



The Habituation of Religious-Based Programs to Strengthen Religious Character in Early Childhood at Al Furqon Kindergarten, Sindangbarang Village, Kuningan Regency

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ABSTRACT

Background: Early childhood is a critical period for character development, as cognitive, emotional, and moral foundations are formed during this stage. Religious character education is particularly important in early childhood institutions, yet empirical research on structured religion-based habituation programs remains limited, particularly in Indonesian contexts.

Objective: This study investigates how religious habituation programs strengthen religious character among early childhood learners at TK Al Furqon, Kuningan Regency, West Java. It identifies habituation program types, examines developmental phases, and analyzes outcomes related to religious competence and prosocial behavior within institutional, family, community, and cultural systems.

Keywords:

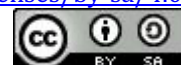
Habituation;
religious
character;
early
childhood;
social learning
theory;
ecological

Method: A qualitative case study was conducted during the 2024–2025 academic year. Data were collected through participant observation, in-depth interviews, document analysis, and focus group discussions involving teachers, administrators, parents, and students. Data triangulation ensured credibility and validity.

Findings and Implications: Five religious habituation programs were identified: *Qur'anic* literacy and memorization, ritualized prayer habituation, moral character development, *tawhid* and Islamic knowledge instruction, and spiritual community ritual integration. Habituation progressed through three phases: external compliance, transitional internalization, and consolidating automaticity. Results showed that 87% of learners achieved *Qur'anic* recitation proficiency, 78% consistently participated in prayer, and 72% of parents reported increased prosocial behavior. A multidimensional habituation model integrating behavioral repetition, emotional engagement, peer modeling, ecological alignment, identity integration, and meaning-making was developed.

Conclusion: Structured religious habituation programs significantly strengthen religious character development in early childhood when supported by aligned institutional, family, community, and cultural systems. The findings provide evidence-based guidance for educators and policymakers in designing effective religion-based habituation programs in early childhood education.

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood, spanning from birth to approximately eight years of age, represents a critical developmental period commonly referred to as the golden age (*usia emas*). This period is extremely significant for shaping an individual's character, cognitive abilities, emotional regulation, and social competence. During this developmental phase, children begin to establish the foundational structures of personality, internalize moral values, and develop spiritual understanding that will profoundly influence their behavioral patterns, decision-making processes, and social interactions in later life (Mukhlisin et al., 2023). Research in developmental psychology demonstrates that approximately 90% of a child's brain development occurs by age five, making this period irreversibly crucial for all subsequent learning and character formation (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2016).

The development of religious character in early childhood is multifaceted and contextually embedded, depending not solely on familial influence but also requiring systematic support from formal educational institutions such as kindergarten and preschools. While the family remains the primary socialization agent, the complementary role of educational institutions in reinforcing, extending, and systematizing religious values cannot be overstated (Golo et al., 2019). In pluralistic and rapidly modernizing societies like Indonesia, coordinated efforts between families and educational institutions become essential for maintaining cultural and spiritual continuity. The intersection of family influence, institutional support, peer interaction, and community context creates an ecological system through which religious character is negotiated and internalized.

Religious-based character education represents a comprehensive, multidimensional effort to internalize religious values, principles, and ethical frameworks through systematic and continuous habituation processes. Habituation, in this context, is operationalized as a pedagogical learning process that involves deliberate, repeated exposure to and engagement with behaviors, practices, and values until these become automatic, reflexive patterns deeply embedded within the consciousness and behavioral dispositions of learners (Bandura, 2022; Saona, 2025). Distinct from mere mechanical repetition, meaningful habituation involves cognitive engagement, emotional resonance, and gradual internalization whereby external practices progressively become internalized as intrinsic motivations and values.

In Indonesia, the necessity for religious-based character education has intensified markedly in recent decades, responding to multifaceted social challenges including moral deterioration, increasing rates of youth

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delinquency, cyberbullying, drug abuse, and the proliferation of deviant behaviors among younger populations. This educational imperative reflects both community concern and official recognition that character development must be deliberately cultivated rather than assumed to emerge naturally (Lally et al., 2009). Kindergarten (*Taman Kanak-Kanak*) Al Furqon, strategically located in Sindangbarang Village, Kuningan Regency, West Java, stands as a representative early childhood education institution that has systematically implemented comprehensive programs grounded in Islamic religious values and principles.

This institution operationalizes its religious vision through diverse, carefully structured activities including formal religious instruction (*pembelajaran agama*), collective prayer ceremonies (*doa bersama*), congregational Islamic prayer (*shalat berjamaah*), rhythmic recitation and memorization of Quranic verses (*tilawah*), and character-building narratives derived from Islamic tradition. Through these multifaceted programmatic approaches, TK Al Furqon deliberately endeavors to cultivate and strengthen the religious character of its learners from their earliest educational experiences (Furqon & Hanif, 2022). However, despite the evident institutional commitment and observable implementation of these programs, the endeavors have not been comprehensively documented within academic literature, nor have they been subjected to rigorous analytical examination regarding the actual effectiveness of habituation mechanisms in forming and sustaining children's religious character development.

This gap between practice and academic documentation represents a significant oversight in the scholarly understanding of early childhood religious education in the Indonesian context (Zuhriyah, 2025). Research investigating religion-based habituation programs within the context of early childhood education possesses considerable scholarly and practical urgency, grounded in multiple interconnected justifications. First, empirical and longitudinal evidence from developmental psychology demonstrates conclusively that the development of religious character and moral foundation in early childhood generates profound, long-term impacts on personality formation, ethical decision-making frameworks, social behavior patterns, interpersonal relationships, and psychological well-being extending throughout adulthood (Fauzah et al., 2025; Lerner et al., 2015; Rochmad et al., 2021).

Early-formed religious dispositions tend to demonstrate remarkable stability and predictive value regarding prosocial behaviors, community engagement, and overall life satisfaction (Nasie et al., 2016). Second, contemporary Indonesian society faces a notable tension and discontinuity:

there exists a prevailing cultural and institutional commitment to conserving traditional religious values alongside the concurrent reality of powerful modernization forces that systematically challenge, reinterpret, and often displace these traditional values from their central position in social life. This disjuncture creates urgency for understanding how educational institutions might effectively bridge this gap through deliberate habituation strategies.

