habituation, modeling, religious character, SRITI Qawwam.

INTRODUCTION

The reinforcement of religious character is a crucial aspect in shaping students who are not only intellectually intelligent but also possess moral and spiritual integrity¹. From a theoretical perspective, character formation can be explained by Thorndike's learning theory, which emphasizes

¹ Ailula Mufidatus Solihah dkk., "Teacher's Role: Implementation of Religious Character Education through the Habituation Method in Elementary School," *Jurnal Ilmiah Sekolah Dasar* 8, no. 3 (2024): 402–12.

the role of repeated stimulus–response interactions (the Law of Exercise), and by Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, which highlights the importance of observational learning and role modeling. These theories suggest that religious character can be developed through consistent habituation supported by exemplary behavior². Amid the increasingly complex changes of the modern era and the challenges of globalization, religious character education serves as a vital foundation for preparing students to face social pressures and technological developments. Particularly at the elementary school level, the cultivation of religious character plays a strategic role as the initial stage in developing personalities grounded in religious values, enabling students to grow into individuals who are faithful, devout, and morally upright. However, there are still challenges in ensuring consistent and effective implementation of religious character education in elementary schools, especially through continuous habituation³.

The habituation method is one of the most effective approaches to fostering religious character education at the elementary school level because it is theoretically grounded in behaviorist principles, in which repeated practices strengthen behavioral patterns, and is supported by social learning processes through modeling. This method involves the structured repetition of religious activities such as daily prayers, congregational worship, Qur’an recitation, greeting and smiling habits, and the practice of moral values as an integral part of a systematic school culture. Moreover, this habituation is implemented gradually according to students’ age and grade level, accompanied by the teacher’s role as a model and provider of positive reinforcement, as well as the active participation of parents and the community. Such an approach not only instills worship routines but also shapes a religious moral identity that becomes embedded in students’ daily lives. However, repetition alone is not sufficient. The effectiveness of habituation largely depends on the presence of a supportive social environment and the teacher’s role as a behavioral role model who can be observed and emulated by students³.

Support for the effectiveness of the habituation method has also been found in studies conducted in Malaysia. For example, research conducted at Madrasah Al-Muhibbin in Melaka showed that the habituation method is highly effective in shaping students’ religious character through repeated religious activities that have become part of the school’s culture. This method helps to instill spiritual discipline and a consistent sense of religious responsibility among students. In addition, a study on strategies for strengthening religious character through the study of Kitab Turats in several Islamic boarding schools (*pondok pesantren*) in Selangor found that habituation through discussions and the learning of local religious texts strengthens values such as honesty and responsibility⁴. These habituation practices are relevant to be adapted within the context of elementary schools in Indonesia.

At present, Indonesia faces various challenges in developing students’ religious character, particularly in an era of rapid technological advancement. The changing times and technological progress pose unique challenges for religious character education in elementary schools. Students are increasingly exposed to diverse forms of digital content that are not always aligned with moral and religious values. This has led to a weakening of religious character, as reflected in student behaviors such as a lack of discipline, tolerance, and spiritual awareness⁵. This phenomenon is further exacerbated by insufficient supervision and consistent guidance, both from the school environment

² Albert Bandura, “Human agency in social cognitive theory.,” *American psychologist* 44, no. 9 (1989): 1175

³ Sri Lestari, “Teacher’s Efforts in Instilling Student Religious Character Education Through the Habituation Method,” *Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan dan Pembelajaran* 7, no. 2 (2023): 295–304.

⁴ Muzammil Muzammil dan Noer Kholis, “Strategi Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Religius Peserta Didik melalui Kajian Kitab Turats di Pondok An-Nahdloh Selangor Malaysia,” *JIP-Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 8, no. 4 (2025): 3983–91.

