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Religious Habituation in Shaping Students' Religious Character at SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya

Pembiasaan Keagamaan dalam Membentuk Karakter Religius Siswa di SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya

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Abstract

Religious character education plays a strategic role in shaping students' behavior in line with the values of Islamic teachings. Concerns about declining morality and religious behavior among students, in schools and in society, highlight the need to strengthen religious character through a structured religious habituation program. This study aims to describe how religious habituation is implemented through a religious habituation program at SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya and to analyze its role in shaping students' religious character. It used a descriptive qualitative approach involving the school principal, Islamic Education teachers, facilitators of religious activities, and students. Data were collected through direct observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings show that the program runs as a cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation. It consists of morning greetings, prayers before and after lessons, Qur'an recitation, congregational Dhuha, Dhuhur, and Asr prayers, Islamic spiritual guidance, and the commemoration of Islamic holidays. Repeated habituation fosters students' awareness to practice Islamic values independently, reflected in gratitude, reliance on God, humility, and courtesy, although internalization is uneven because it depends on family support and the peer environment. The study implies that habituation should be designed as a collaborative system involving the school, families, and the wider environment. Its limitations are a single research site and a descriptive design that does not measure levels of internalization.

Keywords: religious character; religious habituation; religious attitude

Abstrak

Pendidikan karakter religius berperan strategis dalam membentuk perilaku siswa agar selaras dengan nilai-nilai ajaran Islam. Kekhawatiran akan menurunnya moral dan perilaku keagamaan siswa, baik di sekolah maupun di masyarakat, menegaskan perlunya penguatan karakter religius melalui program pembiasaan keagamaan yang terstruktur. Penelitian ini bertujuan mendeskripsikan pelaksanaan pembiasaan keagamaan melalui program pembiasaan keagamaan di SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya dan menganalisis perannya dalam membentuk karakter religius siswa. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan subjek penelitian kepala sekolah, guru Pendidikan Agama Islam, pembina kegiatan keagamaan, dan siswa. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi langsung, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa program berjalan sebagai siklus perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi. Program tersebut terdiri atas salam sapa pagi, doa sebelum dan sesudah pembelajaran, tadarus Al-Qur'an, shalat Dhuha, Dhuhur, dan Ashar berjamaah, pembinaan rohani Islam, serta peringatan hari besar Islam. Pembiasaan yang dilakukan berulang menumbuhkan kesadaran siswa untuk mengamalkan nilai-nilai keislaman secara mandiri, yang tampak dalam sikap syukur, tawakal, tawadhu, dan sopan santun, meskipun internalisasinya belum merata karena

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dipengaruhi dukungan keluarga dan lingkungan pergaulan. Implikasinya, pembiasaan keagamaan perlu dirancang sebagai sistem kolaboratif yang melibatkan sekolah, keluarga, dan lingkungan sekitar. Keterbatasan penelitian ini adalah satu lokasi penelitian dan desain deskriptif yang tidak mengukur tingkat internalisasi.

Kata kunci: karakter religius; pembiasaan keagamaan; sikap keagamaan

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Introduction

Education is directed not only at developing students' intellectual abilities but also at shaping attitudes and behavior that reflect good values. Students' success cannot be judged by academic achievement alone; it also depends on their ability to apply what they learn in daily life. This matters especially in adolescence, when students undergo development in thinking, attitudes, social relationships, and independence. One character that needs to be developed at this stage is religious character, which concerns a person's attitudes and behavior in practicing religious teachings and actualizing them in everyday life. Concern about declining morality among young people has also drawn research attention to the relationship between religiosity and adolescent behavior (Mohammad & Banse, 2023). Forming religious character cannot rely on theoretical religious instruction alone. It requires a process of habituation that allows students to practice religious values directly and repeatedly. In Islamic education, habituation is a strategy for internalizing religious values through activities carried out consistently in students' lives (Nursobah et al., 2025; Sahlan, 2010). From a psychological perspective, repeated action in stable contexts is also what turns behavior into habit (Lally et al., 2010; Wood & Neal, 2007). Religious habituation can therefore be understood as a process of shaping religious behavior through religious activities that are routine, purposeful, and sustained.