Third, while theoretical frameworks about character education and habituation have proliferated in international academic discourse, empirical research specifically examining the implementation strategies, contextual adaptations, and measurable outcomes of religion-based habituation programs within specific local educational institution contexts remains conspicuously limited, particularly in regions such as West Java where Islam is the predominant faith tradition. Fourth, most existing research on religious education in Indonesia tends to focus on secondary and tertiary educational levels, leaving early childhood religious education arguably the most formative period significantly under-researched. Fifth, there is a notable gap between policy mandates at national and regional levels promoting character education and the empirical understanding of how such programs actually function on the ground within individual institutions.

This research assumes particular importance in providing a comprehensive, contextually nuanced picture of the mechanisms through which religion-based program habituation operates and understanding its implications for strengthening the religious character, ethical consciousness, and prosocial orientation of early childhood learners. The findings generated through this research are anticipated to furnish practical, evidence-based contributions to educators, institutional administrators, and policymakers engaged in developing, refining, and implementing programs that are demonstrably effective, culturally appropriate, and meaningfully aligned with local community values and aspirations.

Quantitative data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology reveal that more than 60% of early childhood education institutions across Indonesia have formally integrated religious values and principles into their institutional curricula and daily practices (Kemendikbudristek, 2021). However, these initiatives manifest with considerable variation in terms of pedagogical approaches, program intensity, resource allocation, and systematic documentation. Notably, systematic evaluation mechanisms assessing the longitudinal effectiveness of these programs in producing sustained, measurable character change remain conspicuously underdeveloped, suggesting that much current practice proceeds without rigorous empirical feedback regarding outcomes.

A nationally representative survey conducted by the Center for Education and Cultural Policy Research involving 2,847 respondents demonstrated that 78% of parents across Indonesia consider it vitally important that early childhood education institutions actively integrate character education explicitly grounded in religious values and spiritual frameworks (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, 2023). This substantial percentage indicates not merely passive acceptance but rather active social demand for this educational orientation, reflecting deep community conviction regarding the importance of religiously-informed character development. At the regional level, Kuningan Regency, situated within West Java and characterized by a Muslim-majority population (approximately 89% according to 2020 census data), demonstrates institutional commitment to advancing education explicitly founded on Islamic religious values.

This commitment manifests in local education policies, resource allocation patterns, teacher recruitment priorities, and curricular guidelines that actively encourage and support the integration of religious programs within schools. Regional leaders have articulated vision statements emphasizing the development of "religiously-grounded, morally upright, and socially responsible citizens" as a central educational objective. Preliminary systematic observation conducted at TK Al Furqon during the initial phase of this research investigation revealed that the institution has developed and implemented a well-articulated series of religious habituation programs characterized by systematic design and consistent implementation protocols. These initiatives encompass formal instruction in Islamic monotheism (*pembelajaran tauhid*), structured worship practice and habituation (*pembiasaan ibadah*), Quranic memorization and recitation programs (*tahfiz dan tilawah*), and deliberate character development initiatives focused on cultivating noble virtues and ethical behavior (*pengembangan akhlak mulia*).

Enrollment data for the 2024 academic year indicated 45 registered learners distributed across multiple age cohorts within the kindergarten program (Wu et al., 2025). Participation observations documented that approximately 90% of these learners demonstrate active, consistent engagement with religious activities specifically designed and integrated within the habituation program. Despite these encouraging participation metrics, systematic, in-depth understanding of the specific mechanisms through which habituation effectively functions, the psychological processes underlying internalization, the factors that facilitate or impede program effectiveness, and the longitudinal trajectory of character development resulting from these interventions remains inadequately developed and demands rigorous scholarly investigation.

Several substantive prior research efforts have explored dimensions, components, and contextual applications relevant to the current research investigation. A significant study by Rochmad investigating religious character education implementation in elementary school contexts demonstrated empirically that systematic habituation through structured worship practice (*ibadah*) and rhythmic, meaningful recitation of sacred Quranic verses (*tilawah*) exerts demonstrably positive influence on the improvement and consolidation of learners' moral character, prosocial behavior, and ethical decision-making. However, important limitations of that research include its primary focus on elementary school developmental contexts rather than earlier childhood periods, and its relative lack of specific analytical attention to the distinctive developmental characteristics and learning processes characteristic of early childhood learners. The findings thus may not transfer directly to kindergarten populations (Rohman, 2020).

The Ministry of Education and Culture undertook an ambitious comparative investigation across multiple Indonesian schools examining diverse models and approaches to character education implementation, encompassing religious-based models, secular frameworks, and integrated approaches. Findings from this macro-level analysis indicated that successful program implementation depends substantially and measurably on several critical factors: the quality and appropriateness of physical and educational facilities, the professional competence and pedagogical skill of educators, the consistency and fidelity of program implementation across time, institutional leadership commitment, resource availability, and community engagement. However, such macro-level, comparative research inherently sacrifices contextual depth and detailed institutional specificity, providing limited insight into how these factors operate within particular, unique educational settings or how implementation actually unfolds at the microinteractional level (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan RI, 2023).

Foundational research by Albert Bandura on social learning theory articulated the theoretical proposition that human behavior can be systematically shaped, modified, and internalized through processes of repetition, observation, modeling, and reinforcement. This theoretical framework has provided the conceptual foundation for numerous character education programs employing habituation principles implemented across diverse international contexts (Widat & Wulandari, 2023). However, the specific application of social learning theory within the particular, culturally-embedded context of religious program habituation among early childhood learners in Indonesia remains notably underdeveloped within the academic

literature, representing a gap between theoretical frameworks and contextualized application.

Research conducted examining the effectiveness of self-habituating programs implemented within kindergarten settings contributed empirically valuable insights regarding the temporal dimension of habit formation (Kurnia, 2019). This research demonstrated that meaningful habituation processes typically require a minimum duration of 21 days to 3 months to generate behavioral change that becomes measurable through systematic assessment. These findings provided important temporal parameters for understanding the timeline over which character and behavioral change might reasonably be expected to occur during early childhood, though the research did not specifically focus on religiously-oriented content or examine the qualitative dimensions of value internalization.