⁵ Rustan Efendy dan Irmwaddah Irmwaddah, *Peran pendidikan agama Islam dalam membentuk karakter religius siswa*, 2022, <http://ejurnal.iainpare.ac.id/index.php/JurnalPAI/article/view/1976>.

and the family. The character crisis often occurs not because children do not know what is right, but because they lack real role models. Amid the flood of digital content, students need direct social interaction with educators who can exemplify religious values through real actions, not merely theoretical explanations in the classroom. Therefore, religious character education must be designed using approaches that are adaptive to the demands of the times. In this regard, the role of the family and the school environment is crucial in implementing effective religious character education.

In addition, technological advancements that provide easy access to information also have the potential to exert negative influences that disrupt the internalization of religious values⁶. Content such as violence, pornography, and values that contradict religious teachings may lead students toward deviant behavior. Therefore, religious character education needs to be designed with an approach that is adaptive to technological advancements⁷.

Elementary school teachers (PGSD) play a strategic role in shaping students' religious character. As moral exemplars and guiding figures, elementary teachers can serve as guardians of students' ethics by directly practicing religious values such as greetings, prayers, and good manners, as well as providing guidance during social interactions⁸. Similarly, the social environment at school and within the family plays a crucial role in determining the success of efforts to strengthen students' religious character. The inconsistency between the values taught at school and the influences from the external environment becomes one of the main obstacles. Therefore, synergy among the roles of schools, teachers, families, and communities is essential to create an educational ecosystem that consistently and sustainably supports the formation of religious character⁹.

Recent developments show that many Islamic-based elementary schools, including Sekolah Rendah Integritas Teras Islam (SRITI) Al-Qawwam, have sought to implement habituation activities as the main method for strengthening students' religious character. These activities include religious routines such as praying before lessons, performing *salat dhuha* in congregation, regular Qur'an recitation, and practicing Islamic manners and etiquette. Research indicates that repeated, structured habituation can significantly enhance students' faith and piety while fostering positive behaviors that reflect religious character in their daily lives.

The methods of habituation and role modeling play a highly important and effective role in enhancing the religious character of students in Islamic elementary schools¹⁰. Routine and consistent habituation instill religious values in students, making them an integral to their character. This is supported by Basri's research, which found that the development of students' religious character at Madrasah Aliyah Miftahul Ulum Purwakarta implemented through scheduled religious activities demonstrates that the habituation method is highly effective in the internalization of religious values¹¹.

⁶ Lita Kurnia dan Ahmad Edwar, "Pengaruh negatif di era teknologi informasi dan komunikasi pada remaja (perspektif pendidikan islam)," *Kordinat: Jurnal Komunikasi Antar Perguruan Tinggi Agama Islam* 20, no. 2 (2021): 291–308.

⁷ Farikhatun Nikmah, "Pendidikan Karakter Religius Anak Usia Dini di Era Digital dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an," *Tinta Emas: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam Anak Usia Dini* 2, no. 1 (2023): 1–14.

⁸ Afifah Aulia Fitri dkk., "KAJIAN LITERATUR: PERAN GURU SEBAGAI TELADAN DALAM PEMBENTUKAN KARAKTER SISWA SEKOLAH DASAR DI ERA DIGITAL," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 3 (2025): 83–91.

⁹ Miftah Ilham Mazid dan Nurawati Nurawati, "Problematika Pembentukan Karakter Religius Siswa Pada Pembelajaran PAI di SMP Negeri 1 Sei Kepayang Timur," *JAMP: Jurnal Administrasi dan Manajemen Pendidikan* 7, no. 3 (2024): 421–35.

¹⁰ Tatan Zenal Mutakin dkk., "Penerapan teori pembiasaan dalam pembentukan karakter religi siswa di tingkat sekolah dasar," *Jurnal Edutech* 1, no. 3 (2014): 361–73.

¹¹ Hasan Basri dkk., "Pembentukan Karakter religius peserta didik melalui pembiasaan kegiatan keagamaan di MA Miftahul Ulum Kabupaten Purwakarta," *Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 12, no. 02 (2023),

Furthermore, similar findings were reported by Kumala and Wisono, while Maknun (2024) explained that habituation can be implemented through moral (*akhlaq*), worship (*ibadah*), and faith (*aqidah*) dimensions¹².

