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ISLAMIC MORAL HABITUATION AND ITS EFFECT ON SELF-CONTROL AND MORAL RESPONSIBILITY AMONG PRIMARY STUDENTS

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Abstract: This study aimed to examine the effect of Islamic moral habituation programs on the development of self-control and moral responsibility among primary school students in Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan, Indonesia. This study employed a quantitative survey design. Data analysis used Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS 4. The study involved 200 students from Grades 4 and 5 across six Islamic primary schools. Three latent variables consisted of Islamic moral habituation (exogenous; 7 dimensions, 24 items), self-control (first endogenous; 5 dimensions, 20 items), and moral responsibility (second endogenous; 5 dimensions, 25 items). The structural model revealed that Islamic moral habituation had a significant positive effect on self-control (β = 0.469, t = 7.44, p < 0.001) and on moral responsibility (β = 0.542, t = 7.953, p < 0.001). The model demonstrated predictive relevance (Q^2 = 0.191 and 0.262) and explanatory power (R^2 = 0.22 and 0.294) with acceptable model fit (SRMR = 0.071). These findings confirmed that structured Islamic moral habituation served as a meaningful predictor of character development outcomes among primary school learners. The implication of this finding is that Islamic moral habits are effective in increasing students' self-control and responsibility, so they need to be implemented routinely by teachers as an important part of character education in Islamic primary schools.

INTRODUCTION

Self-control and moral responsibility constitute two essential developmental outcomes for primary school students. Self-control refers to the capacity to override dominant response tendencies, regulate emotions, and align behavior with long-term goals (Kerasha et al., 2024; Maryani et al., 2025). Moral responsibility represents an individual's awareness of the consequences of personal actions and acceptance of accountability toward others and the community (Hommel, 2023; Jenuri et al., 2025; Khusnadin & Shihab, 2025). Elementary school students need these two aspects as foundations for their character formation. Students who possess strong self-control tend to demonstrate better academic performance and fewer behavioral problems (Fitriah et al., 2025; Hair et al., 2024; Hashim, 2025). Primary school students who develop a sense of moral responsibility exhibit greater social awareness, honesty, and ethical commitment in their daily interactions (Anwar et al., 2025; Demir & Usak, 2025).

Indonesian primary education faces a growing moral crisis that demands urgent attention. The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (*Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia*/KPAI) documented persistent trends of bullying, academic dishonesty, and behavioral infractions among primary school students. Recent studies confirmed that moral decline has weakened empathy, discipline, and student responsibility across elementary schools in Indonesia (Abdalla, 2025; Milosevic & Bass, 2024). Sambas Regency, a predominantly Malay Muslim community in West Kalimantan, experienced a similar erosion pattern. Educators and community leaders in Sambas observed a gradual weakening of moral values despite the region's traditionally strong Islamic heritage. This condition necessitates a systematic intervention that strengthens both self-control and moral responsibility among young learners. Preliminary observations and interviews conducted by the researchers in several Islamic primary schools in Sambas Regency revealed that students frequently exhibited difficulties in controlling their impulses during learning activities. Teachers reported that some students engaged in verbal altercations, showed impatience, and failed to take personal responsibility for their actions. These initial findings indicated a gap between the Islamic values taught in schools and students' actual behavior, suggesting the need for a more structured moral habituation approach.

The schools are a foundational strategy for character formation that directly targets self-control and moral responsibility. The concept of *ta'wid* (moral habituation) occupies a prominent position in classical Islamic scholarship. Al-Ghazali argued in *Ihya Ulumiddin* that moral virtue must be cultivated through sustained and deliberate practice, a process he described as *riyadhah al-nafs* (Pike et al., 2024; Rodiyah et al., 2024). Ibn Miskawaih maintained in *Tahdzib al-Akhlaq* that virtuous character emerges when righteous actions become habitual dispositions. Islamic primary schools across Indonesia, including *Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* (MI) and integrated Islamic schools, have implemented habituation programs encompassing daily congregational prayers, Quranic recitation, charitable giving, and Islamic etiquette instruction. These activities require

students to exercise patience and sustained attention, developing self-control. The collective rituals cultivate social awareness and personal accountability, building moral responsibility (Shepperd & Forsyth, 2023; Yilmaz, 2024).

