

Cultivating Noble Character in Students Through Habituation at Islamic Boarding School-Based Private High Schools in Aceh Besar Regency

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study examines the cultivation of students' noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) through habituation at Islamic boarding school-based private high schools in Aceh Besar Regency. **Method:** This qualitative research utilizes a case study approach at two Islamic boarding school-based private high schools: SMAS Babul Magfirah and SMAS IT Ar-Rabiyah. **Results:** The findings reveal that the cultivation of noble character is implemented across five domains: spiritual and worship habituation, social morality habituation, etiquette in seeking knowledge habituation, unique boarding school culture habituation, and integration into co-curricular activities. The cultivation strategies are carried out through participatory planning, consistent implementation, multi-perspective evaluation, comprehensive stakeholder involvement, and the establishment of a conducive school climate. Teachers act as role models, mentors, supervisors, facilitators, and liaisons connecting school values with families. The study concludes that moral cultivation based on habituation and boarding school culture is proven effective in holistically shaping students' characters. **Novelty:** The implementation of these research findings is recommended for the development of character education models in boarding school-based educational institutions.

INTRODUCTION

Education serves as the primary foundation for the advancement of individuals and society, as well as the key to achieving sustainable development goals. Fundamentally, education functions not only as a means to acquire knowledge but also as a medium for developing the character, morality, and skills necessary for life. The urgency of education becomes increasingly evident as the world evolves, requiring individuals to adapt to rapid social, technological, and economic changes. In this context, character education becomes a primary focus, particularly in shaping a younger generation that is not only intellectually intelligent but also possesses noble morals. Character education, as emphasized by Lickona [1], encompasses three interrelated moral components: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral acting.

As a comprehensive religion, Islam places great importance on educational development, especially religious education for the younger generation. The primary goal is to shape a reliable future generation equipped with good character in the form of noble morals (*akhlakul karimah*). Moral education in Islam does not focus solely on theoretical aspects but also emphasizes the practice and habituation of noble values in daily life. The Quran and Hadith serve as the main sources of Islamic character education, as reflected in Surah Luqman verses 13-19, which highlight the values of faith, respect for

parents, moral responsibility, as well as patience and virtue in social interactions [2]. These verses act as a guideline for comprehensive Islamic character building, encompassing spirituality, personal ethics, and social relations.

The rapid advancement of science and technology, coupled with political and economic practices devoid of religious morality, has fueled the rise of a materialistic lifestyle within society. A deeper consequence of this lifestyle is moral decadence and the erosion of religious values among adults, adolescents, and children alike. The most distressing phenomenon is the moral decline of students within educational institutions. Consequently, moral education has become increasingly vital in shielding the younger generation from the adverse effects of globalization and technological progress [3]. The urgency of instilling noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) in students is paramount for shaping good character and personality, fostering a positive learning environment, and producing well-rounded individuals who are ready to contribute to society.

The cultivation of noble character in schools is a fundamental process aimed at shaping the moral and ethical foundation of students. Through an approach of habituation, educational institutions play a crucial role in embedding virtuous values within learners. The habituation of good morals, in particular, significantly impacts a child's character development, ultimately leading to improved behavior. This method aligns with Imam Al-Ghazali's theory of moral education, which emphasizes spiritual training and the routine practice of righteous deeds. Al-Ghazali asserts that morality is not merely theoretical knowledge, but rather a state of the soul that drives spontaneous actions without the need for prolonged deliberation [4]. This process is realized through the concepts of *riyadhah* (spiritual training) and *mujahadah* (the earnest struggle against worldly desires).

Pesantren-based schools represent an integrative educational model that seeks to harmonize the national education system with the Islamic values-driven pesantren (Islamic boarding school) system. This concept was developed in response to modern demands for educational outcomes that produce individuals who are not only academically proficient but also equipped with noble character, strong spirituality, and a solid Islamic identity [5]. By integrating pesantren values and culture into the school environment, an educational ecosystem is formed where the overall climate, daily interactions, and routines are deeply infused with the fundamental ethos of the pesantren. The core of this integrative model lies in merging the national and religious curricula, with the goal of establishing a unified scientific worldview within the framework of *tauhid* or Islamic monotheism [6].