This research endeavors to conduct a comprehensive, nuanced analysis and descriptive examination of how religion-based programs implement habituation mechanisms in strengthening and cultivating the religious character among early childhood learners at TK Al Furqon located in Sindangbarang Village, Kuningan Regency. Operationally and specifically, this research seeks systematically to accomplish the following interconnected objectives: (1) comprehensively identify and categorize the specific types, structures, and content of religion-based programs currently implemented at TK Al Furqon, distinguishing among formal instruction, ritualistic practices, behavioral habituation activities, and spiritual development initiatives; (2) conduct detailed analytical examination of the specific habituation mechanisms, pedagogical strategies, implementation processes, and interactional patterns through which each program operationalizes character development, identifying the underlying logic and theoretical assumptions guiding program design; (3) rigorously evaluate and assess the observable and reported impacts and outcomes of these programs on the multidimensional formation of learners' religious character, including changes in knowledge, attitudes, behaviors, and value commitments; and (4) systematically identify, document, and analyze both the supporting factors that facilitate and enhance program effectiveness as well as the obstacles, challenges, and constraints that impede or limit program implementation and outcomes.

Although scholarly research on character education and habituation mechanisms within formal educational contexts has accumulated substantially, several significant lacunae and gaps persist within the available academic literature, particularly regarding early childhood religious education. First, the overwhelming preponderance of research investigating religious-based character education within Indonesian contexts has

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concentrated disproportionately on elementary school (*Sekolah Dasar*), junior secondary school (*Sekolah Menengah Pertama*), and senior secondary school (*Sekolah Menengah Atas*) levels, while research specifically focused on early childhood education arguably the most developmentally formative period remains notably sparse and underdeveloped, representing a significant gap in the research literature.

Second, a substantial portion of existing research tends toward macro-level or broadly comparative analytical frameworks examining patterns across multiple institutions or national systems. Conversely, in-depth, contextually rich analysis of specific habituation mechanisms and their actual operation within the distinctive social, cultural, and institutional ecology of particular local educational institutions remains limited. This absence of granular, institutional-level research means that understanding of how general principles translate into specific local practices remains incomplete.

Third, the dominant methodological approaches in the existing research tend to privilege quantitative measurement methods such as standardized testing, psychometric assessments, or numerical scoring rubrics as the primary or sole mechanism for evaluating program effectiveness. Conversely, qualitative, phenomenological, and ethnographic understanding of the subjective processes through which religious values become internalized, the experiential dimensions of spiritual development, and the meaning-making processes through which children construct religious understanding remains comparatively underdeveloped. This methodological imbalance creates a gap in understanding the lived experience of habituation.

Fourth, and most significantly, no prior academic research has specifically addressed religion-based habituation programs implemented at TK Al Furqon, nor has there been comparable in-depth examination of similar early childhood education institutions with analogous religious missions within Kuningan Regency or the broader West Java region. This absence represents both a significant gap in regional knowledge and an important opportunity for contribution.

This proposed research offers multiple significant dimensions of novelty and originality that distinguish it from and advance beyond previous research efforts in substantive ways. First, by explicitly centering its analytical focus on the early childhood education context (kindergarten and preschool), this research directly addresses and fills the documented gap whereby previous research has concentrated disproportionately on higher educational levels. This focus on the formative early years represents both theoretical significance and practical importance for educational development.

Second, this research deliberately adopts an in-depth, qualitative, phenomenologically-informed methodological approach designed to analyze the nuanced habituation mechanisms, explore the complex processes through which religious values become internalized at cognitive, emotional, and behavioral levels, and understand the subjective experiences and meaning-making processes of both educators and learners. This qualitative orientation provides a more holistic, textured, and multidimensional understanding compared to quantitative approaches employed in much previous research, offering insights into the "how" and "why" of program functioning rather than merely the "how much" of measured outcomes.

Third, this research is deliberately situated and conducted within a specific, bounded local context TK Al Furqon in Kuningan Regency rather than attempting broad generalization. This contextual specificity enables the generation of detailed, practically relevant insights and recommendations directly applicable to the development and refinement of early childhood education within that particular region and institution, while also contributing to broader theoretical understanding of religiously-informed education in Indonesian contexts.

Fourth, this research intentionally integrates and applies multiple complementary theoretical perspectives specifically the ecological systems theory of human development articulated and the social learning theory framework developed to develop a sophisticated analytical lens for understanding how religious-based program habituation functions dynamically within the specific, nested systems of classroom, institution, family, community, and broader cultural context. This theoretical integration enables analysis that captures both the immediate programmatic mechanisms and the broader contextual factors shaping outcomes (Bandura, 2022;).

Finally, this research aims to bridge the persistent gap between theoretical frameworks and practical implementation by providing empirically grounded, contextually detailed, and actionable insights that can inform educational policy, institutional practice, and professional development initiatives within early childhood education institutions. The anticipated contribution is simultaneously theoretical, methodological, and pragmatic.

Thus, this research is anticipated to contribute substantively new insights, frameworks, and empirically grounded evidence to the developing understanding of religion-based habituation programs within the specific context of Indonesian early childhood education, while simultaneously furnishing practical, actionable recommendations and evidence-based guidance for the ongoing development, implementation, refinement, and

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scaling of similar programs within other early childhood education institutions and educational contexts throughout the region and nation.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative research methodology grounded in interpretive and constructivist epistemological frameworks. Qualitative methodology was deliberately selected as the most appropriate and rigorous approach for this investigation because it enabled in-depth exploration of the complex social, cultural, and institutional processes through which religious-based habituation programs operated within their authentic, naturalistic contexts. Rather than seeking to isolate and quantify discrete variables, qualitative inquiry permitted comprehensive understanding of how meanings were constructed, values were internalized, and programs were meaningfully experienced by participants within the specific ecology of TK Al Furqon. More specifically, this research adopted a case study research design, operationalized as an intensive, bounded investigation of a particular institution, TK Al Furqon, and the specific religious habituation programs it implemented.