Previous research established a relationship between religious practice and self-regulatory capacity. Aminulloh et al. (2023) and Rahman et al. (2023) proposed that religion promotes self-control through sanctification of behavioral goals and cultivation of self-monitoring, a framework that empirically tested among Muslim-American adolescents. Faidah et al. (2024) and Hidayat (2024) examined self-control as a mediating variable between Islamic learning and students' religious character and demonstrated a significant mediation effect. Investigated how Islamic education learning shapes students' religious maturity in the *Edureligia* journal. H. & F (2025), Sutarja et al. (2024), and Zakharin & Bates (2023) found that school culture and religious activity habituation significantly influence students' character development. These studies predominantly relied on qualitative approaches or simple correlation analyses, providing limited capacity for predictive inference regarding Islamic moral habituation outcomes.

This research occupied a unique position of novelty and urgency in the literature on Islamic character education. A critical gap exists in the quantitative analysis of Islamic moral habituation programs using advanced statistical methods in Southeast Asian primary education contexts. Existing studies have generally relied on descriptive or correlational approaches that cannot simultaneously evaluate measurement models and test structural relationships. In contrast to these traditional methods, this study provided empirical evidence by quantifying the direct impact of habituation on specific behavioral outcomes. Furthermore, it shifts the focus from general moral education to a specialized examination of how structured Islamic values were internalized through daily school routines, offering a more granular perspective on character formation. Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM) offers a robust analytical framework that handles reflective indicators and assesses both explanatory power and predictive relevance.

No prior study has employed PLS-SEM to examine the relationship between Islamic moral habituation and character development outcomes at the primary school level in West Kalimantan, making this investigation both timely and necessary. So, this study addressed two research hypotheses to fill the identified gaps. H1 posited that Islamic moral habituation has a significant positive effect on self-control among primary school students. H2 posited that Islamic moral habituation has a significant positive effect on moral responsibility. The study contributed to the literature by offering the first PLS-SEM analysis of the relationship between Islamic moral habituation and character development outcomes at the primary school level in Sambas Regency.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative survey design with cross-sectional data collection in six Islamic primary schools in Sambas Regency, West Kalimantan. The analytical framework used PLS-SEM through SmartPLS 4 software. The

target population comprised all students in Grades 4 and 5 enrolled in Islamic primary schools that had implemented structured moral habituation programs. A multi-stage sampling procedure was selected as follows.

Table 1. Distribution of Research Sample

School	Type	Grade 4	Grade 5	Total
School A	MI Negeri	16	19	35
School B	MI Negeri	15	18	33
School C	MI Swasta	15	18	33
School D	SDIT	14	19	33
School E	MI Swasta	14	19	33
School F	MI Negeri	14	19	33
Total		**88**	**112**	**200**

Note. School names are anonymized. MI = Madrasah Ibtidaiyah; SDIT = Sekolah Dasar Islam Terpadu.

Students were then selected through proportional random sampling, yielding a final sample of 200 students (101 males and 99 females) distributed across Grade 4 (n = 88) and Grade 5 (n = 112). Data were collected over two weeks using questionnaires administered in classrooms under the supervision of the research team. The research model comprised three latent variables measured using a four-point Likert scale (1 = Never to 4 = Always). Islamic Moral Habituation (X) served as the exogenous variable with seven dimensions totaling 24 items. Self-Control (Y1) served as the first endogenous variable with five dimensions totaling 20 items adapted from Hair et al. (2024) and Sarstedt et al. (2024). Moral Responsibility (Y2) served as the second endogenous variable with five dimensions totaling 25 items. The analysis followed a two-stage PLS-SEM approach: the outer model assessed indicator reliability, internal consistency (CR > 0.70), convergent validity (AVE > 0.50), and discriminant validity; the inner model assessed path coefficients via bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples, R^2, f^2, Q^2, and SRMR.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION
Result
Descriptive Statistics