Private pesantren-based high schools in Aceh Besar Regency encounter complex challenges in cultivating noble character (*akhlakul karimah*). A primary challenge is the disparity in students' comprehension of moral values, which stems from diverse family and educational backgrounds. Additionally, the adverse effects of globalization and social media generate a clash of values between pesantren teachings and the external behaviors adopted by students. The continued use of conventional guidance methods

also leads to student boredom and low motivation. Furthermore, inadequate parental involvement results in inconsistencies between the values reinforced at home and those taught at school. A lack of specialized facilities and resources dedicated to focused moral development programs presents another major hurdle. In light of these issues, this research is highly urgent. It aims to evaluate the effectiveness of current habituation methods, identify ongoing challenges, and offer actionable recommendations to educators and pesantren administrators for more effective approaches to moral character development.

This study aims to describe and analyze the methods of cultivating students' noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) through habituation, the implementation of developmental strategies, and the implications of the teacher's role in this process. Furthermore, this research is expected to contribute to the enhancement of educational quality in Aceh Besar Regency, enrich the academic literature regarding the concept of noble character development, and serve as a reference for future researchers interested in exploring similar topics with a broader approach or scope.

METHODOLOGY

This study utilizes a qualitative research design with a case study approach. Qualitative research is a method used to investigate subjects in their natural settings, with the researcher acting as the primary instrument for data collection [7]. This approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of noble character cultivation within the natural context of Islamic boarding school-based private high schools. A case study is an appropriate method when a researcher can clearly identify specific cases or compare multiple cases under investigation [8]. The subjects of this research comprise two Islamic boarding school-based private high schools in Aceh Besar Regency: SMAS Babul Magfirah and SMAS IT Ar-Rabiyah. These institutions were selected for their representative characteristics as educational facilities that successfully integrate the national curriculum with traditional Islamic boarding school values.

This study is categorized as field research utilizing a descriptive approach. The objective of descriptive research is to gather information regarding the current status of a phenomenon exactly as it exists at the time of the study, without the intention of testing specific hypotheses [9]. A qualitative descriptive approach enables the researcher to illustrate the empirical reality behind a phenomenon in a profound, detailed, and comprehensive manner. The collected data is non-numerical, consisting instead of information derived from interviews, observations, personal documents, notes, memos, and other official records. The primary goal of qualitative research is to thoroughly and deeply depict this empirical reality, meaning that the interpretation of the phenomenon relies heavily on the researcher's analytical skills and acuity.

The data sources in this study are divided into two categories: primary and secondary. Primary data is obtained directly from the field or research site, specifically involving the Principals, Islamic Religious Education Teachers, and students at both

schools serving as the research locations. The selection of informants was conducted using purposive sampling, wherein the researcher chooses data sources based on predetermined criteria designed to address the research problem [10]. The criteria for selecting informants include relevance to the research topic, accessibility, representativeness, reliability, time availability, and direct involvement with the subject matter. Secondary data is acquired through relevant literature, such as journal articles, reference books, and other documents closely aligned with the core research problem.

Data collection was conducted through three methods: observation, interviews, and documentation study. In this research, observation is defined as an examination that involves focusing attention on an object using all the senses. Observations were carried out to assess specific situations, specifically aimed at observing the cultivation of students' noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) through habituation practices in both schools. Interviews were conducted using an interview guide to ensure they remained directed and focused on the research objectives based on information from the data sources. The interview technique utilized an open-ended approach, where the researcher asked key respondents about factual events alongside their personal opinions regarding those events [11]. Interviews were carried out continuously until the desired information was obtained. The documentation study was used to support and supplement evidence gathered from other sources, including school profiles, photographic documentation, and video recordings of activities.