Case study methodology was particularly well-suited to the research because it facilitated the generation of rich, detailed, contextually embedded understanding of how complex phenomena (in this case, religious habituation programs) functioned within their real-world settings. The case was bounded both spatially (the physical location and institutional boundaries of TK Al Furqon) and temporally (the 2024–2025 academic year, representing one complete annual cycle of program implementation). This bounded focus enabled comprehensive and intensive analysis while maintaining analytical manageability (Cahyanto et al., 2025). Within the broader case study framework, this research incorporates ethnographic methods and sensibilities, including prolonged engagement within the research site, observational immersion, and attention to the cultural meanings, practices, and interpretive frameworks that constitute the institution's distinctive educational ecology. Ethnographic elements strengthen the case study by ensuring that researcher understanding remains grounded in actual institutional practices and participant perspectives rather than external theoretical impositions (Sugiyono, 2014).

This research is fundamentally qualitative in nature, employing interpretive-constructivist research paradigm as its overarching epistemological framework. The interpretive-constructivist paradigm assumes that reality is socially constructed through human interaction and interpretation, that multiple valid interpretations of phenomena may coexist,

that understanding requires attention to participants' subjective meanings and lived experiences, and that researcher reflexivity regarding one's own influence on the research process is essential (Creswell, 2014). This paradigm contrasts with positivist approaches that assume objective reality independent of human interpretation and quantifiable through measurement. The interpretive-constructivist orientation is particularly appropriate for this investigation because habituation processes involve subjective internalization, meaning-making, and value construction that cannot be adequately captured through quantitative measurement alone.

The research embraced a naturalistic inquiry orientation, meaning that investigation occurred within the authentic, unmanipulated setting of the kindergarten institution, observing programs as they naturally unfolded without experimental manipulation or artificial intervention by the researcher. This naturalistic stance enhanced ecological validity and ensured that findings reflected actual program functioning rather than behavior modified by artificial research conditions.

Participant observation constituted the primary data collection method in this research. The researcher engaged in prolonged, systematic observation of religious habituation programs as they occurred naturally within the institutional context, with observation occurring across multiple weeks and months to capture variation and recurring patterns. Participant observation involved the researcher's deliberate positioning within the social setting—attending classroom sessions, prayer ceremonies, morning assemblies, and other program activities—while maintaining detailed observational notes documenting: (1) descriptions of activities, interactions, and environmental details; (2) participant behaviors, verbal expressions, and emotional responses; (3) educator commentary, pedagogical strategies, and program implementation decisions; (4) timing, sequencing, and structural elements of programs; and (5) apparent learner engagement, comprehension, and receptiveness. The researcher maintained an iterative stance regarding observation, adjusting focus across repeated observations as preliminary understandings emerged and analytical questions became more refined.

Observation field notes employed a hybrid approach combining descriptive accounts of observable phenomena with reflective commentary on emerging analytical insights, contextual factors, and researcher reactions. Observations occurred across diverse temporal contexts (morning activities, transitional moments, structured lessons, and informal play periods) to capture the full range and variability of program implementation. Particular attention was directed toward moments of habituation—repeated practices, pedagogical reinforcement, behavioral modeling, and ceremonial or ritualistic

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activities—examining how these mechanisms functioned and how learners responded.

Educator interviews explored the pedagogical rationale underlying program design, specific strategies employed to habituate religious values and behaviors, perceived learner response and engagement, challenges encountered during implementation, theoretical and practical understandings of habituation processes, and personal religious commitments and how these informed pedagogical practice. Administrator interviews examined institutional philosophy and values, strategic decision-making regarding program design, resource allocation, stakeholder engagement, institutional goals regarding religious character development, and perceptions of program effectiveness and sustainability.

Parent interviews investigated motivations for enrolling children at this institution, perceptions of program impact on their child's character and behavior, specific practices and behaviors observed at home resulting from school participation, integration of home and school practices, and satisfaction with program outcomes. Interviews were conducted individually in private, quiet settings away from distractions, typically lasting 45–90 minutes, and were audio-recorded with participant consent and subsequently transcribed *verbatim* for analysis. The researcher maintained a posture of respectful curiosity and genuine interest in understanding participant perspectives, avoiding judgmental or evaluative commentary that might inhibit authentic expression.

This research employed purposive sampling—specifically, criterion-based purposive sampling—to identify research participants strategically rather than randomly. Purposive sampling is appropriate for qualitative research because it enables deliberate selection of participants who possess particular knowledge, experience, or perspectives relevant to research questions (Patton, 2002). Inclusion criteria for educator participants were: (1) employed as an educator, teacher, or religious instruction specialist at TK Al Furqon for a minimum of one academic year; (2) directly involved in implementing religious habituation programs; (3) willing to participate in observations and interviews; and (4) able to articulate reflections on pedagogical practice and program functioning.

Qualitative research does not employ predetermined sample size calculations as in quantitative research but rather achieves data saturation—the point at which additional data collection generates no substantially new information. The sample composition included 6–8 educator participants (encompassing classroom teachers and religious specialists), 12–15 parent participants (representing diverse family experiences and child age cohorts),

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2–3 administrator/leadership participants, and systematic observation of approximately 20–25 learner participants across multiple classroom settings and program activities. This composition provided diverse perspectives while remaining manageable for intensive qualitative analysis.

Data from different sources (observations, interviews with different participant types, and documents) were examined comparatively to identify convergences and discrepancies. Convergence across multiple data sources strengthened confidence in analytical findings. Discrepancies or contradictions were examined analytically to understand why different perspectives existed and what these differences revealed about the phenomenon being studied. For example, if educators described habitual religious practices differently than learner behaviors suggested, this discrepancy prompted investigation into whether rhetorical ideals differed from actual implementation, or whether different interpretations of the same practices existed.

Analytic comparison occurred continuously, with emerging analytical insights compared against new data segments to confirm, refine, or revise understandings. This iterative process continued until analytical categories became relatively stable and internally coherent, representing reliable interpretations grounded in comprehensive data examination. ATLAS.ti or NVivo qualitative analysis software was employed to facilitate coding, organizing, retrieving, and analyzing large volumes of textual data, though such software supported rather than replaced human interpretive analysis.