The sample comprised 200 students, of whom 101 were males (50.5%) and 99 females (49.5%). Students were drawn from Grade 4 (n = 88, 44.0%) and Grade 5 (n = 112, 56.0%), with ages ranging from 9 to 11 years.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Islamic Moral Habituation (X)	200	2.00	3.88	3.046	0.369
Self-Control (Y1)	200	2.00	3.90	2.858	0.376
Moral Responsibility (Y2)	200	1.68	3.84	2.917	0.388

Note. Scale: 1 (Never) to 4 (Always). N = 200. Source: Primary data processed via SmartPLS 4

Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics. Islamic Moral Habituation recorded the highest mean score (M = 3.046, SD = 0.369). Self-Control recorded the lowest mean (M = 2.858, SD = 0.376). Moral Responsibility fell between the two (M = 2.917, SD = 0.388). The slightly lower mean for self-control may reflect the developmental reality that impulse regulation remains challenging for children aged 9 to 11 years.
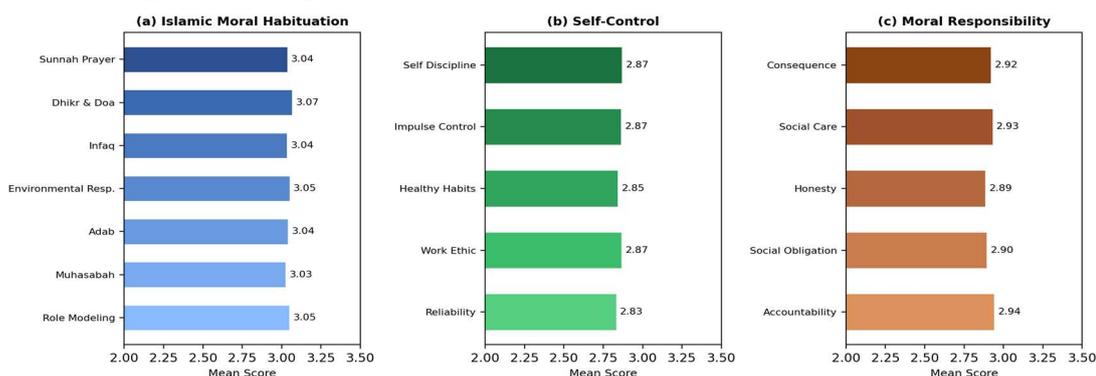

Figure 1. Mean Scores by Dimension Across Research Variables.
Source: SmartPLS 4 Output

Figure 1 displayed the mean scores for each dimension. Among Islamic Moral Habituation dimensions, *sunnah* prayer practice and *adab* recorded the highest means. Within Self-Control, self-discipline emerged as the strongest dimension. For Moral Responsibility, consequence awareness, and social care scored highest.

Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity Analysis

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's α	CR	AVE	Loading Range	Status
Islamic Moral Habituation (X)	0.935	0.968	0.557	0.64–0.846	Valid
Self-Control (Y1)	0.926	0.966	0.591	0.682–0.885	Valid
Moral Responsibility (Y2)	0.942	0.971	0.576	0.653–0.89	Valid

Note. CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted.

Thresholds: α > 0.70; CR > 0.70; AVE > 0.50. Source: SmartPLS 4 output. All constructs exceeded reliability and convergent validity thresholds. Indicators with loadings slightly below 0.70 were retained because the AVE for each construct exceeded 0.50.

Discriminant Validity Analysis

Table 4. Discriminant Validity: Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT Ratio

Panel A: Fornell-Larcker	X	Y1	Y2
Islamic Moral Habituation (X)	0.746		
Self-Control (Y1)	0.469	0.769	

Moral Responsibility (Y2)	0.542	0.207	0.759
Panel B: HTMT Ratio	X	Y1	Y2
Self-Control (Y1)	0.502		
Moral Responsibility (Y2)	0.577	0.236	

Note. Panel A diagonal (bold) = √AVE. HTMT < 0.85.
Source: SmartPLS 4 output.