The data analysis technique in this study was based on the Miles and Huberman model, which is conducted interactively and continuously from the start of field data collection until the data is complete, thorough, and saturated [12]. The analysis steps included data reduction, which is the process of selecting, focusing on simplification, abstracting, and transforming the raw data found in the researcher's field notes. Data reduction activities involved summarizing the data, coding, tracing names, and creating clusters. The next step was data display, which involves organizing a set of information to make it possible to draw conclusions. The data can be presented in the form of narrative text or graphs. Finally, conclusion drawing was performed after verifying the data's validity through testing criteria such as triangulation, member checking, and auditing.

To guarantee data validity, this study utilizes triangulation techniques, which include source, method, and time triangulation. Source triangulation involves cross-verifying data gathered from multiple sources. The collected data is then described, categorized, and subjected to member checking to reach a definitive conclusion [9]. Method triangulation is performed by verifying data from the same source using different data collection methods, specifically observation, interviews, and documentation studies. Time triangulation relates to the effectiveness of timing; for example, data collected through interviews when the informant is fresh and rested will produce more valid and credible information. Through this series of methods, the research is expected to yield valid and reliable findings regarding the cultivation of noble

character (*akhlakul karimah*) among students through habituation practices at pesantren-based private high schools in Aceh Besar Regency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Forms of Noble Character Cultivation Through Habituation

This research reveals that the cultivation of noble character in pesantren-based private high schools is implemented through five interconnected primary domains: spiritual and worship habituation, social character habituation, the etiquette of seeking knowledge, the unique cultural habituation of the pesantren, and integration into co-curricular activities. These five domains construct a comprehensive and multi-layered architecture for character education. These findings reinforce the theory that character education within an Islamic setting relies heavily on the ability to develop a cohesive ecosystem of values, ensuring there is no disconnect between what is preached, what is modeled, and what students experience in their daily lives [1].

Spiritual and worship habituation holds a central position as the primary foundation for moral development. These practices include the five daily congregational prayers, routine voluntary acts of worship such as the Dhuha and Tahajud prayers, structured Qur'anic recitation (*tahsin*) and memorization (*tahfidz*) programs, as well as collective rituals like intensive Islamic courses (*pesantren kilat*) and mass supplications (*istighosah*). These findings align with research indicating that clear religious structures and routines within an educational environment significantly contribute to the development of self-regulation and moral identity in adolescents [13]. Punctual congregational prayer, for instance, is not merely a collective physical activity, but a structural discipline that cultivates obedience to a divine rhythm of time, an awareness of social responsibility, and the elimination of the individual ego through a standardized ritual [4]. Furthermore, a structured *tahfidz* program serves as a process for internalizing the revealed text, where through mechanical repetition, Qur'anic values are expected to become embedded in long-term memory and shape the students' cognitive framework [14].

The cultivation of social and interpersonal ethics is demonstrated through the culture of greeting and the 5S principles (Smile, Greet, Acknowledge, Polite, Courteous), peer mentoring systems, mutual cooperation and community service activities, as well as educational conflict resolution mechanisms (*ishlah*). These findings highlight a shift from focusing on individual morality to building a community-based social morality. The widespread implementation of the greeting culture and the 5S principles serves as an effort to establish a linguistic and behavioral common ground among all school members [2].

The structured peer mentoring program, in which selected and trained senior students guide the adaptation of juniors, proves to be an effective strategy. It utilizes communication channels and peer influences that are more fluid and widely accepted among adolescents compared to the top-down authority of teachers. Research on peer

leadership models for value development indicates that this approach enhances the sense of belonging and the effectiveness of instilling social norms within the school [15]. Furthermore, utilizing the *ishlah* mechanism for conflict resolution shifts the disciplinary paradigm from a retributive to a restorative approach, which aligns more closely with the Islamic values of forgiveness and reconciliation [16].

