

Efforts To Improve Students' Disciplinary Character Through Religious Habituation At Darut Taqwa Vocational High School

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Article Info :	ABSTRACT
Accepted: 24-04-2026 Approved: 15-05-2026 Published: 06-07-2026	Background: Character education is a primary objective of Indonesia's national education system. However, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of religious habituation in strengthening students' disciplinary character, particularly in vocational schools, remains limited. Objective: This study aims to examine the role of religious habituation as a strategy for strengthening students' disciplinary character at SMK Darut Taqwa. Method: This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. Data were collected through observations, semi-structured interviews, and documentation involving seven purposively selected informants. The data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, while validity was ensured through source and technique triangulation. Findings and Implications: The findings indicate that religious habituation activities, including Qur'an recitation, congregational Duha and Dhuhr prayers, collective supplication, and a greeting culture, positively strengthened students' punctuality, compliance with school regulations, responsibility in completing assignments, and participation in school activities. Teacher role modeling, a supportive religious environment, and strong school-parent collaboration emerged as key enabling factors. Conclusion: Religious habituation is an effective and context-sensitive strategy for fostering disciplinary character in pesantren-based vocational schools and should be systematically integrated into character education programs.
Keywords: disciplinary character; religious habituation; character education; vocational high school students	

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a process that is not only oriented toward the intellectual development of students, but also toward the formation of character and personality in accordance with moral, social, and spiritual values. In the context of national education, character building is one of the main objectives that must be realized through a planned and sustainable educational process. This is in line with Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System, which emphasizes that national education functions to develop abilities and shape the character and civilization of a dignified nation in order to educate the life of the nation. Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia Nomor 20 Tahun 2003, Therefore, educational institutions have a major responsibility in shaping students who are not only academically competent but also possess good character. In the context of vocational education, character building remains a critical challenge, as vocational school students are often more exposed to work-oriented curricula that may inadvertently neglect personal character development ([Nasrudin, 2023](#)).

One important character that students must possess is discipline. Discipline is an attitude of obedience and compliance with rules, regulations, and norms that apply in everyday life. The character of discipline plays a very important role in shaping students into responsible, organized individuals who are able to control themselves. Students who possess disciplinary character tend to appreciate time more, obey school regulations, and carry out their duties and responsibilities properly. On the other hand, a low level of discipline can have an impact on decreasing learning quality, violations of school rules, and weak social responsibility among students. Furthermore, character education policies in Indonesia have increasingly emphasized the integration of religious values as a means of strengthening students' discipline and moral awareness ([Setiawan et al., 1993](#)).

The phenomenon of declining disciplinary character among students today has become a serious concern for various parties, especially educational institutions. The rapid development of technology and globalization has had a major influence on the behavior patterns of the younger generation. Many students begin to show undisciplined attitudes, such as arriving late to school, disobeying school regulations, lacking responsibility for assignments, and having low awareness in maintaining ethics and politeness. This condition indicates that character education needs deeper attention so that students not only develop intellectually but also morally and spiritually. Research has demonstrated that habituation of religious activities in schools contributes significantly to the internalization of positive character values among students ([Safitri et al., 2023](#)).

In an effort to shape students' disciplinary character, schools need to implement effective and sustainable strategies. One approach that can be carried out is through religious habituation. Religious habituation is a process of instilling religious values continuously so that they become habits in students' daily lives. Religious activities carried out routinely are believed to be able to build spiritual awareness while also instilling the values of discipline, responsibility, and self-control. In the context of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, this approach has been recognized as particularly effective in reorienting moral education for the younger generation ([Jubba et al., 2022](#)).

Religious habituation in the school environment can be realized through various activities such as reading the Qur'an before learning activities, congregational prayers, praying before and after lessons, greeting culture, and other religious activities. Through these activities, students are trained to follow schedules, obey rules, and carry out obligations consistently. These habits indirectly shape disciplinary character within students. In addition, a religious school environment can create a conducive educational atmosphere with high moral values. Studies on school culture-based religious character education have confirmed that the internalization of Islamic values through consistent habituation programs significantly shapes students' behavioral patterns ([Mujahid, 2021](#)).