Discriminant validity was confirmed. All √AVE values exceeded inter-construct correlations. All HTMT values were below the 0.85 threshold. Inner Model Assessment The VIF was 1.000 for both paths, indicating no collinearity issues.
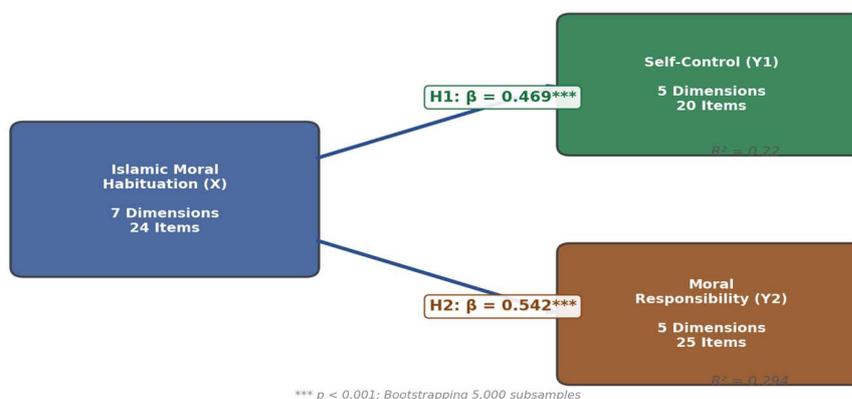
Structural Model Assessment

Figure 2. Structural Model With Path Coefficients And R² Values.
Source: SmartPLS 4 output.

Figure 2 illustrates the structural model with standardized path coefficients and R² values for each endogenous construct. The paths from Islamic Moral Habituation to Self-Control (β = 0.469) and to Moral Responsibility (β = 0.542) are both positive and statistically significant. The R² values of 0.22 and 0.294 indicate that the exogenous construct explains a meaningful proportion of variance in both outcome variables. The higher path coefficient and R² for Moral Responsibility suggest that Islamic moral habituation had a more direct and stronger association with ethical accountability than with impulse regulation.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 5. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing

H	Path	B	T	P	CI LL	CI UL	f²	Decision
H1	X→Y1	0.469	7.44	<0.001	0.345	0.594	0.282	Supported
H2	X→Y2	0.542	7.953	<0.001	0.405	0.673	0.416	Supported

Note. Bootstrapping: 5,000 subsamples, BCa CI, two-tailed, α = 0.05.
Source: SmartPLS 4 output.

Both hypotheses were supported at p < 0.001. H1 was confirmed (β = 0.469, f^2 = 0.282, medium effect). H2 was confirmed (β = 0.542, f^2 = 0.416, large effect).

Model Quality Assessment

Table 6. Model Quality Assessment

Endogenous Variable	R^2	Adj. R^2	Q^2	Interpretation
Self-Control (Y1)	0.22	0.216	0.191	Weak to moderate
Moral Responsibility (Y2)	0.294	0.29	0.262	Moderate

Note. SRMR = 0.071 (threshold < 0.08). Q^2 > 0 indicates predictive relevance.
Source: SmartPLS 4 output.