Academic routines and the etiquette of acquiring knowledge prioritize academic integrity, respect for educators and educational resources, and the cultivation of critical literacy within an Islamic framework. These findings challenge the traditional separation of morals and academics. In the educational process, traits such as honesty, orderliness, and respect are viewed not merely as supplementary ethical guidelines, but as fundamental epistemological conditions. Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, truly beneficial knowledge (*al-'ilm al-nafi'*) can only be achieved through a pure heart and proper conduct [4]. Consequently, emphasizing academic honesty and humility (*tawadhu'*) toward teachers serves to protect the pursuit of knowledge from spiritual ailments such as vanity (*riya'*), anger (*ghadhab*), and deception (*ghishsy*) [14]. Studies on academic integrity in religious educational institutions indicate that instilling these values is most successful when fostered by a unified school culture and the exemplary behavior of teachers, rather than simply through the threat of punishment [17]. As a result, classrooms and libraries are transformed into training spaces (*madrasas*) for intellectual ethics, where truth and modesty are prioritized over mere numerical grades [18].

Habituation through the distinct routines and culture of an Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*) involves viewing time discipline as an act of worship, maintaining a physical environment filled with symbolic reminders, utilizing Islamic terminology, and adhering to orderly sharia-compliant dress codes. These findings represent a profound manifestation of the hidden curriculum concept. The institution recognizes that values are not merely taught, but are largely absorbed through the daily atmosphere and rhythm of life. Implementing rigorous schedules, curating a physical space rich in religious symbols, and enforcing uniform regulations serve as methods of environmental engineering designed to shape perceptions, memories, and ultimately, behavior [5]. Predictable routines foster a sense of security and order, whereas visual symbols act as mnemonic devices for continuous value reinforcement [1]. This approach corresponds with ecological systems theory, which highlights the crucial role of the microsystem in guiding individual development through consistent patterns of activities, roles, and interpersonal dynamics [8]. Furthermore, analyses of *pesantren* culture within formal education suggest that its transformative impact stems from its capacity to establish a "total environment" that conditions every facet of a student's life [19].

Incorporating these habits into co-curricular and extracurricular activities such as community service initiatives, structured religious clubs, Islamized student councils (OSIS) and scout programs, along with Islamic-themed competitions highlights a strong grasp of experiential learning and the contextualization of values [20]. Core values like

leadership, teamwork, and social responsibility can remain abstract and difficult to comprehend if they are only taught theoretically in a classroom setting. By establishing community service projects, student council leadership roles, and religious competitions as mandatory platforms, the school offers students the opportunity to directly engage with the complexities of applying these values in dynamic, real-world situations [21]. Studies on character education through extracurricular involvement confirm that active participation in such structured programs has a positive correlation with the enhancement of social skills, empathy, and the formation of a robust moral identity [22].

These five forms of habituation are interconnected, forming a multi-layered architecture of moral education. Spiritual and worship-based habituation serves as the foundation that establishes a vertical connection. Social and cultural habituation constructs the walls and horizontal living spaces where interactions take place. Academic habituation and integrated activities act as the furnishings and dynamics that bring this space to life. Rather than being static, this architecture is dynamic, supported by monitoring systems, evaluations, and the vital role of teachers [18]. These findings reinforce the thesis that the success of character education within an Islamic setting depends heavily on the ability to foster a coherent ecosystem of values, ensuring there is no gap between what is preached, what is modeled, and what students experience on a daily basis [23]. The novelty of this research lies in its architectural mapping, which provides a new, more systematic conceptual framework for analyzing the complexities of character education in integrative institutions.

Strategies for Cultivating Noble Character Through Habituation

The moral development strategies identified in this study represent an advanced managerial framework that translates normative Islamic values into measurable, sustainable, and adaptable operational actions. These strategies illustrate an evolution from intuitive and charismatic methods of moral development toward approaches that are more rational, institutionalized, and data-driven [18]. The five core strategies identified include planning, implementation, evaluation, stakeholder engagement, and the creation of a supportive school climate.

The planning and formulation strategy for the habituation program is carried out collaboratively by involving the moral development working group, integrating the program into the School Work Plan and Annual Work Plan (RKS/RKT), and establishing measurable behavioral indicators. These findings indicate that these schools have applied strategic management principles to the field of character education. The establishment of a moral development working group involving various stakeholders is not merely a formality, but rather a mechanism designed to achieve a shared vision and collective ownership [16].