Based on the three studies mentioned above, it can be concluded that the habituation method can help address the moral or character crisis among students in schools. However, these studies still reveal certain limitations, namely the limited exploration of the integration between habituation (repetition) and modeling (observation), the lack of attention to students' developmental differences, and the absence of a structured, tiered habituation system. This aspect distinguishes SRITI Al-Qawwam, where habituation activities are systematically structured and adjusted according to students' developmental stages and class levels.

Therefore, further research on the habituation method at SRITI Al-Qawwam is necessary. This study aims to examine how the habituation method is implemented at SRITI Al-Qawwam by analyzing the synergy between repetition mechanisms (habituation) and social interaction (teacher role modeling) within a structured, tiered system. Accordingly, the research question guiding this study is: How do habituation and modeling methods, implemented in a structured and tiered manner, contribute to the internalization of religious values among elementary school students?

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design to explore the implementation of habituation and modeling in strengthening students' religious character at SRITI Al-Qawwam. The participants consisted of four informants selected using purposive sampling: one principal, two teachers, and two students who were directly involved in the habituation activities.

Data were collected through three techniques: semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and documentation. Interviews were conducted to obtain participants' perspectives on religious character education practices. Observations were carried out to examine the implementation of daily habituation activities, such as congregational prayers, tahfidz, cleanliness routines, and *qailullah*. Documentation, including lesson plans (RPP), school schedules, and student records, was used to support and validate the findings.

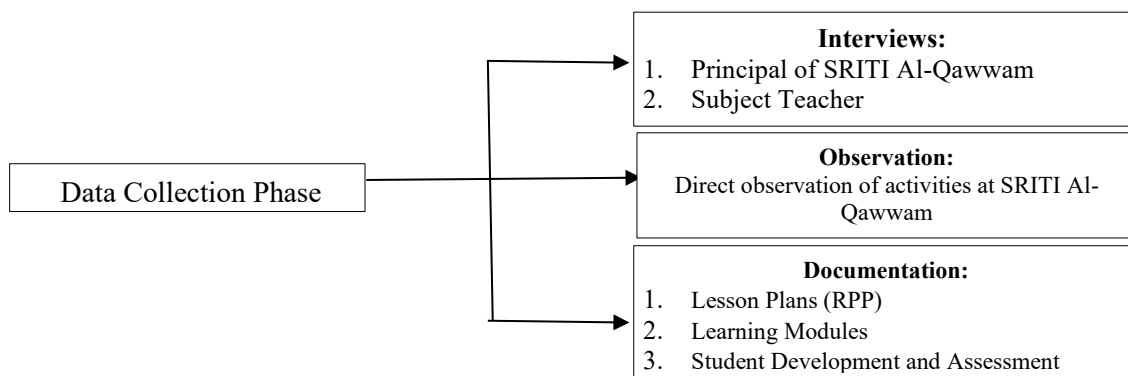


Figure 1. Data Collection Phase

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, involving data reduction, coding, categorization, and interpretation to identify key themes related to habituation, modeling, reinforcement, and self-regulation. To ensure trustworthiness, data triangulation was applied by comparing information from different sources and methods.

¹² Maknun, L., & Annisa, A. P. *Application of the habituation method as an effort to instill religious character values in elementary school students*. Journal of Elementary Education (JIPDAS), 4(2), 2024: 87–96.

Ethical considerations were addressed by obtaining participants' consent and maintaining confidentiality by using initials.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Result

1. Welcoming Students' Arrival

Based on observations and interviews, welcoming students at the school gate is a consistently implemented daily activity at SRITI Al-Qawwam. Teachers greet students with smiles and salutations, fostering positive, respectful interactions at the beginning of the school day. This activity is systematically organized through a duty roster, ensuring continuity and consistency.

This finding indicates that early teacher–student interaction plays a crucial role in shaping students' emotional connection, politeness, and respect. The repeated exposure to positive social behavior encourages students to internalize similar attitudes in their daily interactions.