At school, religious habituation can take various forms, such as reading the Qur'an, praying, performing Dhuha prayer, praying in congregation, dhikr, short sermons (*kultum*), sharing activities, and other religious activities. Repeated activities give students the opportunity to experience and practice religious teachings so that the values they learn can develop into habits. Syaroh and Mizani (2020) showed that habituation of religious behavior was one of the efforts made by SMA Negeri 3 Ponorogo to shape students' religious character. Studies in other school settings likewise indicate that religious habituation activities contribute to students' religious character (Febriyanti

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& Supriyadi, 2023; Nurizah & Amrullah, 2024; Wati & Amrullah, 2022). Research on the management of religious programs also treats such programs as a means of building students' religiosity (Adzhar & Siswahyuningsih, 2025). Together, these studies show that religious habituation holds an important position in character education because it gives students room to practice religious values directly in school life.

Studies on religious habituation over the past decade have examined it in several school contexts. Fauziyah et al. (2024) studied the habituation of congregational Dhuhr prayer in shaping students' religious character, while Sukmah et al. (2025) examined religious habituation in shaping discipline among vocational high school students. Auliyak and Surur (2024) investigated the implementation of religious habituation programs at an Islamic junior high school in Jombang. Congregational Dhuha prayer has also been examined as a means of shaping students' religious character (Susanto et al., 2026; Thoha & Fajri, 2025). These studies demonstrate the importance of religious habituation, but the process of implementation and the internalization of religious values in students' lives still need to be examined in greater depth.

Based on previous studies and the initial conditions at SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya, a gap remains to be addressed. Earlier research has shown that habituation of religious activities can contribute to the formation of religious character at both the primary and secondary levels, including senior high schools and madrasah aliyah. However, research that treats religious habituation as a process, covering the implementation of activities, supervision, student involvement, and the formation of habits in a school with diverse religious programs, still needs to be developed. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining directly how religious habituation is carried out at SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya and what role it plays in shaping students' religious character. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on the process of implementing habituation and on the dynamics of internalizing religious values in a senior high school that has a structured system of religious habituation. The study therefore looks not only at the existence of the program or the character that results from it, but also tries to understand how the habituation is carried out and what part it plays in students' religious lives.

This study aims to describe the implementation of religious habituation through the religious habituation program at SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya and to analyze the role of religious habituation in shaping students' religious character. Theoretically, the study is expected to enrich research on character education based on religious

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1 habituation, particularly on the process of forming religious character at the senior high school level. Practically, it is expected to serve as material for evaluation and consideration by schools in developing religious habituation programs, so that these programs are oriented not only toward the regular running of activities but also toward fostering students' awareness and consistency in practicing religious values. Because the study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, it formulates no hypotheses and instead focuses on understanding the implementation and role of religious habituation based on empirical conditions in the field.

Method

9 This study used a descriptive qualitative approach (Sugiyono, 2023) and was carried out as field research (Creswell & Poth, 2018) to examine how religious habituation is implemented through the religious habituation program and what role it plays in shaping students' religious character. The study was conducted at SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya. The research subjects were the school principal, Islamic Education teachers, facilitators of religious activities, and students.

8 Primary data were obtained from direct observation and interviews in the field, while secondary data came from relevant supporting documents. The researcher acted as the main instrument and went directly to the research site to observe, interview, and gather documents, assisted by an observation guide, an interview guide, a camera, and a voice recorder (Sugiyono, 2023). Observations focused on religious habituation activities such as *tadarus*, congregational Dhuha prayer, daily prayers, and congregational prayers. Interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, and students to understand how the program was run and what effects it had. Documentation consisted of photographs of activities, program schedules, and other supporting documents, and was used to corroborate the observation and interview data.

1 The collected data were condensed and focused on matters relevant to the research questions, then arranged into a descriptive narrative to show patterns in the implementation of religious habituation. Conclusions that answer the two research questions were drawn from this narrative, a sequence consistent with interactive models of qualitative analysis (Miles et al., 2014). Data trustworthiness was maintained by comparing interview results across subjects and by comparing the results of observation, interviews, and documentation with one another (Carter et al., 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), so that the findings are more consistent and scientifically accountable.