R^2 for Self-Control was 0.22, and for Moral Responsibility was 0.294. Q^2 values were 0.191 and 0.262, respectively, confirming predictive relevance. SRMR of 0.071 indicated an acceptable model fit.
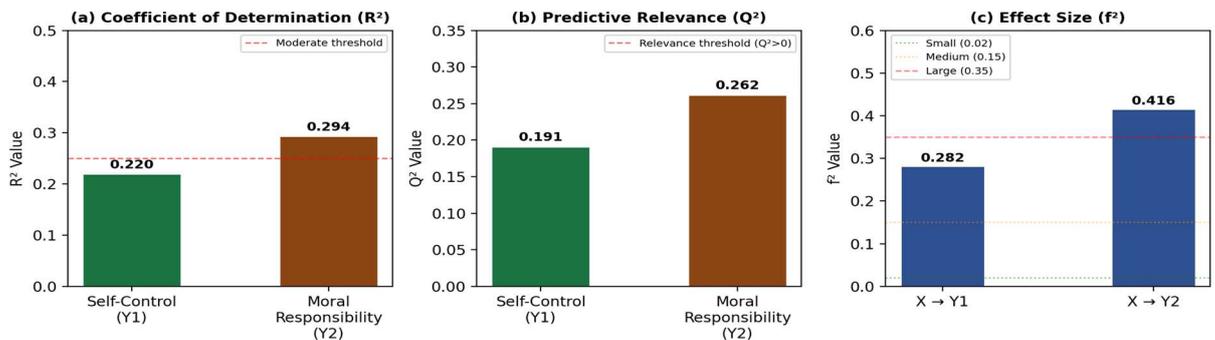

Figure 3. Model quality: R^2, Q^2, and f^2.
Source: SmartPLS 4 output.

Figure 3 presents the model quality indicators, including R^2, Q^2, and f^2 values for both endogenous variables. The R^2 values of 0.22 (Self-Control) and 0.294 (Moral Responsibility) confirm the moderate explanatory power of the structural model. The Q^2 values of 0.191 and 0.262, both exceeding zero, verify that the model possesses adequate predictive relevance for out-of-sample predictions. The f^2 values of 0.282 (medium effect) and 0.416 (large effect) further demonstrate the substantive practical significance of Islamic moral habituation as a predictor of character development outcomes.
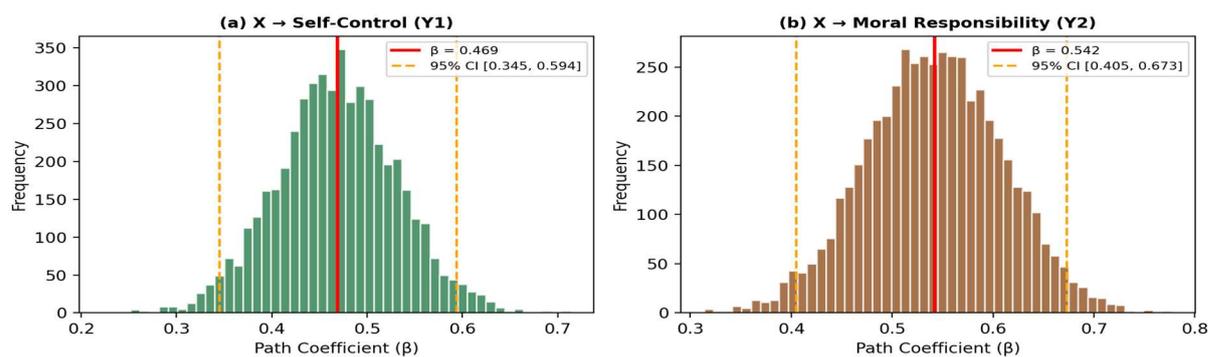
Figure 4. Bootstrap Distribution of Path Coefficients (5,000 Subsamples).
Source: SmartPLS 4 output.

Figure 4 displays the bootstrap distributions of the two path coefficients derived from 5,000 subsamples using the bias-corrected and accelerated (BCa) method. Both distributions were approximately normal and concentrated away from zero, confirming the stability and statistical significance of the estimated path coefficients. The narrow spread of each distribution indicates low sampling variability, thereby reinforcing the robustness of the structural model results. The non-overlapping confidence intervals for both paths provide further evidence that Islamic moral habituation was a reliable and significant predictor of both self-control and moral responsibility.