“Every morning, we are welcomed by the teachers at the school gate. Usually, the teachers on duty greet us with smiles and salutations as we arrive. Besides teaching in the classroom, the teachers are also responsible for welcoming students...” (Student EL)

“Every morning, at SRITI Al-Qawwam, we are instructed by the principal to welcome the students as they arrive. Usually, the teachers on duty are the ones responsible for greeting the students at the gate (Teacher SZ)

The repeated exposure to such positive interactions strengthens students' social awareness and encourages them to internalize similar behaviors in their daily communication. Furthermore, this practice serves as an implicit form of value transmission, in which students learn appropriate social conduct through direct experience rather than formal instruction. The consistency of this activity suggests that habituation plays a significant role in transforming externally guided behavior into internally accepted norms.

2. Congregational Worship Activities

Congregational worship activities, including dhuha, dzuhur, and ashar prayers, as well as Yasin recitation, are conducted regularly under the supervision of teachers. These activities are systematically organized and implemented across different grade levels, with adjusted schedules to accommodate students' developmental stages. Teachers are actively involved not only as supervisors but also as participants, ensuring that students perform the activities correctly and consistently.

“Our school has established regulations and schedules for teachers to supervise students during worship activities. During duha, dzuhur, and ashar prayers, all teachers are assigned to monitor and guide the students from lower to upper grades...” (Teacher AN)

“The schedules for lower and upper grades are different. When the lower-grade students go out for breakfast and perform the duha prayer, we, the upper-grade students, stay in the classroom. After that, it's our turn to have breakfast and carry out the activities set in the school regulations...” (Student SP)

This finding demonstrates that structured religious routines serve to reinforce discipline, order, and collective responsibility among students. The presence of clear

regulations and teacher duty schedules indicates that these activities are institutionally managed rather than incidental practices. Furthermore, the differentiation of schedules between lower- and upper-grade students reflects an adaptive approach that considers students' developmental needs, allowing for gradual engagement and more effective participation in religious practices.

“Activities such as duha, dzuhur, ashar prayers, and other religious routines are always supervised by teachers. Some teachers are assigned to monitor the lower grades, while others oversee the upper grades. The duty teachers also participate in the prayers so that we can follow their example. One of their responsibilities is to supervise all our activities.”
(Student EL)

In addition, the active involvement of teachers as both supervisors and participants strengthens the internalization process. Students not only receive instruction but also directly observe appropriate behavior, reinforcing learning through imitation.

The interview data obtained by the researcher are consistent with the documentation, which indicates that one of the duties of the duty teachers is to supervise students during congregational worship activities.



Figure 2. Congregational Worship Activities

3. Tahfidz Activities

The tahfidz activity refers to the memorization and recitation of short Qur'anic surahs, conducted during break time under the guidance and supervision of teachers. Based on the researcher's observations, SRITI Al-Qawwam regularly conducts several religious activities, including tahfidz sessions led directly by the teaching staff. These findings are consistent with the results of an interview conducted with the school principal. The principal stated the following:

“One of the religious activities carried out by the students is the tahfidz program. This activity is usually conducted during free periods or break time and is directly supervised by the teachers. In each tahfidz session, students are required to recite and submit their memorization from Juz 30, including the surahs, the places of revelation, and the meanings or interpretations of the verses they memorize. After completing their recitation, the teacher provides verification and initials the student's record as confirmation.” (Principal RZ)

This activity is conducted regularly under teacher supervision, with clear expectations regarding memorization accuracy and comprehension. Teachers provide validation upon

successful completion, while students who have not yet met the required standard are asked to repeat the memorization process.

“We, the teachers, not only teach but also supervise the students during their tahfidz activity. For students who have perfectly completed and recited their memorization, we give a signature as proof that they have finished their tahfidz” (Teacher AN)

“If any of us are unable to complete the memorization, the teacher will ask us to repeat it until we can recite it perfectly. Once we have memorized it, we must recite it again to the teacher...” (Student SP).