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Results and Discussion

Implementation of Religious Habituation through the Religious Habituation Program

Religious character in students can be said to have formed when religious values have taken root and are reflected in daily behavior. This is visible in firm belief in Allah SWT, discipline in performing worship, and good manners toward teachers, peers, and the school environment (Hidayah & Fauzi, 2025). Seen in this light, the religious habituation program at SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya can be examined as a structured effort to move students from knowing religious values to practicing them.

Observations at SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya show that the program is planned as an official part of the school's distinctive Ke-Alfalahan curriculum, which is integrated with the Merdeka Curriculum. As a result, strengthening worship is not a supplementary activity but part of the learning structure. The school's vision and mission, which are grounded in the Qur'an and hadith, are communicated from the start: to students through the School Environment Orientation Period (*Masa Pengenalan Lingkungan Sekolah*), to parents through meetings at the beginning of the school year, and to teachers and staff through work meetings and internal socialization forums. Planning also involves the principal and the vice principals for student affairs, curriculum, public relations, and facilities, who regularly discuss and determine implementation steps in work meetings with school management. This pattern indicates that the school treats habituation as an institutional commitment shared by all school members rather than as the initiative of individual teachers. It is consistent with the view that a religious school culture develops when religious values are embedded in the school's vision and routines (Fathurrohman, 2016; Sahlan, 2010), and with recent work that describes religious habituation as an integrated model (Nursobah et al., 2025).

At the implementation stage, the program is regarded as effective because religious activities are carried out every day, from before lessons begin until after they end. The habituation aims to help students apply religious teachings not only at school but also in family and community life. Through continuous activities, religious values are gradually embedded in students, shaping character that influences their attitudes, behavior, and discipline. Based on observations and interviews, the program consists of several main activities that are carried out regularly and in a planned way.

The school day begins with the morning greeting. When students arrive, they are accustomed to greeting school staff and their peers, while *ustadz* and *ustadzah* welcome them at the school gate or arrival area with positive greetings and light motivation. This

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activity trains students to be polite and respectful and instills the habit of saying *salam* as a prayer for goodness among Muslims from the very start of the school day. Before lessons begin, students perform congregational Dhuha prayer every morning in the school mosque, led directly by the supervising *ustadz* or *ustadzah*. After the prayer, they recite a selected surah that has been agreed upon together. This voluntary act of worship trains sincerity and discipline and improves worship habits beyond the obligatory prayers, so that spiritual values can grow naturally in students. In the classroom, prayers before and after lessons are led by *ustadz* or *ustadzah* and by students in turn. The habit aims to make students aware that learning is a form of worship that requires God's help, and the closing prayer encourages them to be grateful for the knowledge they have gained, which instills spiritual character in daily learning.

At a scheduled time before lessons start, students also take part in Qur'an recitation (*tadarus*). They read and memorize surahs together and in turns, while *ustadz* and *ustadzah* guide *tajwid* and the correct articulation of letters (*makhraj*) so that students' recitation becomes more accurate. This activity helps students strengthen their memorization, grow closer to the Qur'an, and cultivate love for the holy book as a guide for life. Later in the day, all students go to the school mosque in an orderly manner according to prayer times and perform the Dhuhr and Asr prayers and dhikr together. This habituation teaches the importance of observing prayer times, trains orderliness and earnestness in worship, and strengthens the sense of brotherhood among students in carrying out religious commands.

Two further activities deepen and widen this routine. Spiritual guidance through Rohis (*Rohani Islam*, the Islamic spiritual organization) covers regular religious studies, *adhan* training, short-sermon coaching, and deeper study of Islamic morals. Through it, students receive more thorough grounding in Islamic values and are directed to become role models for their peers in behavior and religious attitudes. The commemoration of Islamic holidays (*Peringatan Hari Besar Islam*, PHBI), such as Maulid Nabi, Isra' Mi'raj, and the Ramadan intensive religious program (*pesantren kilat*), involves *shalawat*, religious study, and social activities. These events not only strengthen Islamic knowledge but also foster togetherness, social concern, and love for religious teachings.

