

Internalization of Student Discipline Character thru Worship Habituation: A Moral Shield Study against the Impact of Modernity in the Southern Route

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of the degradation of discipline character and lifestyle changes due to regional infrastructure development (Southern Cross Road) poses a serious challenge to self-control among elementary school students. This study aims to analyze the mechanism of habituating Duha prayer as an instrument for strengthening student discipline. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected thru participatory observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Analysis was conducted by integrating Thorndike's Law of Exercise theory and Thomas Lickona's character education concept. Research findings indicate that structured habituation thru pre-, process, and post-worship stages effectively builds three dimensions of discipline: time discipline, instructional discipline, and regulatory discipline (self-control). The success of this program is determined by the strategic partnership of religious leaders and the collective example set by teachers, although it is still hindered by factors such as teacher dissonance and the family environment. This study concludes that consistent worship habituation functions as a moral shield for students in facing the negative impacts of modernity and sociological changes in the region.

I. INTROUCTION

In the architecture of primary education, discipline serves as 'internal immunity' that shields students from various social pathologies in the future. Self-discipline instilled from an early age helps students develop responsible behavior and self-control without the need for constant supervision from adults (Khikmah, F. Santosa, A. B. & Sudarsono, 2022). However, empirical reality shows a gap between the idealism of the curriculum and the stagnation of character in the field. The failure to instill this discipline is manifested in various social crises in the Special Region of Yogyakarta, ranging from street crime (klithih), high prevalence of bullying, to vandalism that damages public spaces (Waliyanti et al., 2018). In the Gunungkidul Regency area, this crisis even culminates in a high rate of early marriages, mostly triggered by unwanted pregnancies, as a clear indicator of the collapse of moral discipline among teenagers (Ibrahim & Haliman, 2022). The root of this character crisis often stems from a dichotomous understanding of science and religion. As emphasized by Hopid (2021), although the concept of integration is outlined in Islamic teachings, in reality, educational institutions still face obstacles in mastering scientific integration, both conceptually-paradigmatically and practically. As a result, the potential of Muslims remains scattered and isolated because they have long been influenced by secular materialism (Hopid, 2021). This condition is exacerbated by the issue of teachers' personality competence, which still requires strengthening. Arqam (2022) identified that the weak mastery of religious norms and

teacher personality directly impacts professionalism and the effectiveness of value internalization in schools. As educators in the Muhammadiyah environment, teachers are required not only to master the material but also to become *Uswatun Hasanah*, reflecting piety, an Islamic work ethic, and steadfast commitment as outlined in the Muhammadiyah Islamic Living Guidelines (PHIWM) (Sasmita & Arqam, 2022).

The situation becomes even more complex with the external challenge of culture shock due to massive infrastructure development such as the South Coast Road (JJLS). This wave of modernization triggers the emergence of new economic groups that tend to adopt a hedonistic lifestyle, which then seeps into permissive parenting styles (Herlina, 2023). In facing this social disruption, educational institutions are required to have systematic character strengthening management. As emphasized by Hopid (2021), the success of character value internalization in schools greatly depends on the creation of a religious educational ecosystem and the integration of moral values into every daily activity of students (Afriyani et al., 2025). Excessive material facilities often hinder the instillation of a learning ethos and student discipline in schools (Arodani et al., 2025). Previous literature, such as the research by Nasution and Indazah, has confirmed the effectiveness of ritual worship in shaping students' religious character (Indazah, 2024). However, the majority of these studies remain monolithic and have not specifically dissected the variable of discipline in facing the onslaught of materialistic culture and sudden wealth syndrome in transitioning rural environments (Anshori & Asjhari, 2015).

This research gap is where the originality of this study lies. This research offers novelty by shifting the focus from merely a ritual of worship to a functional analysis of Duha prayer as an instrument of behavior modification (Asyari et al., 2025). The success of habituating worship in schools cannot be separated from the role of teachers as the primary exemplars. As explained by Sasmita & Arqam (2022), the personality competence of teachers from the Muhammadiyah perspective demands integrity and noble character, which serve as behavioral standards for students in the process of internalizing religious values (Sasmita & Arqam, 2022). The approach used integrates Thorndike's Law of Exercise theory and Thomas Lickona's character education concept to see how the habituation of worship can become a counter-culture against the tide of hedonism (Lickona, 2022). This approach aligns with Hopid's (2023) findings, which emphasize that the effectiveness of quality improvement in elementary schools heavily relies on leadership strategies in motivating and creating a consistent reward and punishment system (Yusutria et al., 2022). Based on this urgency, this study aims to describe and analyze the process of habituating Duha prayer, its impact on the dimensions of student discipline, as well as the supporting and inhibiting factors at SD Negeri Jepitu 3 Girisubo. This research is expected to offer an adaptive character habituation model amidst the dynamics of social and economic changes in the region.

II. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to deeply analyze the phenomenon of instilling student discipline character (Sugiyono, 2020). The choice of this method is based on the need to explore the "meaning behind behavior" and the dynamics of social interaction in its natural setting. Case studies allow researchers to capture the uniqueness of the Duha prayer habituation model at SDN Jepitu 3 Girisubo as an instrument for behavior modification amidst the currents of rural modernity due to the construction of the Southern Cross Road (JJLS) and the challenges of hedonistic parenting (Mulyadi et al., 2025). The research was conducted at SD Negeri Jepitu 3 Girisubo, Gunungkidul, during the period from October 2025 to January 2026. The research subjects were purposively selected, consisting of key informants such as the Principal (SK), Class Teachers (NP, SW, KS), Physical Education Teacher (H), and representatives from grades IV, V, and VI students. The selection of these subjects aims to obtain a holistic perspective, starting from policymakers, technical implementers (teacher role models), to the subjects undergoing the process of value internalization (students).

Data collection techniques were carried out thru triangulation, which included passive participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation (Sugiyono, 2020). Observations focused on the manifestation of students' disciplined character during worship processes, while in-depth interviews were conducted to explore students' moral knowing and moral feeling. The research instruments were developed based on the integration of Thorndike's Law of Exercise theory to capture the habituation process, Thomas Lickona's theory to measure character outcomes, and Abdullah Nashih Ulwan's Al-Qudwah principle to analyze the factor of exemplary behavior. To ensure the validity of the data, the researcher applied credibility tests thru source triangulation, technique triangulation, and prolonged observation to build a deep rapport with the informants. Data analysis was conducted interactively following the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model, which includes the stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. This analysis process is carried out continuously from the data collection stage in the field until a saturated and consistent pattern regarding the effectiveness of worship habituation in shaping students' autonomous self-control is found (Dr. Indra Prasetia et al., 2022).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mechanism of Duha Prayer Habituation

The habituation of Duha prayer at SDN Jepitu 3 Girisubo is designed instructionally to form systematic habituation. Based on the research findings, this process follows Thorndike's Law of Exercise, where the strength of the stimulus-response relationship is determined by the frequency of consistent practice. The stimulus in the form of a bell sound at 09:00 WIB triggers an automatic response from students to transition from the play zone to the worship zone (Darmayanti et al., n.d.). Managerially, the success of this mechanism does not happen by chance. As

emphasized by Hopid (2023), the effectiveness of improving quality and character at the elementary school level highly depends on leadership strategies in motivating and creating a disciplined organizational system (Muhammad Hatta Minulyo et al., 2025). At SDN Jepitu 3 Girisubo Gunungkidul, the principal and teachers manage this transition time as a "hidden curriculum" that trains students' agility. This stage includes pre-worship discipline (orderly ablution queues), procedural discipline (neatness of rows and tranquility), and post-worship discipline (remembrance and arrangement of prayer equipment inventory). The analysis of this phenomenon aligns with Arqam's (2020) view, which asserts that the internalization of character values will reach an optimal point when supported by consistent habituation management in students' daily activities. In this context, the discipline before and after worship at SDN Jepitu 3 is not merely a routine, but rather a form of strengthening the school culture that functions as a 'social laboratory' to train students' obedience to norms without the need for external pressure (Perawironegoro et al., 2020). Thus, the orderliness in the wudu queue and the neatness of the rows become indicators of the school's success in transforming religious values into lasting automatic behaviors.

Theoretically, this orderliness is a manifestation of Moral Action (Lickona), where students not only understand the rules cognitively but also practice them repeatedly until they form muscle memory. This pattern proves that habits managed with good management can transform mechanistic activities into stable spiritual awareness (Dalmeri, n.d.). This is in line with Arqam's (2022) view, which states that a complete personality competence requires consistency between moral knowledge and real actions. In the Muhammadiyah perspective, the process of 'grounding' these values can only occur if the school creates an ecosystem that compels these values to be practiced consistently until they become part of one's identity (Sasmita & Arqam, 2022). Thus, the habituation of Duha prayer at SDN Jepitu 3 serves as a bridge connecting religious cognitive aspects to automatic, character-driven behavior.

