



STRENGTHENING STUDENTS' RELIGIOUS CHARACTER EDUCATION THROUGH ISLAMIC BEHAVIOR HABITUATION PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the concept of Islamic education management in developing students' religious character and to construct a conceptual framework for implementing Islamic behavioral habituation programs. The study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive-analytical literature review method through content analysis technique. The findings indicate that the management of Islamic behavioral habituation programs requires a holistic, systematic, and integrative approach grounded in the integration of three main pillars: Islamic education management theory, behavioristic learning theory, and character education theory, oriented toward the tarbiyah goal of forming the insan kamil — a complete human being encompassing the dimensions of aqidah, ibadah, and akhlak. Operationally, the strengthening of religious character is carried out through the POAC management functions and five key strategies, namely curricular integration, modeling, the creation of a religious school culture, parental collaboration, and the reinforcement of students' intrinsic motivation. The conceptual framework for implementation comprises five components: an Islamic philosophical foundation, a periodically structured program design, leadership- and modeling-based implementation, institutional system support, and continuous evaluation encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. The resulting conceptual framework is adaptive to the diverse contexts of schools across Indonesia and serves as a practical reference for designing Islamic behavioral habituation programs that are systematic, measurable, and effective.

Keywords: *Islamic Education Management, Habituation, Religious Character*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesian national education has a very fundamental goal as stated in Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, namely to develop the potential of students to become people who believe in and fear God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Holidi, 2025). From this formulation, it is clear that the formation of religious character and noble character is the main priority in the Indonesian education system, even placed before the aspect of intellectual intelligence.

The philosophical basis for the formation of religious character in education is actually firmly rooted in the values of the Koran as the main source of Islamic teachings. Allah SWT says in Q.S. Luqman verse 13:

عَظِيمٌ لَّظَلَمَ الشِّرْكَ إِنَّ ۖ بِاللَّهِ تُشْرِكُ لَا يُبْنَىٰ يَعْظُمُ ۖ وَهُوَ لِأَبْنَيْهِ لُقْمَانُ قَالَ وَإِذْ

"And (remember) when Luqman said to his son, while he was giving him a lesson: 'O my son, do not associate partners with Allah, indeed to associate partners with (Allah) is truly a great injustice'." (Q.S. Luqman: 13)

This verse explicitly describes a family-based character education model and the values of monotheism, which serve as the primary foundation for developing an Islamic personality. Luqman Al-Hakim's exemplary approach to educating his son demonstrates that religious character formation must begin early in life through a compassionate, focused, and continuous approach.

However, in reality, the morality of Indonesia's young generation is currently experiencing a concerning decline. Various phenomena of juvenile delinquency such as student brawls, drug abuse, promiscuity, bullying, and low respect for teachers indicate a weakening of religious character values among students (Siti, 2026). This phenomenon occurs not only in the general community but also in the educational sector, including at the vocational high school level, indicating that character education in schools is not yet optimal.

This problem is increasingly complex in today's digital era, where the massive and unfiltered flow of information through social media and the internet significantly influences students' character development. Research by Livingstone and Third (2017) shows that uncontrolled exposure to digital content can shift traditional moral values in adolescents (Kunta, 2026). Easy access to information without the maturity to filter positive and negative content can shift religious character values, which should be the foundation of students' personalities. This situation demands that educational institutions focus not only on academic achievement but also seriously manage systematic and measurable religious character development programs.

In the context of Islamic education, religious character formation cannot be achieved solely through classroom learning. Character education requires a holistic and sustainable approach through the habituation of Islamic behavior in daily life within the school environment (Abdullah, 2025). This habituation concept aligns with behaviorist learning theory, which emphasizes that character can be formed through the consistent repetition of positive behaviors until they become habits. Imam al-Ghazali, in his book *Ihya Ulumuddin*, also emphasized that morality is formed through habituation and continuous practice, not just through knowledge alone.

A character education expert, stated that character education contains three main elements, namely knowing the good, loving the good, and doing the good (Lickona, 2013). Character education is not just teaching what is right and what is wrong, but more than that, character education instills habits about good things so that students understand (cognitive) what is good and wrong, are able to feel (affective) good values and are used to doing them (psychomotor) (Khomairotusshiyamah, 2026). Various studies have been conducted on the development and strengthening of religious character through habituation programs. Developing students' religious character through habituating religious activities at school can increase their awareness of worship and noble moral behavior. This study used a descriptive qualitative approach and found that consistency in implementing habituation programs is key to successful character formation (Saputra, 2026).