This finding indicates that the tahfidz program integrates repetition, evaluation, and reinforcement as key components of learning. The requirement to repeat memorization until it meets the expected standard strengthens students’ persistence, discipline, and attention to detail. Furthermore, the inclusion of meanings and contextual understanding (such as the place of revelation) suggests that the program goes beyond rote memorization and encourages deeper cognitive engagement with religious texts.

In addition, the validation system provided by teachers plays an important role as structured feedback that motivates students to achieve learning targets. This mechanism not only supports academic achievement but also fosters a sense of responsibility and accountability in students’ learning processes. The consistent supervision by teachers ensures that students remain guided throughout the process, reinforcing both accuracy and discipline.



Figure 3. Tahfidz Activity

4. Cleanliness Maintenance Activities

Observations indicate that students are actively involved in maintaining both personal hygiene and classroom cleanliness. The school maintains cleanliness through a structured duty system, in which students are assigned specific cleaning responsibilities on a rotating daily basis. These activities are carried out routinely before and after lessons to ensure the classroom environment remains clean and conducive to learning. The system is reinforced through continuous teacher supervision and students' collective participation.

“there are designated cleaning duty officers who routinely clean the classroom every day. Before lessons begin, they make sure that the learning area is completely free from trash

and dirt. This is done to create a comfortable and conducive learning atmosphere for all students... “. (Student EL)

“The students clean their classrooms independently without being told by the teachers. Each of them already has assigned duties to maintain classroom cleanliness, so they understand that cleanliness is essential for creating a comfortable learning environment” (Teacher AN)

This finding demonstrates that cleanliness is not merely instructed but systematically maintained through clearly organized routines, role distribution, and consistent monitoring. The structured duty system promotes responsibility, cooperation, and accountability among students, as each individual understands their role in maintaining the environment. Over time, repeated engagement in these activities fosters discipline and environmental awareness.

Furthermore, the involvement of all students fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility, helping sustain cleanliness practices. The fact that students carry out these responsibilities even without direct instruction indicates that the values have been successfully internalized.

5. *Qailullah* Activity

The *Qailullah* activity, or scheduled rest period, is conducted after the learning sessions to help students restore their energy and improve concentration. This activity is implemented consistently as part of the daily schedule and supervised by teachers to ensure that students rest in an orderly, conducive environment.

“The qailullah activity is indeed scheduled after the learning sessions are completed so that the students can take a short rest before continuing with their next activities. Each student is given the opportunity to take a nap for about 30 minutes to restore their energy and enhance their learning concentration. During this activity, the teachers remain nearby to supervise and ensure that the students rest calmly and without disturbance. The qailullah activity is routinely held every day, from 12:00 to 12:30... ..” (Principal RZ)

This finding indicates that the school recognizes the importance of students’ physical and mental readiness in supporting effective learning and character development. Providing a structured rest period helps reduce fatigue and enhances students’ ability to participate in subsequent academic and religious activities.

“We are always supervised by the teachers during qailullah. We are given about 30 minutes to rest so that our bodies and minds can feel refreshed again. During qailullah, everyone in the class must rest quietly, and the classroom lights are turned off to create a dark and comfortable atmosphere...” (Student EL)

Additionally, the supervision provided during this activity ensures that students follow the rules and develop self-discipline even during rest periods. This practice reflects a holistic approach to education, where physical well-being is considered an essential component of character formation.



Figure 4. Qailullah Activity

DISCUSSION

The discussion section interprets the findings of this study by situating them within relevant theoretical frameworks and previous empirical studies. The results demonstrate that the strengthening of religious character at SRITI Al-Qawwam is not merely a product of routine activities but a result of the integration of structured habituation, reinforcement mechanisms, teacher modeling, and the gradual development of students' self-regulation.

Furthermore, this study adopts the perspectives of Edward L. Thorndike and Albert Bandura as the main analytical lenses to explain how repeated practices and social interactions contribute to the internalization of religious values. By combining these perspectives, the discussion highlights the dynamic relationship between behavioral conditioning and social learning processes in shaping students' religious character.