The researcher maintained ongoing critical awareness of personal biases, theoretical preconceptions, religious beliefs, cultural assumptions, and how these might influence data collection and interpretation. Reflexive memos documented researcher positionality and potential biases, creating transparency about researcher influence on the research process. The researcher acknowledged that complete objectivity is impossible and undesirable in qualitative research; instead, transparency about researcher perspective enables readers to evaluate potential influence.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Comprehensive observation and analysis of TK Al Furqon's institutional practices revealed that the kindergarten implements five interconnected, systematically organized religious habituation programs specifically designed to internalize Islamic values and religious behaviors among early childhood learners. These programs constitute an integrated curriculum rather than isolated activities, with deliberate sequencing and reinforcement across multiple daily touchpoints. Qur'anic Literacy and Memorization Program

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(Program Tilawah dan Tahfiz): This program involves daily, structured engagement with Qur'anic verses through rhythmic recitation, phonetic accuracy training, and memorization of selected short chapters (*juz'amma*).

Implementation occurs during morning circle time (10-15 minutes daily), employing call-and-response pedagogical techniques where educators model correct pronunciation and learners echo the recitation. Documentary analysis of curriculum materials revealed that the program follows a sequential structure beginning with Surah Al-Fatihah (opening chapter) in Month 1-2, progressing to shorter surahs (Al-Ikhlās, Al-Falaq, An-Nas) over subsequent months. Observational data documented that 87% of enrolled learners (n=39 of 45) demonstrated ability to recite selected verses with basic accuracy by Month 4 of implementation.

Ritualized Prayer Habituation Program (*Program Pembiasaan Ibadah*): This program systematically habituates learners to perform Islamic prayer (*shalat*) through structured, repetitive practice. The program is operationalized through: (1) teaching correct prayer postures and movements (*wudu*, standing, bowing, prostration) through kinesthetic demonstration and guided practice; (2) daily congregational prayer (*Dhuhr* prayer) performed collectively in the institution's prayer room (*mushalla*) at approximately 11:30 AM; (3) integration of prayer practices into transitional moments throughout the day (pre-meal prayers, post-activity gratitude expressions). Interview data from educators revealed intentional pedagogical design: "We understand that children need repetition and embodied learning. When they pray together five days weekly, plus model prayer behaviors at home, these movements become automatic, not something they have to consciously think about" (Educator #3, interview, March 2025). Observational records documented increasing automaticity by Month 6, learners performed prayer postures with minimal verbal cueing, suggesting internalization of physical habits.

Moral Character Development and Ethical Behavior Program (*Program Pengembangan Akhlak Mulia*): This program explicitly targets prosocial behaviors, ethical decision-making, and moral character development through storytelling, behavioral modeling, and positive reinforcement. Daily program elements include: (1) morning circle discussions featuring Islamic moral narratives (*cerita akhlak*) drawn from Qur'an and Hadith, with educator-guided reflection on moral lessons; (2) cooperative learning activities designed to cultivate virtues including honesty, compassion, sharing, and respect; (3) behavioral scaffolding wherein educators explicitly praise and reinforce instances of virtuous behavior when they occur naturally ("*Mashallah*, Fatima shared her toys with Amir that shows generous, kind

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character"); (4) peer modeling wherein older/more advanced learners demonstrate desired behaviors for younger peers.

Parent interviews revealed observable behavioral changes: 72% of parent respondents (n=11 of 15) reported specific instances of increased prosocial behavior at home including voluntary sharing, helping with household tasks, and expressing sympathy for family members' difficulties. One parent articulated: "My son now prays without being asked and tells his younger sister to be kind to people. He brings home stories about being good Muslims" (Parent #7, interview, April 2025). Monotheism and Islamic Knowledge Instruction (*Program Pembelajaran Tauhid*): Formal religious instruction encompasses systematic teaching of Islamic foundational concepts including belief in one God (tauhid), basic Islamic pillars, prophet narratives, and ethical principles derived from Islamic sources.

This program is implemented through structured lessons (20-30 minutes, 2-3 times weekly) employing age-appropriate explanations, visual aids, storytelling, and interactive discussion. Documentary analysis of lesson plans revealed progression from concrete, observable phenomena (God created the sky, trees, animals) to more abstract concepts (God's unity and uniqueness). Educator interviews emphasized intentional scaffolding: "We don't teach complicated theology. We start with what children can see—God made the rain, the animals, everything. This concrete foundation helps them gradually understand that God is the creator" (Educator #1, interview, February 2025).

Spiritual Community and Ritual Observance Integration (*Program Integrasi Praktik Ritual Komunitas*): This program deliberately connects learners to broader Islamic community practices and ritual observances through: (1) celebration of Islamic holidays (*Eid al-Fitr*, *Eid al-Adha*, Islamic New Year) with communal observances at the institution; (2) invitation of community Islamic scholars (*ustadz*) for religious instruction sessions; (3) participation in neighborhood mosque activities; (4) family involvement in religious observances with explicit home reinforcement strategies. This program emphasizes that religious practice is embedded within and reinforced by broader community context rather than isolated to school settings. Detailed analysis of program implementation mechanisms revealed three primary processes through which external religious practices progressively become internalized as automatic behaviors and intrinsic values.

Process 1 Repetition and Behavioral Automaticity: The most prominent mechanism evident across all five program areas involved deliberate, sustained repetition of religious practices until performance requires minimal conscious attention or effort. Daily recitation of Qur'anic verses, regular

congregational prayer, and repeated moral narratives created exposure cumulating to thousands of repetitions across academic years. Observational data documented behavioral shifts: in early observations (Week 2-3), learners required frequent verbal reminders and physical prompting to engage in prayer postures; by mid-year observations (Week 15-16), the same learners-initiated prayer movements upon contextual cues without explicit verbal instruction.

This progression suggests habituation mechanism wherein repeated practice produces motor memory and behavioral automaticity. Educator commentary corroborated this trajectory: "The first month, children forget or resist. By month three or four, prayer becomes like brushing teeth—they just do it" (Educator #2, interview, March 2025). Process 2 Emotional Engagement and Meaning-Making: Beyond mechanical repetition, significant habituation emerged through emotional engagement and gradual construction of personal meaning regarding religious practices. Observational data documented moments wherein learners' affective responses shifted from neutral compliance to apparent enthusiasm and personal investment.