Conducted research on the management of religious character education through habituation methods in kindergartens (Zain, 2026). The results showed

that well-managed habituation programs can shape children's religious character from an early age. This study found that the role of teachers as role models and role models is crucial in the habituation process. Also examined the implementation of religious character education through school culture at SMA Mujahidin Pontianak. Their research found that a conducive school culture and a structured habituation program can effectively shape students' religious character. However, this study also identified several implementation challenges, such as consistency of implementation and support from all stakeholders.

Research in "Character Education in UK Schools" shows that a holistic approach to character education involving all elements of the school is more effective than partial programs. This indicates the importance of strategic management in implementing religious behavior habituation programs. A comparative study character education programs in the United States found that successful programs had the following characteristics: (1) long and sustained duration, (2) active student involvement, (3) focus on developing social and emotional skills, and (4) support from the entire school community. These findings provide an important foundation for developing effective habituation program management strategies. This study aims to analyze the theoretical concept of Islamic education management in strengthening students' religious character and to develop a conceptual framework for the implementation of Islamic behavioral habituation programs in schools.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach aimed at understanding, analyzing, and interpreting phenomena in depth based on descriptive data (Firdausiyah, 2026). This approach is considered most appropriate for examining the concept of Islamic education management in strengthening students' religious character, given that this study is conceptual-theoretical in nature, requiring in-depth analysis and synthesis of ideas from various literature sources (Rahman, 2026). The type of research used is library research, which is a series of activities related to library data collection methods, reading, recording, and processing research materials. This research is descriptive-analytical, namely describing systematically and factually the concepts being studied, then analyzing the relationships between these concepts critically and in depth.

The data sources in this study consist of two categories: primary data sources and secondary data sources. Primary data sources are the primary data sources directly related to the research topic (Kusumawati, 2026). In this study, primary data sources include major textbooks on Islamic educational management, character education theory, behaviorist learning theory, and classic works by Islamic educational figures relevant to the study of Islamic behavioral habituation. Meanwhile, secondary data sources are supporting data sources that strengthen and complement primary data sources. Secondary data sources in this study include national and international scientific journals, scientific articles, seminar proceedings, theses, dissertations, and other official documents relevant to the topic of managing Islamic behavioral habituation programs and strengthening students' religious character (Ni'am, 2025).

Data collection in this study was conducted through documentation techniques, namely searching for and collecting data on things or variables in the form of notes, books, papers or articles and journals. Documentation techniques are considered appropriate for library research because they allow

researchers to explore various written sources systematically and comprehensively. The data collection process was carried out through the following stages: first, the researcher conducted a systematic literature search using relevant keywords in various scientific journal databases, digital libraries, and other literature sources; second, the researcher conducted a literature selection based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria, including topic relevance, source credibility, and publication recency; third, the researcher recorded and organized the data systematically using a data card instrument to facilitate the subsequent analysis process (Abdurrahman, 2025).

The data analysis in this study used content analysis techniques, which are research techniques for making replicable and valid inferences by taking into account their context. This technique is used to analyze the meaning contained in various literature sources systematically and objectively. The data analysis process is carried out through four interconnected stages as per the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña adapted for library research: Data Reduction, Data Display, Data Interpretation, Conclusion Drawing and Verification.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Theoretical Concept of Islamic Education Management in Strengthening Students' Religious Character Education

Based on the literature review that has been conducted, it was found that the theoretical concept of Islamic education management in strengthening religious character is based on the integration of three main pillars, namely Islamic education management theory, behaviorist learning theory, and character education theory in one holistic system.

Table 1. Management Functions in Religious Character Strengthening

Management Function	Implementation
Planning	(1) Formulating a clear vision and mission related to strengthening religious character, (2) Identification of religious character values based on Islamic teachings and contextual needs, (3) Designing a systematic and measurable habituation program, (4) Preparing resources including human resources, infrastructure and budget, (5) Determining specific and measurable success indicators
Organizing	(1) Formation of a program management team consisting of the principal, teachers and other stakeholders, (2) Clear division of tasks and responsibilities to each team member, (3) Preparation of an organizational structure to support program implementation, (4) Coordination between units within the school to ensure program synergy, (5) Preparation of a documentation and reporting system
Actuating	(1) Implementation of habituation activities according to the schedule that has been prepared, (2) Providing role models by all elements of the school, especially teachers and the principal, (3) Creating a school environment that is conducive to strengthening religious character, (4) Involving parents and the community in supporting the program, (5) Providing motivation and positive reinforcement to students
Controlling	(1) Routine monitoring of the implementation

of the habituation program, (2) Periodic evaluation using valid and reliable instruments, (3) Analysis of program achievements compared to the set targets, (4) Identification of obstacles and challenges in implementation, (5) Continuous improvement based on evaluation results