1. Habituation and Repetition as the Foundation of Character Formation

The findings reveal that the strengthening of religious character at SRITI Al-Qawwam is fundamentally underpinned by structured, continuous habituation practices systematically embedded in students' daily activities. Activities such as congregational worship, *tahfidz* programs, cleanliness routines, and daily greetings are not only implemented consistently but are also organized within a clear and disciplined schedule¹³. This structured repetition enables students to repeatedly engage in value-based behaviors, which gradually become part of their daily routines and behavioral patterns. Such consistency reflects the principle of learning through repetition, where behaviors are reinforced through continuous exposure and practice over time¹⁴.

From a theoretical perspective, this aligns with the learning principles proposed by Edward L. Thorndike, particularly the Law of Exercise, which emphasizes that repeated stimulus–response connections strengthen behavioral patterns¹⁵. In this context, the routines implemented at SRITI Al-Qawwam serve as repeated stimuli that encourage students to perform specific religious behaviors in response. Over time, these behaviors become more stable, automatic, and integrated into students' character. Importantly, the repetition observed in this study is not merely mechanical but intentionally designed as

¹³ Ilmi Nur Hidayah dan Muhamad Parhan, "Reinforcing school culture based on habituation in improving religious character," *At Turots: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 2025, 883–96.

¹⁴ Muhamad Baiatur Ridhwan dkk., "Implementasi Sholat Dhuha dalam Pembentukan Karakter Siswa di Ma Darul Hikmah Kota Bima," *Action Research Journal Indonesia (ARJI)* 7, no. 1 (2025): 398–410.

¹⁵ Fauzul Adzim dkk., "TEORI FUNGSIONALISTIK DOMINAN MENURUT EDWARD LEE THORNDIKE DAN BURRHUS FREDERICK SKINNER," *Jurnal Paris Langkis* 5, no. 1 (2024): 259–69.

part of a broader educational strategy that integrates religious values into the school culture¹⁶.

However, while repetition effectively explains behavioral consistency, it does not fully capture the depth of value internalization¹⁷. The findings suggest that habituation alone is insufficient without meaningful interaction, supervision, and guidance from teachers. Without these elements, repeated practices risk becoming routine compliance rather than genuine understanding and internal commitment. This is supported by previous studies indicating that habituation must be accompanied by supportive environments and instructional guidance to be effective¹⁸. Therefore, the success of habituation at SRITI Al-Qawwam lies not only in the frequency of repetition but also in the quality of interaction that supports it.

2. Modeling and Social Interaction in Value Internalization

In addition to habituation, teachers' role as behavioral models is a critical factor in shaping students' religious character. Teachers are not only responsible for supervising activities but also actively participate in them, such as praying together, guiding *tahfidz* sessions, and welcoming students at the school gate. This active involvement allows students to observe how religious values are practiced in real-life situations, thereby providing concrete examples they can imitate.

This finding is strongly aligned with Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which highlights observational learning as a key mechanism through which individuals acquire behavior¹⁹. Students learn not only through verbal instruction but also through observing, imitating, and internalizing the behavior of significant figures in their environment. In this context, teachers serve as primary role models whose actions significantly influence students' attitudes and behaviors.

Previous studies also emphasize that teachers play a central role in shaping students' character, particularly in the digital era, where external influences are increasingly diverse and not always aligned with moral values²⁰. The findings of this study reinforce the idea that modeling strengthens the effectiveness of habituation by providing visible, consistent, and meaningful behavioral examples. Thus, integrating modeling into habituation practices creates a more comprehensive and effective approach to character education.

¹⁶ Nur Rohman, "Behaviorism Theory Analysis (Thorndike) In Mathematics And Indonesian Language Sdn Upt Xvii Mukti Jaya Aceh Singkil. Abda: Jurnal Pendidikan Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, 4 (2), 223–236," 2021.

¹⁷ Alammar Laila, "The effective school: The role of the leaders in school effectiveness," *Educational Research and Reviews* 10, no. 6 (2015): 695–721.