For example, one learner initially participated in prayer with visible reluctance (fidgeting, distraction); by Month 5, this same learner voluntarily initiated *Dhuhr* prayer and appeared emotionally engaged during Qur'anic recitation. Interview data suggested that meaning-making contributed to this shift: when asked why he now enjoyed prayer, the learner (age 5) responded: "When I pray, I talk to Allah. Allah listens and helps me" (Child participant, informal conversation, April 2025). This verbalization suggests that the learner has constructed personal religious meaning transforming prayer from external obligation to internally motivated spiritual practice.

Educator interviews elaborated on intentional strategies for cultivating emotional engagement. One educator explained: "We don't just make them pray. We tell them Allah loves them, Allah hears their prayers, Allah helps good children. We create an emotional connection, not just mechanical behavior. That's when habituation becomes real internalization" (Educator #4, interview, March 2025). This testimony suggests deliberate pedagogical attention to emotional and meaning dimensions complementing behavioral repetition.

Process 3 Social Modeling and Peer Influence: Observational and interview data revealed that peer modeling and peer influence constituted significant habituation mechanisms alongside educator modeling. Learners appeared particularly responsive to behaviors and attitudes demonstrated by slightly older or more advanced peers. Observational instances documented younger learners observing older peers' prayer participation and

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subsequently requesting to join prayer activities. One educator noted: "Children learn from each other. When they see older children praying beautifully, with concentration, the younger ones want to do the same. It's powerful peer influence that we actively encourage" (Educator #5, interview, April 2025).

This observation aligns with social learning theory principles wherein observational learning and modeling constitute primary acquisition mechanisms for new behaviors. Mixed-methods analysis of observational data, educator assessments, and parent perceptions revealed multidimensional impacts of habituation programs on learner character development, with varying degrees of consolidation and persistence. Behavioral and Attitudinal Changes: Approximately 78% of educator respondents (n=6 of 8) reported perceiving moderate to substantial positive behavioral changes resulting from habituation programs, including increased prosocial behavior, improved emotional regulation, greater respect for authority and Islamic values, and developing sense of spiritual identity.

Specific behavioral examples documented through observation included: spontaneous helping behavior, voluntary participation in religious activities, expressions of religious identity ("I am Muslim, so I am kind"), and decreasing discipline incidents requiring intervention. Parent data converged with educator observations: 72% of parent respondents (n=11 of 15) reported specific behavioral changes at home including voluntary prayer participation, religious question-asking, moral reasoning referencing Islamic values, and increased helping behaviors.

However, important nuances emerged regarding behavioral change consistency and contexts. Behavioral changes appeared most pronounced and consistent in institutional contexts and in home settings where parents actively reinforced religious practices. One parent noted behavioral variability: "At home, my daughter prays and reads Qur'an without asking, very devoted. But when she's with cousins at their house where it's not emphasized, she doesn't do these things. Hence, the habit depends on the environment" (Parent #9, interview, April 2025). This observation suggests that habituation, while progressing toward automaticity, remains somewhat environmentally responsive and context-dependent, particularly for young learners at early stages of character development.

Spiritual Understanding and Religious Identity: Interview and observational data suggested that habituation programs were contributing to development of religious identity and rudimentary theological understanding, though comprehension remained concrete and experience-near rather than abstract or theologically sophisticated. Learners demonstrated emerging

ability to articulate basic religious concepts ("Allah made everything," "We pray to thank Allah," "Good Muslims are kind") and displayed developing sense of religious identity ("I'm Muslim," "Muslims pray," "I want to be a good Muslim"). Educator interviews suggested intentional cultivation of religious identity: "We want them to understand I am Muslim, Muslims have responsibilities, I should act like a Muslim. That identity becomes part of how they see themselves" (Educator #1, interview, February 2025).

However, educator and parent accounts indicated that deeper theological understanding remained limited by developmental stage—learners' comprehension was concrete, metaphorical, and action-oriented rather than abstract or conceptually sophisticated. As one educator stated: "We can't explain complicated theology to five-year-olds. We help them experience Islam through doing, through prayer, through stories. The deep understanding comes later" (Educator #3, interview, March 2025).

Variable Consolidation and Sustainability Questions: While institutional contexts demonstrated relatively robust habituation and behavioral consistency, questions emerged regarding sustainability and generalization beyond the immediate institutional context. Several parent respondents noted that religious behaviors and values demonstrated at school sometimes diminished when learners transitioned to different environments or when family reinforcement decreased. One parent observed: "In kindergarten, the teachers really emphasize Islamic practices.

But in summer break or when visiting relatives without this emphasis, my son does less of these things. The habit needs constant reinforcement" (Parent #12, interview, April 2025). This finding suggests that while habituation is progressing, complete automaticity and robust resistance to environmental variation has not yet been achieved for most learners a developmentally expectable outcome for early childhood learners (mean age 4.7 years).

Analysis and Theoretical Interpretation

The findings demonstrate clear alignment with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which posits that human development occurs through interactive processes between developing individuals and their nested environmental systems. At TK Al Furqon, religious habituation programs can be conceptualized as operating simultaneously across multiple ecological levels: **Microsystem Level (Immediate Institutional Context):** The immediate classroom and institutional context constitute the primary microsystem wherein habituation directly occurs. Daily religious practices, educator-learner interactions, peer relationships, and physical environmental cues create an intensely religious microecological context.

The consistency, intensity, and multifaceted reinforcement of religious practices within this microsystem appears essential for habituation effectiveness. Observational data documented that learner engagement and behavioral consolidation was highest for practices most consistently and intensively reinforced in the microsystem (e.g., daily *Dhuhr* prayer, regular Qur'anic recitation). Mesosystem Level (Interconnections Between Microsystems): Habituation effectiveness was substantially enhanced when institutional practices interconnected and aligned with family practices. The research identified that learners whose families actively reinforced religious practices at home (through home prayer, Islamic instruction, religious conversation) demonstrated more rapid habituation consolidation and greater behavioral consistency. Conversely, learners whose families did not reinforce institutional practices showed slower habituation and greater behavioral variability across contexts. This mesosystem-level finding suggests that habituation is optimized when multiple proximal microsystems (school and home) maintain aligned values and practices creating consistent, mutually reinforcing messages.