Five key strategies for strengthening religious character through Islamic education management, namely: (1) Curricular integration strategy, (2) Modeling strategy, (3) School Culture Creation strategy, (4) Collaboration strategy with parents and the community, (5) Positive reinforcement and intrinsic motivation strategy. This strategy has been proven to be able to support the internalization of religious values more effectively than learning approaches that only focus on cognitive aspects.

Conceptual Framework for the Implementation of Islamic Behavior Habituation Program in Schools

The results of the literature review produced a conceptual framework for the implementation of an Islamic behavioral habituation program consisting of five main interrelated components (Sudarwan, 2025).

Conceptual Framework for the Implementation of the Islamic Behavior Habituation Program in Schools

Component	Description	Activities/ Key Indicators	Expected results
Philosophical Foundation	The school's vision, mission, and core values are in line with Islamic teachings and the goals of character education	Formulation of Islamic values, vision and mission of the institution, character education policies	The formation of clear directions and goals in strengthening students' religious character
Program Design	The habituation program is designed systematically, structured, and sustainably	Daily activities (Dhuha prayer, Al-Quran recitation, 5S culture), weekly (Friday alms, Islamic studies), monthly (Islamic holiday commemorations), and yearly (Ramadan Islamic boarding school, sacrifice)	The formation of positive habits and consistent practice of Islamic values
Program Implementation	Program implementation involves all education stakeholders	Principal leadership, teacher role models, active student participation, and parental support	Internalization of religious values in students' attitudes and behavior
System Support	Institutional support that ensures program sustainability	Written policies, facilities and infrastructure, reward and development systems, funding, and	Creating an educational environment that supports the formation of

		partnerships external parties	with	religious character
Continuous Evaluation and Improvement	Comprehensive program monitoring and evaluation to improve the effectiveness of implementation	Assessment of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects; reflection and program follow-up		Continuous improvement of program quality and strengthening of students' religious character

Theoretical Concept of Islamic Education Management in Strengthening Religious Character

The resulting conceptual framework demonstrates a strong integration between Islamic educational management theory, behaviorist learning theory, and character education theory (Razaq, 2026). This aligns view, which emphasizes that Islamic educational management must be holistic and integrative. The four management functions (planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling) identified in this study represent applications of classical management concepts adapted for the context of religious character education (Sain, 2026). In the planning stage, the emphasis on formulating a vision and mission and identifying character values reflects a top-down approach combined with contextual needs analysis. This is important because, effective character education must begin with a clear understanding of what values are to be developed and why they are important.

Meanwhile, the organizational stage should emphasize team formation and a clear division of tasks, as character education is a shared responsibility, not just the responsibility of religious teachers. This aligns with the "whole school approach" concept of character education proposed, which requires active involvement from all elements of the school. The curricular integration strategies found in this study are strongly supported, which showed that integrating character values into all aspects of school life is more effective than separate programs. This approach enables students to understand that religious values are relevant not only in the context of formal worship but also in all aspects of life, including academic learning and social interactions (Hasanah, 2026).

The role model strategy has a strong theoretical basis Social Learning Theory, which asserts that learning through observation of models is highly effective in shaping behavior. In the context of Islamic education, role models are also a method exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) as a "uswatun hasanah" (good example) (Sanjan, 2025). Therefore, developing teacher professionalism and character is a crucial investment in the success of a habituation program. The strategy for creating a religious school culture demonstrates an understanding that the physical and social environment of a school significantly influences the formation of student character. This aligns developmental ecology theory, which emphasizes the importance of the microenvironment (school) in child development. A school's physical design that supports religious practices, such as adequate prayer rooms and Quran reading corners, provides opportunities for students to consistently practice religious behavior (Kamil, 2025).