¹⁸ Tatan Zenal Mutakin dkk., "Penerapan teori pembiasaan dalam pembentukan karakter religi siswa di tingkat sekolah dasar," *Jurnal Edutech* 1, no. 3 (2014): 361–73.

¹⁹ Elga Yanuardianto, "Teori kognitif sosial albert bandura (Studi kritis dalam menjawab problem pembelajaran di MI)," *Auladuna: Jurnal Prodi Pendidikan Guru Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 1, no. 2 (2019): 94–111.

²⁰ Norma Yunaini dkk., "The concept of the independent learning curriculum (Merdeka Belajar) in elementary schools in view progressivism educational philosophy," *JIP Jurnal Ilmiah PGMI* 8, no. 2 (2022): 95–105.

Ailula Mufidatus Solihah dkk., "Teacher's Role: Implementation of Religious Character Education through the Habituation Method in Elementary School," *Jurnal Ilmiah Sekolah Dasar* 8, no. 3 (2024): 402–12.

3. Reinforcement and Structured Feedback in Strengthening Behavior

Another important aspect identified in the findings is the role of reinforcement, particularly within the *tahfidz* program. Students receive validation and recognition after successfully completing memorization tasks, while those who do not meet the expected standards are required to repeat the process. This structured feedback mechanism not only ensures the quality of learning outcomes but also encourages persistence and responsibility among students.

This mechanism reflects the Law of Effect proposed by Edward L. Thorndike, which states that behaviors followed by positive outcomes are more likely to be repeated. Providing validation, such as teacher acknowledgment, serves as positive reinforcement, motivating students to continue improving their performance. At the same time, the requirement to repeat incomplete tasks functions as a corrective mechanism that reinforces discipline and commitment²¹.

The findings are also supported by research indicating that structured religious activities, including *tahfidz* programs, significantly strengthen discipline and responsibility. Furthermore, reinforcement not only functions as an external motivator but also plays a role in shaping internal motivation. This aligns with previous findings that positive reinforcement contributes to the development of consistent and sustained religious behavior²². Therefore, reinforcement in this context operates not merely as a reward system but as a strategic tool for character development.

4. From External Control to Self-Regulation

The findings also indicate a transformation from externally regulated behavior to internally driven self-regulation. This is particularly evident in cleanliness activities, where students gradually assume responsibility independently without direct instruction from teachers. Such behavior reflects a shift from compliance-based actions to self-initiated responsibility.

This transformation aligns with the concept of self-regulation in Albert Bandura's theory, where individuals develop the ability to control their behavior based on internalized standards rather than external pressure²³. In the early stages, students may follow rules out of supervision or obligation; however, through repeated habituation and modeling, these behaviors gradually become internalized as personal values.

This process is also supported by developmental psychology perspectives, which emphasize that repeated guided behavior can evolve into autonomous habits when supported by consistent environmental reinforcement²⁴. The findings suggest that SRITI Al-Qawwam successfully facilitates this transition by combining structured routines with supportive guidance, thereby enabling students to develop long-term behavioral autonomy.

²¹ Fauzul Adzim dkk., "TEORI FUNGSIONALISTIK DOMINAN MENURUT EDWARD LEE THORNDIKE DAN BURRHUS FREDERICK SKINNER," *Jurnal Paris Langkis* 5, no. 1 (2024): 259–69.

²² Paskaria Simbolon dkk., "Membangun Karakter Religius melalui Pembiasaan Nilai-Nilai Positif di Lingkungan Sekolah Dasar," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 03 (2025): 260–73.

²³ Pangestu Aji Swasono, "Manajemen Tahfizh Al-Qur'an Berbasis Kurikulum Integratif Dalam Meningkatkan Prestasi Hafalan Santri Ma'had El-Hijaz Ciracas, Jakarta Timur" (PhD Thesis, Institut PTIQ Jakarta, 2024),

²⁴ Farida Isroani dkk., *Psikologi Perkembangan* (LovRinz Publishing, 2023)

5. Holistic Support through Physiological Readiness and Developmental Adaptation

The implementation of *qailullah* and differentiated schedules between lower and upper grades reflects the school's attention to students' physical and developmental needs. This indicates that character education is not only approached from a behavioral or cognitive perspective but also considers students' physical readiness and developmental stages.