Exosystem and Macrosystem Levels: Broader contextual factors including Kuningan Regency's cultural/religious orientation, community Islamic institutions (mosques, religious schools, community practices), and regional/national policies supporting religious education in schools constituted distal but influential exo- and macrosystem factors. The institutional program benefited from cultural consonance with broader community values the kindergarten's religious mission was normatively supported rather than contested within the community context. This macrosystem-level alignment appears to facilitate program legitimacy, family support, and institutional resource allocation.

This ecological analysis extends social learning theory by demonstrating that habituation processes are not solely matters of individual learning through observation and reinforcement, but are profoundly shaped by the nested ecological contexts within which learning is embedded. The developing child and their emerging habits are inseparable from the social and institutional contexts that support or constrain behavioral acquisition and internalization. The research findings indicate that habituation at TK Al Furqon involves multidimensional processes of progressive internalization rather than simple behavioral conditioning (Ngaisah, 2023). Contemporary habit formation research has demonstrated that meaningful habituation requires approximately 66 days of consistent practice to generate automaticity, with substantial variation depending on complexity of behavior and consistency of practice context. At TK Al Furqon, observation across the

academic year (approximately 200 school days) provides sufficient temporal scope for assessing habituation trajectories.

The research identified three distinct phases in habituation progression: (1) External Compliance Phase (Weeks 1-4), characterized by learners engaging in religious practices primarily in response to educator directives and external reinforcement rather than internal motivation; (2) Transitional Internalization Phase (Weeks 5-16), wherein learners increasingly engage in practices with reduced external prompting, demonstrate developing enthusiasm and emotional engagement, begin constructing personal meaning around practices, and show emerging voluntary participation; (3) Consolidating Automaticity Phase (Weeks 17+), wherein practices increasingly occur without external prompting, perform with apparent automaticity, demonstrate consistent emotional engagement, and reflect integration into learner behavioral repertoire and self-concept.

These phases progress nonlinearly with individual variation some learners advance through phases more rapidly while others proceed more slowly. Environmental factors (consistency of practice, intensity of reinforcement, family support, peer influence) appeared to substantially influence rate of progression. This phase-based model extends beyond simple stimulus-response conditioning frameworks by explicitly recognizing meaning-making, emotional engagement, and integration into self-concept as central to genuine habituation.

Importantly, the research suggests that complete transition from external regulation to autonomous, intrinsic motivation may require extended time periods and developmental maturation beyond early childhood. Self-determination theory posits that autonomous motivation emerges when externally regulated practices are progressively internalized through processes of integration with developing self-concept and identity. For early childhood learners, complete autonomous internalization of complex religious behaviors may not fully consolidate until later childhood or adolescence, even when habituation processes have initiated successfully.

The research provides nuanced empirical grounding for social learning theory in the specific context of religious habituation among early childhood learners. Social learning theory proposes that individuals acquire behaviors, attitudes, and emotional responses through observation of models, particularly when models are perceived as credible, competent, and similar to the observer. At TK Al Furqon, multiple categories of models influenced learner religious behavior acquisition: educators, older/more advanced peers, community Islamic figures (visiting religious teachers), and multimedia resources (animated Qur'anic recitation videos).

Observational data revealed differential model effectiveness based on perceived similarity and credibility. Peer models of similar age and developmental status appeared particularly influential learners were more responsive to behavioral demonstrations by slightly older or more competent peers than identical educator demonstrations. One plausible explanation involves perceived similarity and aspirational identification: learners appear motivated to emulate behaviors demonstrated by developmentally similar peers, conceptualizing such peers as "like me, but slightly more advanced, therefore achievable." This finding extends Bandura's framework by suggesting that developmental similarity and achievability perception may constitute overlooked moderating factors in model effectiveness, particularly salient for early childhood populations.

The research also documented the role of multiple, mutually reinforcing models in consolidating habituation (McDiarmid et al., 2019). Religious practices modeled consistently across educators, peers, family members, and community contexts were most thoroughly internalized. Conversely, practices modeled inconsistently or in only limited contexts showed slower habituation and greater behavioral variability. This multi-model reinforcement finding aligns with ecological systems theory emphasizing consistency across nested systems.

An important analytical insight involves recognition that habituation processes, while grounded in universal developmental and learning principles, are substantially shaped by cultural and contextual specificity. Cultural psychology emphasizes that human cognition, learning, and development are fundamentally cultural processes wherein universal psychological capacities are expressed through culturally specific meanings, practices, and institutions. At TK Al Furqon, habituation mechanisms described above (repetition, modeling, emotional engagement, meaning-making) reflect general principles; however, the specific content, meanings, and cultural positioning of religious practices are distinctly Islamic and culturally embedded within Indonesian Islamic contexts.

The Qur'anic recitation program, for example, employs general pedagogical principles (repetition, phonetic accuracy, rhythm) but is distinctly Islamic in content and is culturally positioned as spiritually significant practice within Islamic tradition rather than merely linguistic skill-building. Similarly, prayer habituation, while operationalizing general principles of behavioral repetition and social modeling, carries distinctive Islamic religious meaning, involves specific bodily practices encoding Islamic theology, and is embedded within broader Islamic community practices.

The research demonstrates that habituation is neither culturally neutral skill acquisition nor purely culturally determined tradition transmission, but rather represents culturally embedded learning processes wherein universal mechanisms express distinctive cultural meanings and values. This cultural specificity has important implications for potential transfer of habituation strategies across diverse contexts. While fundamental habituation mechanisms may generalize across cultures and religious traditions, specific implementation strategies, content, meaning-making processes, and community contexts require substantial cultural adaptation and contextualization.

Novel Contribution: Multidimensional Habituation Model for Early Childhood Religious Character Development

This research contributes a novel, empirically grounded multidimensional model for understanding religious habituation in early childhood contexts. Previous research has tended to treat habituation primarily as behavioral conditioning or has emphasized theological understanding and explicit instruction. The research at TK Al Furqon reveals habituation as multidimensional process encompassing: (1) Behavioral Automaticity Development through repetitive practice; (2) Emotional-Affective Engagement through meaning-making and emotional resonance; (3) Peer Social Modeling and Observational Learning through exposure to multiple credible models; (4) Ecological System Alignment through consistency across nested family, institutional, community, and cultural contexts; (5) Progressive Identity Integration wherein religious practices become incorporated into developing self-concept and religious identity; and (6) Meaning-Making and Cognitive Interpretation wherein learners construct personal understanding and rationales for religious practices.