In summary, the overall results of the outer and inner model assessments confirm that both hypotheses proposed in this study are supported. H1, which posited that Islamic moral habituation has a significant positive effect on self-control, was confirmed with a path coefficient of 0.469, a medium effect size ($f^2 = 0.282$), and a p-value below 0.001. H2, which posited that Islamic moral habituation has a significant positive effect on moral responsibility, was also confirmed with a stronger path coefficient of 0.542, a large effect size ($f^2 = 0.416$), and a p-value below 0.001. The structural model demonstrated acceptable fit (SRMR = 0.071), adequate explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.22$ and 0.294), and predictive relevance ($Q^2 = 0.191$ and 0.262). These findings collectively indicated that structured Islamic moral habituation programs serve as a meaningful and statistically robust predictor of both self-control and moral responsibility among primary school students in Sambas Regency.

Discussion

The finding that Islamic moral habituation significantly predicts self-control ($\beta = 0.469$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.282$) aligns with recent studies on the religion–self-regulation nexus. Djuaini (2025); Has (2023); Mahyuni & Tanjung (2024) argued that religion promotes self-control through sanctification of behavioral goals and cultivation of self-monitoring, a framework empirically among Muslim-American adolescents. Chan et al. (2025); Dabdoub et al. (2024); Kumar & Pravesh (2024) demonstrated that Islamic learning significantly influences self-control as a mediating variable in character formation. The strength model of self-control suggested that repeated exercise of self-discipline functions as progressive training that strengthens self-regulatory capacity, converging with

the Islamic concept of *mujahadah al-nafs*. Furthermore, Musthofa et al. (2024) and Wenzel et al. (2023) the consistency of this habituation depends heavily on the synergy between school environments and the primary support system at home. Collaborative engagement with parents ensures that these moral disciplines are reinforced outside the classroom, creating a holistic ecosystem for character development

The structured daily practices embedded within the habituation programs explain the causal mechanism underlying this finding. Daily congregational Dhuha prayer and Asmaul Husna recitation require students to exercise patience, resist distractions, and sustain focused attention, which are core components of self-control. The moderate R^2 (0.22) reflects that self-control depends on multiple factors beyond the school program, including temperament and parenting practices. This study contributed empirical evidence that school-based Islamic habituation constitutes a meaningful predictor of self-control, extending prior qualitative findings into a quantitative-predictive framework. In this context, the active involvement of parents was essential to bridge the gap between school-based spiritual exercises and daily life behavior. Such a collaborative approach ensured that the habituation of self-discipline remained consistent across all environments, reinforcing the student's internal regulatory capacity.

The stronger path coefficient for moral responsibility ($\beta = 0.542$, $f^2 = 0.416$) resonates with the character education literature. Janapati & Vijayalakshmi (2024), and Lin & Jiang (2023) asserted that effective character education required structured opportunities for children to practice responsible behavior, a position reinforced by Bandhu et al. (2024) and Ntoumanis & Moller (2023) who emphasized virtue practice acrossed the curriculum. The most effective programs integrated character education into the school's culture rather than delivering isolated lessons. Recent Indonesian studies (Ergogo et al., 2023; Kurniawati & Aulia, 2025; Manolev et al., 2024) confirmed that habitual religious practices contributed significantly to moral development and responsibility among elementary students. This underscored the necessity of a unified approach where teachers and parents synchronized their expectations to foster a consistent sense of duty in children. Ultimately, a strong partnership with the family environment ensures that the values practiced at school are internalized as a permanent part of the student's moral identity

The weekly *infaq* cultivates generosity, the daily duty roster develops accountability, and the adab sessions reinforce the principle that individual actions carry consequences. The Islamic concept of *mas'uliyyah* provided a transcendent motivational framework: children learn that their actions bear moral significance and that they are accountable to God, extending accountability beyond school rules. This study contributes the first quantitative evidence that Islamic moral habituation serves as a large-effect predictor ($f^2 = 0.416$) of moral responsibility at the primary school level. This finding suggests that the internalization of such values is most effective when reinforced by a supportive domestic environment through active parental collaboration. When

parents and educators align their guidance, the child's sense of accountability evolves from a school requirement into a deeply rooted personal character trait.