SMK Darut Taqwa, as one of the religion-based educational institutions, is committed to shaping students' character through various religious habituation programs. These programs not only aim to improve students' spirituality but also to build discipline in daily life. The implementation of religious habituation at this school is interesting to study because of the integration between formal education and religious values in building students' character. Several previous studies have explored the relationship between religious habituation and character formation among students. For instance, research on school culture-based internalization of religious characters has shown that structured religious programs within Islamic schools foster both nationalism and religious commitment among students. ([Ismail et al., 2023](#)).

Despite these findings, the existing literature reveals several gaps that warrant further investigation. Most previous studies have focused on general educational institutions or public schools, while relatively few have examined the unique context of religion-based vocational high schools that integrate pesantren (Islamic boarding school) values into formal education. Moreover, the majority of prior research has employed quantitative methods or has not provided sufficient empirical detail regarding the process through which

religious habituation gradually transforms disciplinary behavior. There is a need for qualitative, context-specific research that captures the lived experiences of students, teachers, and school leaders in institutions where religious and academic education are deeply intertwined. Previous research in religion-based educational contexts has similarly called for more nuanced investigations into how religious culture management enhances moral development among students ([Sarip, H. et.al, 2023](#)).

The novelty of the present study lies in its focus on SMK Darut Taqwa as a vocational high school with a pesantren-based educational model. Unlike previous studies that predominantly examined conventional schools, this research investigates how the integration of formal vocational education and Islamic religious habituation creates a distinctive environment for character development. By employing a qualitative descriptive approach, this study provides rich, contextual descriptions of the mechanisms through which religious habituation strengthens disciplinary character in this particular institutional setting. The management of school organizational culture has been identified as a key factor in the success of character formation programs in Islamic educational institutions ([Rony, 2021](#)).

This research is expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of character education. Theoretically, the study enriches the existing body of knowledge on religious habituation and its relationship with disciplinary character formation within faith-based vocational educational contexts. Practically, the findings may serve as a reference for school administrators, teachers, and policymakers in designing and implementing effective character education programs that leverage religious values. Furthermore, the implications of this study extend to the broader discourse on the role of Islamic educational institutions in addressing the challenge of declining student discipline in the era of globalization and rapid technological advancement. Indeed, recent studies have underscored the importance of integrating Islamic religious education with character formation strategies to produce students who are morally and spiritually grounded ([Komalasari, 2023](#)).

Based on the description above, this research is important to conduct in order to determine how efforts to improve students' disciplinary character are carried out through religious habituation at SMK Darut Taqwa. This research is expected to contribute to the development of character education, particularly in building students' disciplinary character through religious approaches in the school environment.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study used a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type, which is classified as field research. The qualitative approach was chosen because this research aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of shaping students' disciplinary character through religious habituation in the school environment. Descriptive research was used to systematically describe the facts, conditions, and realities that occur at SMK Darut Taqwa regarding the implementation of religious habituation in improving students' disciplinary character.

The research was conducted at SMK Darut Taqwa, Pasuruan, East Java, during the odd semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. The informants in this study consisted of seven participants: one school principal, three teachers responsible for supervising religious habituation activities, and three students representing different grade levels (X, XI, and XII). The selection of informants was carried out through purposive sampling technique, based on the criterion that the informants possessed direct experience and relevant information regarding the implementation of religious habituation programs at the school.

Data collection techniques in this study were conducted through observation, interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to directly observe the implementation of religious habituation activities and students' disciplinary behavior in the school environment. Interviews were conducted with the principal, teachers, and students to obtain more in-depth information regarding the implementation of religious habituation and its influence on students' disciplinary character. Meanwhile, documentation was used to obtain supporting data such as activity schedules, school regulations, activity photographs, and other documents related to the study.

The primary research instrument in this study was the researcher, functioning as the key instrument (human instrument) who conducted direct observation, facilitated interviews, and collected documentation. To support data collection, the researcher utilized an observation checklist containing indicators of students disciplinary behavior, a semi-structured interview guide comprising open-ended questions related to the implementation and impact of religious habituation, and a documentation checklist for recording relevant school documents and photographs.