Integrating the habituation program into the school's primary planning documents is a highly significant institutional policy action, demonstrating that moral development is positioned on par with academic goals in terms of priority and resource allocation. Research on the effectiveness of character education programs emphasizes that success

largely depends on the institution's commitment to embedding these initiatives into its core policies and organizational structures, rather than treating them as marginal, supplementary activities [23]. Furthermore, by setting measurable and tiered behavioral indicators, schools have adopted an outcome-based education approach within the affective domain, which allows for a more objective evaluation of students' character development [3].

The implementation strategy is executed through a collegial teacher supervision system, organized data documentation, the provision of supporting infrastructure, and the use of public rituals for social reinforcement. Implementing an integrated duty roster system, where all teachers serve as habituation supervisors regardless of their academic subjects, is a brilliant innovation. This approach eliminates the artificial divide between "religious teachers" and "general teachers" regarding moral responsibility, while also establishing a high density of supervision [1]. The utilization of communication books and control cards extends beyond mere administrative purposes; they act as performing artifacts that render moral development visible, measurable, and open for discussion [5]. Studies on effective school management indicate that a structured and transparent monitoring system is a crucial factor in building a positive school culture [24]. Consequently, this implementation strategy successfully establishes an accountability system for moral behavior [18].

The supervision and evaluation strategy employs a multi-rater approach (360-degree feedback), moral development portfolios, and assessments that are both restorative and developmental. A clear shift from judgmental summative evaluations to constructive formative evaluations is demonstrated through the use of moral portfolios, peer assessments, and self-reflection (*muhasabah*) [2]. Moral portfolios, which include behavioral evidence and reflective notes, transform the evaluation process from subjective teacher impressions into a more equitable and comprehensive evidence-based assessment. Involving peers in the assessment process trains students to observe and evaluate behavior constructively, which ultimately heightens their own moral awareness. This approach is consistent with research findings indicating that authentic assessment and self-reflection are vital components of character education, fostering the internalization of values rather than mere external compliance [25]. Furthermore, the restorative sanction mechanism reflects the application of the *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (mercy to all creation) value in school discipline, prioritizing restoration and learning over retaliation [14].

The stakeholder engagement strategy is established through educational partnerships with parents, the institutionalization of the central *pesantren* (Islamic boarding school) role, and the empowerment of teachers as the frontline. The school recognizes that developing a strong character requires ecological consistency an alignment of moral messages across the student's various living environments, including the school, home, and religious community [8]. Partnering with parents through communication books, parenting seminars, and home visits serves as a strategic

approach to managing boundaries and aligning values between the child's two primary socializing institutions. Furthermore, the involvement of the central *pesantren* or Sharia board offers religious legitimacy and a depth of tradition typically absent in formal schooling [5]. Research on school-family partnerships within Islamic education highlights that success is achieved when communication centers on character development and entails a mutual exchange of resources, rather than merely reporting issues [26].

The strategy for cultivating the school climate is shaped by the prevalence of Islamic symbols, structured collective routines, *pesantren*-style kinship dynamics, and transparent communication. Fundamentally, a school's climate represents its "personality" the psychosocial atmosphere experienced by all its inhabitants. The strategies employed aim to mold this personality into one that is religious, disciplined, and compassionate [1]. Designing a physical space adorned with Quranic verses and words of wisdom acts as a form of ambient persuasion, continuously delivering moral messages through the environment rather than through direct commands. Collective rituals, such as *istighosah* (mass prayers) or *halal bihalal* (post-Ramadan gatherings) featuring *sungkeman* (a traditional gesture of respect), act as peak experiences that reinforce emotional connections and dedication to community values [21]. Analyses of school climates in religious educational settings indicate that environments defined by clear expectations, social support, and value congruence significantly enhance students' moral and religious development [27].