Taken together, these activities cover the whole school day and combine different dimensions of religious life: social etiquette in the greeting, ritual worship in the Dhuha, Dhuhr, and Asr prayers, scripture recitation in *tadarus*, reflective supplication around lessons, peer-oriented spiritual guidance in Rohis, and communal celebration in PHBI.

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This layered pattern of habituation supports the concept of religious culture put forward by Sahlan, which emphasizes that a religious atmosphere at school is an effective means of internalizing religious values in students on a continuous basis (Fathurrohman, 2016; Sahlan, 2010). It also shows why repetition matters. Habits form when behavior is repeated in stable contexts (Lally et al., 2010; Wood & Neal, 2007), and the school's fixed schedule and shared spaces, such as the mosque and classrooms, can be seen as providing that stable context. Studies of congregational Dhuha and Dhuhr prayer in other schools likewise link these practices to the formation of students' religious character (Fauziyah et al., 2024; Susanto et al., 2026; Thoha & Fajri, 2025).

At the evaluation stage, the school monitors the implementation of the program periodically. The results of monitoring and evaluation are discussed in teachers' work meetings together with school management and then communicated to parents and students. Evaluation is also carried out at the level of the individual student through a special Qur'an reading report card, which records reading ability, mastery of *tajwid*, and discipline in joining religious activities. In this way, teachers and parents can follow the development of students' religiosity continuously rather than only assessing whether the program is carried out in general. This connected cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation shows that developing a religious school culture is effective when a program is not only run routinely but also monitored and adjusted periodically so that it remains relevant to students' needs. Teachers also take an active role as role models throughout this cycle, which confirms that the success of religious character formation requires the involvement of all parties in the school (Shanti & Shohib, 2026). Consistently scheduled religious activities can also instill discipline in students (Sukmah et al., 2025). In practical terms, the individual report card turns habituation from a collective routine into a process that can be followed, discussed with families, and corrected.

The Role of Religious Habituation in Shaping Students' Religious Character

The religious habituation program at SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya contributes substantially to the development of students' religious character. Carrying out religious activities every day encourages students to practice Islamic teachings in real life. As a result, they gain a strong moral foundation and are less easily influenced by deviant behavior in adolescence. The impact on students is visible in several attitudes. The first is gratitude (*syukur*): students appreciate God's blessings more and show good motivation in the learning process. The second is reliance on God (*tawakal*), reflected in the devotion with which they pray after congregational prayers and in their belief that

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Allah makes every affair easier. The third is humility (*tawadhu'*), that is, modesty and not feeling superior to others, because students realize that all abilities are gifts from Allah. The fourth is courtesy, seen in how they interact with teachers and others, for example by greeting them and kissing the teacher's hand when they meet, both inside and outside school.

This pattern, which touches both the ritual dimension and the inner attitude, is in line with Lickona's concept of character education. Lickona holds that complete character is formed through three interrelated elements: knowing the good, desiring the good, and doing the good (Lickona, 1991). Gratitude, reliance on God, and humility can be read as expressions of the inner, affective side, whereas regular worship and courteous conduct toward teachers represent action. Effective character education therefore requires consistent habituation so that values do not stop at the cognitive level but are actually expressed in daily behavior (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004). The fact that students show courtesy to teachers even outside school suggests that the behavior has begun to carry over beyond the settings in which it is practiced, which is the outcome habituation is meant to achieve. The result also agrees with research that links Islamic education and religious habituation to the formation of students' religious character (Husnaini et al., 2020; Jauhari, 2022).

Factors Supporting Religious Habituation

Although there are several obstacles in implementation, they do not reduce the continuity of the program the school has planned. One of the most influential supporting factors in shaping students' religious character is the involvement of parents and family at home. This support is visible in the continuation of worship within the family, the attention given to the child, and the example set for them. The religious and conducive atmosphere of the school also helps strengthen students' character. Teachers play an active role by giving direction and serving as examples in worship, so that students can readily imitate behavior in line with Islamic teachings. Support from these two main environments leads students to apply religious values not only at school but also in their daily activities at home and in the community.