The R^2 values indicated that Islamic moral habituation accounts for 22% and 29% of variance in self-control and moral responsibility, respectively. Self-control and moral responsibility are complex constructs influenced by family, peers, media, and temperament (Aliyev, 2025; Aulia et al., 2025; Ratnawati et al., 2024). A single school-based program explaining roughly one-quarter of the variance represents a practically significant result. The SRMR of 0.071 and positive Q^2 values confirmed the model is well-specified and predictively useful. However, the remaining variance highlights the indispensable role of external support systems, particularly the home environment, in shaping these character outcomes (Chiang et al., 2024; Mydin et al., 2024; Salo et al., 2024). Therefore, maximizing the impact of such programs requires a strong collaborative bridge between educators and parents to ensure the continuity of moral habituation (Kumar & Pravesh, 2024; Stekelenburg & Maria, 2024; Zhou et al., 2024).

These findings can be attributed to several interrelated factors. First, the consistent and repetitive nature of Islamic moral habituation activities, such as daily congregational prayers, Quranic recitation, and charitable giving (infaq), created a structured behavioral routine that gradually internalizes moral values in students. The regularity of these practices functions as a form of behavioral conditioning, reinforcing self-discipline and impulse regulation over time. Second, the communal and social dimensions of the habituation programs, including collective worship and duty rosters, foster a sense of shared accountability and mutual care among students, which directly strengthens moral responsibility. Third, the Islamic moral framework provides students with a transcendent source of motivation: the belief that their actions carry spiritual significance and that they are accountable to God (*mas'uliyyah*). This spiritual dimension elevates moral responsibility beyond mere compliance with school rules, instilling a deeper ethical commitment that secular programs may not achieve as effectively. Furthermore, the success of this internalization is significantly bolstered when there is a strong alignment between the school's spiritual curriculum and the values practiced within the family unit. Collaborative engagement with parents acts as a catalyst, ensuring that these transcendent motivations are consistently reinforced in the child's daily life.

This study offered three contributions. Theoretically, this research bridges classical Islamic educational philosophy (*ta'wid* and *riyadhah al-nafs*) with contemporary psychological constructs, demonstrating their empirical convergence. Methodologically, this study provides the first PLS-SEM application to Islamic moral habituation research at the primary school level, establishing a replicable analytical framework. Practically, the findings support school practitioners in developing structured habituation programs that prioritize *infaq*, duty rosters, and *adab* training. Policymakers should consider integrating structured moral habituation into the formal curriculum of Islamic primary education, accompanied by clear assessment tools to monitor character development.

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study carried an implicit message that the cultivation of moral character among primary school students cannot rely solely on cognitive instruction but must be grounded in consistent and structured behavioral practice rooted in Islamic values. Furthermore, the results suggested that when schools systematically embed moral habituation into their daily routines. The positive effects extended beyond individual self-regulation to encompass a broader sense of ethical accountability and social responsibility among young learners. The stronger effect on moral responsibility indicated that habituation programs cultivate accountability and ethical commitment more directly than impulse regulation. Additionally, this study did not account for external variables such as peer environments outside of school and digital media exposure, which may significantly influence the effectiveness of students' moral habituation. The implications of this research underscored the importance of integrating structured Islamic moral habituation programs into the formal curriculum of primary education as a viable and evidence-based strategy for fostering character development in young learners across diverse Islamic educational settings. These findings bridge classical Islamic educational philosophy with contemporary psychological theory. The cross-sectional design precluded causal inference, self-report data might introduce social desirability bias, and the sample is limited to Sambas schools. Future research should employ longitudinal designs, multi-method assessments, and moderating variables such as family religiosity and socioeconomic status to extend these findings across diverse Islamic educational contexts. Future research is encouraged to conduct comparative studies between urban and rural schools to understand how differences in infrastructure and information access affect the patterns of Islamic-based character formation.

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