Holistically, these five strategies are interconnected and establish a comprehensive management cycle. Effective planning leads to measurable programs, which are then consistently executed and monitored. The outcomes of this implementation undergo multi-perspective evaluation, and the resulting findings are utilized to refine future planning and enhance external engagement. Meanwhile, this entire process occurs within a climate intentionally designed to support it. This cycle does not operate in a vacuum; rather, it is propelled by a collective commitment and a distinct Islamic vision [18]. These findings reinforce the argument that the success of character education should not rely solely on the individual charisma of teachers. Instead, it must be founded upon robust, adaptable institutional systems and structures dedicated to holistic human development.

The Role of Teachers in the Development of Noble Character (*Akhlakul Karimah*)

The findings regarding the role of teachers in this study reveal a complex and multidimensional construction of professional identity that extends well beyond the traditional definition of teachers as mere transmitters of knowledge. In private high schools integrated with Islamic boarding schools, teachers internalize and execute their duties as an integrative educational (*tarbiyah*) mission. They function simultaneously as role models, guides, supervisors, innovators, and cultural liaisons [16]. These five roles are not isolated; they are interwoven and mutually reinforcing, creating a "web of roles" that embraces and guides students through various approaches. This role construction reflects the internalization of traditional Islamic educational concepts namely *mu'allim*,

murabbi, *mursyid*, and *mu'addib* applied within the framework of modern formal education [28].

The role of the teacher as a direct role model (*qudwah*) serves as the most essential and non-negotiable foundation. In the realm of character education, setting an example is not merely a pedagogical method but an epistemological prerequisite; knowledge of virtue lacks credibility and persuasiveness if it is not actively embodied by the educator [4]. The exemplary behavior identified in this study is absolute and comprehensive, encompassing the ritual-spiritual dimension (punctuality in worship), the social dimension (communication etiquette), the professional dimension (academic integrity), and the personal dimension (a modest lifestyle). A high degree of consistency in this role modeling establishes a clear and observable standard of practice for students [14].

Educators do not simply instruct students to "be honest"; rather, they actively demonstrate this honesty throughout their assessments and academic interactions. This phenomenon aligns with Bandura's social learning theory, which emphasizes that observing a consistent model is a highly effective mechanism for behavioral learning [29]. Furthermore, research within the context of religious education specifically confirms that a teacher's religious and moral credibility is a primary predictor for the successful internalization of religious values among adolescents [30]. By acting as a living curriculum, the teachers at this school effectively resolve the classic dilemma in moral education: the gap between moral knowing and moral doing [1].

The role of a guide and advisor (*mursyid wa nashih*) signifies a shift from a one-way, instructional method to an approach that is dialogical, reflective, and personalized. The use of scheduled individual guidance and small group *halaqah* forums highlights that moral development cannot be standardized; instead, it must address the specific psychological and spiritual needs of each individual [2]. In this capacity, the teacher acts as a facilitator of moral reflection, assisting students in interpreting their experiences, identifying conflicting values, and finding solutions that align with an Islamic framework. The application of *mau'izhah hasanah* delivering advice with wisdom and gentleness reflects Islamic psychological principles regarding how to positively influence the heart, or *qalb* [4]. Beyond merely solving problems, this role aims to cultivate students' ability to practice independent self-introspection (*muhasabah an-nafs*) [16]. Studies on the effectiveness of mentoring in character education further reveal that a caring guidance relationship significantly fosters the development of students' moral identity and their personal connection to the values being taught [31].

The role of teachers as supervisors and disciplinarians in this study is compelling because it effectively avoids the pitfalls of authoritarianism. By distributing collegial oversight among all teachers, regardless of their subject areas, a subtle yet highly effective panoptic system is established. This ensures students recognize that behavioral norms are consistently monitored by multiple individuals [18].

More importantly, the underlying philosophy of this disciplinary approach relies on a tiered system of sanctions that is both restorative and educational [1].