The significance of this program is reflected in the transformation of student behavior through three main dimensions. First, Time Discipline: attendance rates reached 95-100% and students were able to postpone the satisfaction of playing for worship (Adams & Nadlif, 2025). This is in line with Al-Ghazali's concept of *riyadhah al-nafs*, while also proving the paradigm of scientific integration advocated by Hopid (2021). In this view, the practice of worship no longer stands alone in a dichotomous manner, but rather becomes a practical instrument for training students' time management, where students achieve a level of discipline not through coercion, but through inner necessity (Hopid, 2021). Second, Instructional Discipline: a "domino effect" was found where students' concentration and compliance in receiving lessons significantly increased after the Duha prayer. The pattern of the congregation's obedience to the imam in the mosque positively transferred to the students' obedience to the teacher in the classroom (transfer of learning). Third,

Regulatory Discipline (Self-Control): reflected in the culture of queuing independently and the responsibility of maintaining environmental cleanliness without strict supervision (Wardanik et al., 2021). In the Islamic perspective, this is an achievement of the degree of khuluq (settled behavior) that serves as a moral shield against a hedonistic lifestyle and the sociological impact of JJLS development in the surrounding environment (Mukarromah et al., 2022).

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors

The success of discipline internalization at SDN Jepitu 3 is fundamentally supported by a strategic partnership with religious leaders and the Muhammadiyah Branch Leadership (PCM) of Girisubo. This synergy resulted in a representative prayer room facility as a "character laboratory," which provided strong moral legitimacy for the school to implement programs amidst a society undergoing a value transition (Maysa Az-Zahra et al., 2024). However, this research also identifies a crucial obstacle in the form of massive external challenges due to the construction of the Southern Cross Road (JJLS). This national infrastructure project has triggered the phenomenon of sudden wealth syndrome (newly wealthy individuals) among parents due to land compensation (Hadiyanto, 2017). This instant economic transformation has led to an escalation of a hedonistic lifestyle and permissive parenting, where material facilities (such as advanced smartphones and motor vehicles) are given to children without educational filters (Herlina, 2023). This condition creates a value dichotomy; on one hand, the school reinforces spiritual discipline, but on the other hand, the home environment offers material freedom that loosens self-control (Hidayat & Purwowidodo, 2024).

On the other hand, internal obstacles were found in the form of teacher dissonance or inconsistency in the educators' exemplary behavior. This issue becomes very crucial when referring to Arqam's (2022) thinking that the personality competence of teachers is the main behavioral standard for students. The weak mastery of religious norms and personality among certain educators directly impacts professionalism and the effectiveness of value internalization. As emphasized by Sasmita and Arqam (2022), teachers must be *Uswatun Hasanah* who demonstrate integrity and steadfast commitment. Without complete exemplarity, the habituation of Duha prayer will only become a physical formality without depth of character (Sasmita & Arqam, 2022). Therefore, the consistency of the Duha prayer ritual at SDN Jepitu 3 should not be viewed merely as a routine worship, but rather as a strategic and urgent counter-culture. Amidst the storm of sociological changes in the coastal areas of Gunungkidul triggered by the JJLS project, this habituation serves as a spiritual anchor that preserves the integrity of students' character from the shift toward materialistic values. As per Hapid's (2021) framework on the importance of a religious education ecosystem, this consistent spiritual conditioning aims to build an autonomous 'internal brake' within the students (Hapid et al., 2023). This self-control ability can only be

permanently formed if supported by the steadfast personality competence of the teacher (Sasmita & Arqam, 2022) as the primary behavioral model. Thus, the integration of disciplined habituation management and strong role modeling will ensure that students maintain a robust moral compass, so they do not merely become spectators in the region's economic progress, but remain subjects of noble character and independent personality.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the habituation of Duha prayer at SDN Jepitu 3 Girisubo is not merely a ritual activity, but an effective behavioral modification instrument in internalizing students' discipline values thru three main dimensions: time discipline, instructional discipline, and regulative discipline. The success of this program is rooted in systematic habituation management following the Law of Exercise, which is capable of transforming cognitive understanding into automatic behavior (muscle memory). Research findings emphasize that the effectiveness of this value internalization highly depends on leadership strategies in managing a religious school ecosystem and the integrity of teachers' personalities as *uswatun hasanah*. Sociologically, consistent religious practices have proven to be a strategic counter-culture in safeguarding students' morality from the impacts of sudden wealth syndrome and the hedonistic currents resulting from infrastructure development on the coast of Gunungkidul. The synergy between disciplined habituation management and the steadfast exemplary behavior of educators creates an autonomous "internal brake" in students. Thus, the integration of spiritual values into the school culture becomes an absolute prerequisite for shaping students who are not only adaptive to economic changes but also possess moral resilience and strong personal independence.

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