The research procedure consisted of three stages: the preparation stage, which involved conducting a preliminary study, formulating research problems, and developing instruments; the implementation stage, which encompassed observation, interviews, and documentation at the research site over a period of approximately three months; and the completion stage,

which included data analysis, member checking, and report writing.

Data analysis in this study used an interactive analysis model consisting of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and focusing on data relevant to the research. Furthermore, the data were presented in descriptive form to make them easier to understand. The final stage was drawing conclusions based on the results of systematic data analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

To ensure the validity of the data, this study used source triangulation and technique triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from the principal, teachers, and students, while technique triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of observation, interviews, and documentation. Thus, the obtained data were expected to have a high level of validity and credibility (Sugiyono, 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

Observation Results of the Implementation of Religious Habituation

Based on the results of observations conducted at SMK Darut Taqwa, the implementation of religious habituation was carried out routinely and scheduled every day as part of the school's character education program. These activities included reciting prayers before and after learning activities, reading the Qur'an before lessons began, performing congregational Duha prayer, congregational Dhuhr prayer, greeting and shaking hands with teachers, and maintaining the cleanliness of the school environment.

At the beginning of the observation, the researcher found that there were still several students who arrived late, were less orderly during the learning process, and lacked discipline in participating in school activities. Some students also appeared less active in the religious activities that had been scheduled by the school. However, after the religious habituation program was implemented consistently, changes in students' behavior in terms of discipline began to emerge.

The activity of reading the Qur'an before learning activities had a positive impact on students' readiness to learn. The classroom atmosphere became calmer and more conducive before the learning process began. In addition, congregational prayer activities trained students to value time, comply with activity schedules, and maintain order during worship activities.

The habituation of greeting and shaking hands with teachers also influenced the development of students' politeness and courtesy. Interactions between teachers and students became more harmonious, creating an orderly and religious school environment. Teachers also played

an active role in supervising the implementation of religious habituation activities and providing direct examples to students.

Interview Results

Based on interviews with the principal, the religious habituation program was implemented as an effort to shape students' character to become disciplined, responsible, and possess good morals. The principal (P1) explained: "Character formation cannot rely solely on classroom theory. We must habituate students through real daily activities so that discipline becomes part of their identity, not merely a forced behavior" (Interview, October 2024). This statement underscores the school's commitment to a holistic approach to character building that transcends conventional didactic methods.

Interviews with teachers showed that there were behavioral changes in students after the implementation of religious habituation. One teacher (T2) reported: "Before the program was consistently enforced, many students arrived late and showed little enthusiasm for learning. After we established the routine of Qur'an recitation and congregational prayers, I noticed a significant shift students became more punctual, attentive, and respectful during lessons" (Interview, October 2024). Another teacher (T3) confirmed that assignment submission rates improved markedly, stating that students developed a stronger sense of responsibility as a result of the structured religious activities.

Meanwhile, based on interviews with students, most students acknowledged the positive influence of religious activities on their daily behavior. One student (S1) stated: "At first I felt burdened by the many religious activities, but over time I became accustomed to waking up early and arriving at school on time. Now I feel that these activities help me become a more disciplined person" (Interview, November 2024). Another student (S2) emphasized that the collective nature of religious activities, particularly congregational prayers, created a sense of social accountability that motivated consistent attendance and compliance with school regulations.

Development of Students' Disciplinary Character

Based on the results of observations during the research, the development of students' disciplinary character improved after the implementation of the religious habituation program at SMK Darut Taqwa. These changes can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Implementation of the religious habituation program at SMK Darut Taqwa

No	Discipline Indicators	Before Religious Habituation	After Religious Habituation
1	Punctual attendance	Many students arrived late	The majority of students arrived on time
2	Compliance with school regulations	Students often violated rules	Students became more orderly and obedient
3	Discipline during learning activities	Less focused and noisy in class	More focused and conducive
4	Responsibility toward assignments	Frequently submitted assignments late	More responsible
5	Participation in religious activities	Some students were less active	The majority of students became active
6	Politeness and courtesy	There was still impolite behavior	Politeness and courtesy improved
7	Awareness of maintaining cleanliness	Less concerned about cleanliness	More disciplined in maintaining cleanliness

In addition, the researcher also obtained data regarding the development of students' discipline based on teachers' observations during one semester.