When a teacher assigns a penalty, such as writing a reflection or completing a service task, the primary objective is not to inflict hardship but to facilitate restoration and learning. This method reframes infractions, shifting them from simply being "mistakes that must be paid for" to "opportunities to learn and mend relationships" [14]. This represents a practical application of the Islamic concept of *ta'dib*, which prioritizes nurturing and guidance over mere punishment. Research on restorative discipline within faith-based schools demonstrates that this approach not only decreases the rate of repeat offenses but also enhances social bonds and deepens students' comprehension of the moral implications of their behavior [32].

The roles of facilitator and innovator highlight a teacher's agency and creativity in addressing contemporary challenges. Rather than passively executing a standard curriculum, teachers actively create engaging and contextual moral learning experiences [5]. Innovative approaches such as community service projects, utilizing digital media for positive content, or engaging in moral dilemma discussions serve to bridge traditional Islamic values with the realities and communication styles of Generation Z. In this capacity, teachers act as cultural translators and pedagogical designers, effectively presenting timeless moral lessons in formats that align with the interests and aptitudes of modern students [6]. The ability to convert popular media, such as podcasts or short videos, into instruments for moral instruction demonstrates how educators embrace the role of a digital *murabbi* [21]. Furthermore, research on pedagogical innovation in religious education highlights that effective values education in the digital age relies heavily on an educator's skill in utilizing media and techniques that resonate with students' everyday lives, without compromising the core substance of the message [33].

The role of a liaison between school values and the family environment represents a realistic acknowledgment of the limits of school authority. Teachers understand that the fortress of values built at school can easily crumble if not supported by a sturdy wall of values at home [8]. Consequently, they proactively build bridges of communication, trust, and education with parents. Moral liaison books, family consultations, and school-at-home extension programs like the "Family Ramadan Mission" serve as instruments to create value congruence between the two main socializing institutions of a child [3]. In this capacity, teachers act as community organizers and family educators who do more than just report on child development; they empower parents with the knowledge and skills needed to support moral development at home [18]. Research on family-school partnerships within the Indonesian context indicates that meaningful engagement focused on character development, as observed in this study, is significantly more effective than transactional communication limited to administrative or disciplinary matters [34].

Overall, these five roles of the teacher illustrate an integrative model of moral education leadership. Teachers are the architects of the moral environment (through exemplary behavior and climate creation), the guides of the moral journey (through guidance and advice), the guardians of moral boundaries (through supervision and

discipline), the engineers of moral experiences (through innovation and facilitation), and the peacemakers of the moral ecosystem (through familial connections) [23]. These five functions operate simultaneously, ensuring that moral development through habituation is not merely an implemented program, but a living, dynamic, and meaningful relational process centered on the educational bond between competent teachers and growing students.

Implications of Cultivating Noble Character (*Akhlakul Karimah*) in the Context of Modern Education

The implications of these research findings for modern education are highly significant. The cultivation of noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) through habituation in Islamic boarding-based high schools provides a character education model that can be adopted and adapted by other educational institutions, whether religious or secular. This model demonstrates that effective character education cannot be implemented in isolation from the academic curriculum; rather, it must be integrated into all aspects of school life [1].

First, regarding the implications for educational policy, the research findings indicate that the successful development of moral character relies heavily on robust policy support from both the government and educational institution administrators. The Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Education must establish technical guidelines and specific accreditation instruments that proportionally accommodate and evaluate the boarding-based school model. These instruments should assign significant assessment weight to the effectiveness of character and moral development programs, rather than focusing solely on academic achievements [18]. Furthermore, it is necessary to create grant schemes or specialized assistance for the development of facilities that support character building (such as prayer rooms and *tahfidz* rooms) and for training teachers in integrative Islamic character education methodologies [16].

Second, concerning the implications for curriculum development, the model of integrating the national curriculum with the religious curriculum identified in this study can serve as a reference for other educational institutions. This integration should not be a superficial patchwork but rather a cohesive unity in which moral values are infused into every subject and learning activity [6]. A thematic-interdisciplinary approach that examines major themes from the perspectives of various subjects, both general and religious, can serve as an effective strategy for holistically instilling moral values [5].