The role of teachers as models fits social learning theory, in which people acquire behavior by observing and imitating models (Bandura, 1977), and it agrees with studies that emphasize the exemplary conduct of Islamic Education teachers in building students' character (Kusuma & Inayati, 2023; Shanti & Shohib, 2026). The importance of the family matches findings on collaboration between teachers and parents in shaping

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the Islamic character of senior high school students (Hafiz & Nurmawati, 2024), and it reflects the emphasis of research-based character education on involving families and the wider community (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004).

School facilities also support the religious activities. The school has a mosque that is used for Dhuha prayer, for congregational Dhuhr and Asr prayers, and for worship practice, as well as supporting facilities such as adequate ablution areas and complete prayer equipment. Another supporting factor is the commitment of the whole school community to instilling religious values. Teachers and education staff consciously set an example of religious behavior in daily life, so that habituation can proceed consistently and effectively. With adequate facilities and the exemplary conduct of school members, the program is easier to implement and contributes to improving students' morals and religious character. These findings show that habituation depends on material conditions and on human example at the same time. Clear school direction, active teachers, and parental support appear together as the conditions under which the program works, and a school that wishes to strengthen its own program would need to attend to all three rather than to facilities or schedules alone.

Factors Inhibiting Religious Habituation

In addition to these supporting factors, the implementation of religious habituation also faces several obstacles. One comes from differences in students' family backgrounds and living environments. Not all students receive the same habituation in worship and religious education at home, so some of them still need more intensive guidance. In addition, peer influence and technological developments can make some students less consistent in joining religious activities when teachers are not supervising them. The role of the family and the surrounding environment is therefore essential if the religious values instilled at school are to continue to be applied in students' daily lives.

The peer environment also affects the success of religious character formation. An environment that sets a good example supports the habituation applied at school. However, if students are in a less supportive environment, for example among peers who are not used to worship, this can become an obstacle to the development of their religious character. Such influence is often stronger because it occurs outside the school's control. Moreover, some students do not yet fully understand the importance of the religious activities held every day. They are sometimes less enthusiastic about joining *tadarus* or congregational prayer, and some even prefer to chat and disturb their friends

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while the activities are under way. This lack of awareness challenges the school in instilling discipline in worship and religious attitudes among all students.

These obstacles show that internalization is gradual and uneven. Research on habit formation indicates that the time needed for behavior to become automatic varies considerably between individuals and depends on repetition in supportive contexts (Lally et al., 2010; Wood & Neal, 2007). This helps explain why students' independent awareness does not form evenly even though they all take part in the same program. The practical implication is that the school's supervision and role modeling need to be paired with communication with families and with approaches that help students understand why the activities matter, so that participation does not depend on the presence of teachers.

Conclusion

This study shows that religious habituation at SMA Al-Falah Ketintang Surabaya operates as a mutually supporting cycle of planning, implementation, and evaluation, not as a series of isolated acts of worship. Integrating the religious program into the distinctive Ke-Alfalahan curriculum, together with the involvement of all school members from the principal to parents, makes habituation part of a planned educational structure rather than an incidental supplementary activity. This answers the first research objective and confirms that the success of religious habituation depends largely on the school's ability to design it as a coherent system, not merely to run religious activities separately. Religious habituation also plays a role in shaping students' religious character through two complementary dimensions: the strengthening of visible worship behavior and the strengthening of inner attitudes such as gratitude, reliance on God, humility, and courtesy in daily interaction. This answers the second research objective.

This role is not uniform across students. The internalization of religious values is shaped by the synergy between role modeling and supervision at school, on the one hand, and the support of the family and the peer environment outside school, on the other. Theoretically, the findings contribute to character education by suggesting that religious habituation should be understood not as a one-way process from school to students but as a collaborative process whose success is also determined by the consistency of support beyond the school, an aspect that has received little attention in earlier research on religious habituation at the senior high school level. Practically,

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1 schools are advised to design habituation as an integrated system with active family involvement. The study is limited to a single research site and a descriptive qualitative approach, so its findings cannot be generalized to religious habituation in senior high schools in general, and it did not measure the level of internalization of religious character in each student. Future studies are therefore advised to widen the number of research sites to allow comparison between schools, to consider quantitative or mixed methods to measure internalization, and to examine more closely the role of the family in determining the success of religious habituation outside the school.

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