This aligns with the Law of Readiness proposed by Edward L. Thorndike, which emphasizes that learning is more effective when individuals are physically and mentally prepared²⁵. By providing rest periods and structuring activities by age level, the school ensures students are in optimal condition to engage in both learning and character-building activities.

Additionally, adapting activities based on students' developmental stages strengthens the effectiveness of character education, as learning strategies must be aligned with students' cognitive and emotional readiness²⁶. This holistic approach demonstrates that the success of habituation at SRITI Al-Qawwam is not solely dependent on repetition but also on the alignment of educational practices with students' developmental needs.

6. Conceptual Model of Religious Value Internalization

Based on the findings, this study proposes a conceptual model that integrates habituation, reinforcement, modeling, and self-regulation into a coherent framework for the internalization of religious values. This model illustrates that character formation is a dynamic process that involves the interaction of multiple components rather than a single linear mechanism.

This model is supported by previous studies emphasizing that religious character formation requires the integration of school culture, teacher roles, and structured activities²⁷. However, the findings of this study extend previous research by demonstrating how these components interact within a tiered habituation system that is adapted to students' developmental stages.

The proposed model contributes to the theoretical understanding of character education by highlighting the importance of integrating behavioral repetition, social interaction, reinforcement mechanisms, and internal regulation into a unified framework. This provides a more comprehensive explanation of how religious values are internalized in educational settings²⁸.

7. Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted in a single institutional setting, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts with different characteristics.

²⁵ Roy Ardiansyah dkk., "Self-regulated learning levels among elementary education students: Thorndike's law of readiness analysis in hybrid learning," *Jurnal Fundadikdas (Fundamental Pendidikan Dasar)* 8, no. 1 (2025): 24–32.

²⁶ Destia Septiani dkk., "Kurikulum merdeka: Readiness in facing curriculum changes at SMAN 1 Lembang," *Hipkin Journal of Educational Research* 1, no. 2 (2024): 189–202.

²⁷ Rustan Efendy dan Irmwaddah Irmwaddah, *Peran pendidikan agama Islam dalam membentuk karakter religius siswa*, 2022.

²⁸ Muzammil Muzammil dan Noer Kholis, "Strategi Penguatan Pendidikan Karakter Religius Peserta Didik melalui Kajian Kitab Turats di Pondok An-Nahdloh Selangor Malaysia," *JIP-Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan* 8, no. 4 (2025).

Second, the qualitative approach relies on interpretive analysis, which may be influenced by the researcher's subjectivity despite efforts to ensure data credibility.

In addition, the study focuses primarily on school-based implementation without exploring the role of family and digital environments, which are increasingly influential in shaping students' character. These external factors may either support or hinder the effectiveness of school-based character education.

Therefore, future research is recommended to examine the interaction between school, family, and digital environments in shaping religious character, as well as to explore the applicability of this model in different educational settings to enhance its generalizability.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the internalization of religious values at SRITI Al-Qawwam is achieved through the integration of habituation, modeling, and reinforcement within a structured school environment. The findings indicate that repetition (Thorndike's law of exercise) builds consistent behavior, while teacher modeling (Bandura's Social Learning Theory) strengthens value internalization through observation and imitation. This demonstrates that character formation is not only behavioral but also social and cognitive. Conceptually, this study highlights that religious character education requires the synergy of structured routines, social interaction, and developmental adaptation. This integrated approach offers a more comprehensive framework for understanding how religious values are internalized in educational settings. However, this study is limited to a single school context and focuses primarily on school-based practices. Practical implications suggest that schools should combine habituation with strong teacher role modeling and structured reinforcement. Future research is recommended to explore the role of family and digital environments in supporting character education.

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