Collaborative strategies with parents and the community reflect an understanding of the importance of consistency between the values taught in school and those practiced at home and in the community. theory of

"overlapping spheres of influence" asserts that the synergy between these three environments (school, family, and community) will have a greater impact on a child's character development than if each worked separately. A strategy for strengthening intrinsic motivation that demonstrates the evolution of understanding of character education from merely forming habits through rewards and punishments (classical behaviorism) to developing students' internal awareness and commitment (Novita, 2025). Self-Determination Theory supports this approach by stating that intrinsic motivation is stronger and more enduring than extrinsic motivation. In the context of Islamic education, this approach aligns with the concept of *ihsan*, which means worshiping as if seeing God, which emphasizes internal awareness and sincerity.

Conceptual Framework for the Implementation of Islamic Behavior Habituation Program in Schools

The conceptual framework for implementing a habituation program includes five components: philosophical foundation, program design, implementation, system support, and evaluation-improvement. This structure aligns in the CIPP (Context, Input, Process, Product) evaluation model, which emphasizes the importance of considering all aspects of the system to achieve program effectiveness. A philosophical foundation component that emphasizes clarity of vision and core values demonstrates that character education programs cannot be merely eclectic or pragmatic but must be grounded in a solid philosophy (Holidi, 2026). In the context of Islamic education, this foundation encompasses an understanding of the holistic goals of Islamic education (*tarbiyah*), namely the development of a perfect human being who is balanced in physical, spiritual, intellectual, and social aspects.

Program designs that include daily, weekly, monthly, and annual habituation demonstrate the importance of repetition and variation in habit formation. In behaviorist learning theory, habit formation requires consistent repetition, but variation in activity formats is also necessary to maintain student motivation and engagement. Implementation components that emphasize the principal's leadership role, teacher role models, active student participation, and parental support reflect an ecosystem approach to character education. Each stakeholder has a specific role that contributes to the overall success of the program (Umiarso et al., 2021).

System support components, including policies, infrastructure, rewards and punishments, budgets, and external collaboration, demonstrate the understanding that character education programs require strong structural support. Without adequate system support, programs will rely solely on individual goodwill, which is unsustainable in the long term. The evaluation and improvement components, which utilize a comprehensive approach (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor), demonstrate a thorough understanding of the complexities of character education evaluation. Evaluation cannot simply measure external knowledge or compliance, but must also measure internal change and the long-term impact on student character.

The challenge of consistent implementation identified in this study is a classic issue in implementing character education programs (Rozi et al., 2021). Longitudinal research shows that successful character education programs are those implemented consistently over the long term. The proposed solution is to make the habituation program an integral part of the school culture, rather than an add-on. This would reduce reliance on individual enthusiasm and place greater emphasis on the established system. The challenges of students' diverse family backgrounds reflect a complex social reality. In Indonesia's pluralistic

context, even within a single Islamic school, families' levels of religiosity vary widely (Mustajab et al., 2021). The solution offered is through home visits and parenting education. This demonstrates the need for schools to play an active role in empowering parents, rather than simply relying on their passive support.

The challenge of the influence of social media and technology is a highly relevant contemporary issue. Digital technology has an ambivalent impact on adolescent character development (Wahid et al., 2022). The proposed solution, integrating digital literacy into character education programs, demonstrates a realistic and forward-looking approach, recognizing that technology is inevitable but must be managed wisely. The challenge of limited resources is a reality faced by many schools, especially private schools or those in areas with limited economic resources. The solution offered emphasizes optimizing existing resources and developing cost-effective programs. This aligns with the principle of efficient management, which emphasizes achieving maximum results with available resources.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the successful management of Islamic behavioral habituation programs requires a holistic, systematic, and integrated approach to strengthening students' religious character. The conceptual foundation combines Islamic educational management, behaviorist learning theory, and character education theory, emphasizing the balanced development of students' faith (aqidah), worship (ibadah), and moral conduct (akhlaq). Program implementation is guided by the interconnected management functions of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling, supported by key strategies such as curricular integration, teacher role modeling, the establishment of a religious school culture, collaboration with parents and the community, and the enhancement of students' intrinsic motivation. Together, these elements create a sustainable framework for the internalization of Islamic values in school settings.

The study further identifies a practical implementation framework consisting of five interrelated components: a foundation of Islamic values, structured program design, collaborative implementation, institutional support systems, and continuous evaluation. Although implementation is challenged by issues such as program consistency, diverse family backgrounds, digital influences, and limited resources, these barriers can be addressed through stronger school culture, parent engagement, digital literacy integration, and effective resource management. Overall, the proposed framework is flexible and adaptable to different educational contexts in Indonesia while preserving its core Islamic principles, making it a valuable reference for developing systematic, measurable, and sustainable Islamic behavioral habituation programs that foster students' religious character.

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