Table 2. Development of students' discipline

Assessment Aspects	Initial Condition	Condition After the Program
Student tardiness level	High	Decreased
Compliance with school rules	Low	Increased
Orderliness during learning	Less conducive	More orderly
Participation in school activities	Less optimal	More active
Students' spiritual awareness	Fair	Good

Based on the table above, it can be concluded that religious habituation had a positive impact on the development of students' disciplinary character at SMK Darut Taqwa.

Discussion

The results of the study showed that religious habituation had a significant influence on improving students' disciplinary character at SMK Darut Taqwa. Religious habituation carried out consistently was able to shape disciplined behavior because students were accustomed to obeying rules, valuing time, and carrying out responsibilities regularly. Istiyono et al., (2021) further emphasized that teachers' personality traits serve as a hidden curriculum that directly influences the effectiveness of character education through modeling and daily interactions.

The activity of reading the Qur'an before learning activities proved to be able to create a calmer and more conducive learning atmosphere. Students became more prepared to participate in learning activities, so the level of orderliness in the classroom increased. This indicates that religious habituation not only impacts spiritual aspects, but also influences students' mental readiness and behavior in learning. This finding aligns with research by Fadlilah, D. N., et.al, (2023), who found that religious habituation activities such as congregational prayers and Qur'an recitation positively shape students' moral behavior and engagement in the learning process (Fadlilah, D. N, et. al, 2023).

Congregational prayer activities also contributed greatly to the formation of students' disciplinary character. In these activities, students were trained to arrive on time, follow established rules, and maintain order during worship activities. These habits gradually formed attitudes of responsibility and discipline within students. From a theoretical perspective, this finding supports Kurniawan, B. G., (2021) contention that Islamic character education is most effectively internalized through consistent, communal religious practices that engage both the cognitive and affective dimensions of learning. The repetitive and structured nature of congregational prayers creates a behavioral framework that transfers to other domains of school life, including academic discipline and social interaction. Hayati & Susatya, (2020) similarly reported that school culture-based religious character education, when implemented consistently, strengthens students' adherence to school norms and cultivates a sense of collective responsibility.

In addition, the habituation of greeting and shaking hands with teachers was able to improve students' politeness and respect toward teachers. Harmonious relationships between teachers and students created a more comfortable and orderly school atmosphere. These conditions supported the creation of a conducive educational environment in shaping students' character. Kurniawan, B. G., (2021) confirmed that pesantren-based

education fosters multicultural citizenship character through structured habituation and communal religious practices.

The success of religious habituation at SMK Darut Taqwa was also influenced by the role of teachers as role models. Teachers not only provided direction, but also demonstrated disciplined and religious behavior directly to students. Such role modeling became an important factor because students tended to imitate the behavior they observed in their daily lives within the school environment. This observation is consistent with findings by Jaenullah & Utama, (2022), who demonstrated that the traditional Islamic boarding school education system shapes students' morals through the resilience of habitual religious practices and teacher exemplarity. Jaenullah & Utama, (2022) Nevertheless, there were several obstacles in implementing religious habituation, such as differences in students' backgrounds and the influence of the external environment outside school. Some students required a longer time to adapt to the culture of discipline implemented by the school. However, through continuous guidance and supervision, these obstacles could be minimized.

Thus, it can be concluded that religious habituation is one of the effective strategies in improving students' disciplinary character. Religious habituation programs implemented consistently are able to create a religious, orderly school environment that supports the optimal formation of students' character.

Religious Habituation as an Effort to Form Disciplinary Character

Religious habituation at SMK Darut Taqwa became one of the main strategies in shaping students' disciplinary character. Religious activities carried out routinely and continuously were able to form positive habits in students' daily lives. Through activities such as reading the Qur'an, congregational prayers, praying before lessons, and greeting culture, students were accustomed to obeying rules and carrying out activities according to predetermined schedules. Pike et al., (2021) argued that character development through structured curriculum and habitual practices enables students to internalize virtues through consistent engagement rather than mere cognitive instruction.