Third, the implications for developing teacher capacity. The findings regarding the multidimensional role of teachers indicate that they require not only pedagogical and professional competencies but also strong personal and social skills. Teachers must serve as living role models for students, wise spiritual guides, educative supervisors, creative facilitators, and effective liaisons between the school and the family [28]. Consequently, teacher professional development programs should encompass training in character education methodologies, adolescent developmental psychology, effective communication with parents, and digital literacy [21]. Teachers need to be equipped with

the skills to design value-driven, project-based learning activities, utilize digital media for positive content, and facilitate moral dilemma discussions that foster students' ethical reasoning [33].

Fourth, the implications for parental and community involvement. This study emphasizes that moral development will not be effective if conducted solely at school without the support of parents and the broader community. Schools must establish strategic partnerships with parents through intensive, educative communication that is informed by data regarding the child's moral progress [26]. Regular parenting school programs, moral communication books, and home visits are effective tools for ensuring that values are aligned between the school and the home [34]. Community involvement particularly in the context of Aceh Besar, which has specific regulations for education and children's character development based on Islamic law, Pancasila, and Acehnese culture can serve as a highly significant supporting force.

Fifth, there are implications regarding the use of technology and digital media. In the digital age, moral development faces significant challenges due to the negative impacts of social media and unfiltered digital content. Schools must establish digital literacy strategies that empower students to filter information, engage with technology constructively, and uphold ethical behavior during online interactions [35]. Educators can leverage technology as a tool for character building by assigning projects to create digital content focused on moral values, utilizing applications to track behavioral progress, or establishing interactive communication platforms between the school and families.

Sixth, the study presents implications for future research and scientific advancement. These findings lay the groundwork for subsequent studies, including longitudinal research to evaluate the long-term effects of habituation-based moral education on alumni in their professional and social lives. Additionally, action research in other schools can be conducted to test the efficacy of specific models or strategies. Sharing these research outcomes through national seminars, accredited academic journals, and educational media will further enrich the field of Indonesian educational science [36].

Overall, cultivating noble character (*akhlakul karimah*) through habituation in Islamic boarding-based high schools yields profound and extensive implications. This model provides a comprehensive, integrated, and sustainable framework for character education that can serve as a benchmark for other educational institutions. Its success stems from the creation of a cohesive value ecosystem where every component of the school including the curriculum, teachers, environment, activities, and parental collaboration functions synergistically to develop students with outstanding moral integrity [23]. By applying the insights from this research, it is hoped that we can foster a new generation that is not only intellectually capable but, more importantly, distinguished by exemplary morals and character.

CONCLUSION

Fundamental Finding: The development of students' noble character (akhlakul karimah) in pesantren-based private high schools in Aceh Besar Regency is implemented through five interconnected domains: spiritual and worship habituation, social and interpersonal character, academic and learning etiquette, distinctive pesantren routines and school culture, and co-curricular and extracurricular activities. Its effectiveness is supported by comprehensive planning, implementation, monitoring, stakeholder engagement, a conducive Islamic school climate, and teachers' multidimensional roles as role models, mentors, supervisors, facilitators, innovators, and liaisons between schools and families. **Implication:** The findings support the development of an integrated moral education model based on habituation and pesantren culture that can be adapted by other educational institutions. Effective implementation requires strengthening educators' and administrative staff's capacities, improving school-family partnerships through digital platforms and regular forums, and transforming research findings into practical educational resources that promote both intellectual development and noble character. **Limitation:** This study focuses specifically on pesantren-based private high schools in Aceh Besar Regency, meaning that the findings may be context-dependent and may not fully represent the implementation of habituation-based moral education in other educational institutions, regions, or cultural settings. **Future Research:** Future research should examine the long-term impact of habituation-based moral development, test the proposed integrated model across diverse educational contexts, and investigate the effectiveness of digital school-family collaboration, authentic moral assessment, and teacher capacity-building strategies in sustaining students' character development.

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