The habituation process influenced students' behavior because it was carried out continuously within the school environment. The formation of disciplinary character did not occur instantly, but through a process of consistent practice and repetition. Through religious habituation, students became more accustomed to valuing time, obeying school regulations, and carrying out responsibilities properly.

The Influence of Religious Activities on Students' Discipline

The results of the study indicated that religious activities had a positive influence on the development of students' discipline. The activity of reading the Qur'an before lessons created a calmer and more conducive classroom atmosphere so that students were more prepared to participate in the learning process. In addition, congregational prayers trained students to arrive on time, maintain order, and comply with regulations during activities.

Religious activities also helped students control their behavior and emotions. Students became more aware of the importance of discipline as part of personal responsibility. This was reflected in the increased compliance of students with school regulations and the decreased level of tardiness and disciplinary violations.

The Role of Teachers in Forming Students' Disciplinary Character

Teachers had a very important role in the success of religious habituation at SMK Darut Taqwa. Teachers not only acted as educators, but also as role models for students in implementing the values of discipline and religiosity. Teachers' role modeling could be seen from their punctuality in attending school, regularity in teaching, and participation in religious activities together with students.

Teachers' attitudes and behavior had a major influence on students' character formation because students tended to imitate the behavior they observed directly. Therefore, teachers' consistency in implementing discipline became an important factor in supporting the success of the religious habituation program. Muis et al., (2022) similarly found that Islamic education teachers play a pivotal role in moral improvement by serving as living examples of the values they teach.

Besides being role models, teachers also played a role in supervising and guiding students. Teachers actively reminded students to participate in religious activities and obey school regulations so that the formation of disciplinary character could run optimally.

Supporting and Inhibiting Factors of Religious Habituation

The implementation of religious habituation at SMK Darut Taqwa was supported by several important factors. The main supporting factors were a religious school environment, cooperation between teachers and parents, and full support from the school toward character education programs. A conducive school environment helped students adapt more easily to the culture of discipline implemented.

On the other hand, there were several inhibiting factors in the implementation of religious habituation. Differences in students' backgrounds caused varying levels of awareness and discipline among students. In addition, the influence of the external environment and technological developments also became challenges in consistently shaping students' disciplinary character. Despite these obstacles, the school continued to conduct guidance and evaluation so that the religious habituation program could run optimally and provide a positive impact on the development of students' character.

Implications of Religious Habituation for Character Education

Religious habituation at SMK Darut Taqwa provided positive implications for the implementation of character education at school. The program not only improved students' discipline, but also formed attitudes of responsibility, politeness, and students' spiritual awareness in daily life.

Through religious habituation, the school succeeded in creating an educational environment that was not only oriented toward academic achievement, but also toward the moral and character formation of students. Therefore, religious habituation can be used as one of the effective strategies in strengthening character education within the school environment. Muzakki et al., (2022) affirmed that the formation of student character through Islamic religious education is most effective when implemented holistically within a supportive school ecosystem.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that religious habituation at SMK Darut Taqwa plays an effective role in strengthening students' disciplinary character. The religious habituation program implemented through daily Qur'an recitation, congregational Duha and Dhuhr prayers, collective supplication, greeting culture, and regular moral guidance was able to shape students' disciplined behavior gradually and continuously. The findings demonstrated measurable improvements in punctual attendance, compliance with school regulations, assignment responsibility, orderliness during learning, and increased participation in religious activities.

These improvements were supported by teachers' role modeling, a religious school environment, consistent program implementation, and school-parent cooperation. This study provides empirical evidence that religious habituation within a pesantren-based vocational school constitutes an effective, context-sensitive strategy for cultivating disciplinary character. However, limitations include the single-institution scope, small number of informants, and one-semester observation period. Future research should employ longitudinal and mixed-methods designs and conduct comparative

studies across diverse educational institutions to assess the transferability of these strategies.

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Hopefully, this research can provide benefits and contribute positively to the development of character education, especially in improving students' disciplinary character through religious habituation programs.

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