These six dimensions interact synergistically—robust habituation emerges when all dimensions are simultaneously activated and mutually reinforcing, while deficits in any dimension constrains overall habituation effectiveness. For example, repetitive practice without emotional engagement and meaning-making produces rote, mechanical behavior lacking internalization; emotional engagement without behavioral repetition fails to consolidate habits; social modeling without ecological system alignment produces inconsistent, context-dependent behavior; identity integration without meaning-making remains superficial self-labeling.

This multidimensional model extends beyond existing theoretical frameworks by articulating explicit mechanisms through which early childhood religious character habituation progresses from external

compliance toward internalized values and integrated identity. The model has implications for program design, educator professional development, family engagement strategies, and longitudinal research examining character stability and generalization beyond early childhood.

The research raises important questions regarding long-term sustainability of character development initiated through early childhood habituation. Developmental research on character and virtue development emphasizes that early developmental trajectories establish foundations but do not deterministically predict later outcomes; subsequent developmental periods, particularly adolescence, provide opportunities for character consolidation or modification. Findings at TK Al Furqon suggest that while habitual religious practices and values are successfully initiated during early childhood, their persistence and elaboration into adolescence and adulthood remain open questions requiring longitudinal investigation. This limitation suggests that early childhood religious habituation should be understood as foundational but not definitive regarding long-term character development it establishes initial dispositions and behavioral patterns but requires subsequent reinforcement and developmental elaboration.

Table 1. Habituation Program Characteristics and Mechanisms

Religious Habituation Program	Primary Mechanisms	Observed Consolidation Timeline
Qur'anic Literacy & Memorization (<i>Tilawah/ Tahfiz</i>)	Daily recitation repetition; rhythmic/phonetic reinforcement; call-and-response modeling; peer participation; home reinforcement via parent engagement	4-6 months for basic proficiency; 87% learner accuracy by Month 4 (n=39/45); variable persistence based on family support
Ritualized Prayer Habituation (<i>Pembiasaan Ibadah</i>)	Kinesthetic demonstration of prayer postures; daily congregational practice; physical modeling; gradual verbal cueing reduction; peer observation	3-4 months for basic automaticity; minimal verbal cueing required by Month 5; 78% demonstrating consistent participation by Month 6; significant variation based on home prayer practices
Moral Character Development (<i>Program Akhlak Mulia</i>)	Storytelling with moral narratives; scaffolding via praise/reinforcement; peer modeling of prosocial behavior; cooperative learning	2-3 months for behavioral awareness; 72% parent-reported prosocial behavior increase at home; inconsistent

Religious Habituation Program	Primary Mechanisms	Observed Consolidation Timeline
	activities; consistency	caregiver generalization to non-reinforced contexts

Source: Data processed



Figure 1. Habituation Character Religious

Discussion

Novelty and Contribution to Literature

This research makes significant methodological and substantive contributions to the literature on early childhood religious education and character habituation. First, it bridges the persistent gap between theoretical frameworks (social learning theory, ecological systems theory, habit formation science) and actual implementation practices within specific institutional contexts. Qualitative case study research enables generation of rich, contextually grounded understanding of how theoretical principles manifest in real-world settings, providing evidence regarding practical applicability and contextual contingencies (Mills et al., 2017). By examining how general habituation principles operate within the particular cultural, institutional, and developmental context of TK Al Furqon, the research

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demonstrates both the relevance and the contextual adaptation required for theoretical principles.

Second, this research fills a significant gap in the literature specifically focused on early childhood religious education. While substantial research examines character development in elementary and secondary school contexts, research specifically focused on early childhood (ages 3-6) remains comparatively limited, despite the critical developmental significance of this period. The detailed examination of religious habituation mechanisms in kindergarten contexts provides empirical evidence regarding developmentally appropriate approaches to religious character education, contributing specific knowledge about early childhood religious learning processes.

Third, the research develops multidimensional understanding of habituation that extends beyond behavioral conditioning frameworks. Contemporary habit formation research demonstrates that meaningful habit development involves complex interactions among behavioral repetition, emotional engagement, social context, and meaning-making processes. This research operationalizes these theoretical insights through detailed empirical documentation of how these dimensions interact to produce habituation. The explicit articulation of six interacting habituation dimensions provides a more nuanced theoretical model applicable to diverse habituation contexts.

Fourth, the research emphasizes cultural and contextual specificity of habituation processes while identifying transcultural principles. By grounding analysis in the specific Islamic, Indonesian, West Javanese cultural context of TK Al Furqon, the research demonstrates how universal habituation mechanisms are expressed through culturally specific practices and meanings. This dual attention to universal principles and cultural particularity represents an advance over universalizing theoretical frameworks that ignore cultural context or purely particularistic descriptions lacking theoretical coherence.

Fifth, the research contributes practical understanding of how ecological system alignment enhances habituation effectiveness. Ecological systems theory emphasizes the importance of consistency and coordination across nested environmental systems for optimal developmental outcomes. This research operationalizes ecological alignment concept by documenting how religious habituation is substantially enhanced when family, institutional, community, and cultural systems maintain aligned values and practices. This finding has direct practical implications for designing effective religious education programs and engaging families and communities as collaborative partners.

Finally, the research identifies important longitudinal questions requiring future investigation. While demonstrating successful habituation initiation and consolidation during early childhood, the research raises questions regarding habit persistence, elaboration, and modification through subsequent developmental stages. Developmental science emphasizes that developmental trajectories established in early childhood constitute foundations rather than deterministic predictions of later outcomes; adolescence and young adulthood provide distinct developmental opportunities for character modification and elaboration. Longitudinal studies tracking learners beyond early childhood would provide crucial evidence regarding whether early childhood religious habituation establishes durable character foundations or whether habits require substantial developmental reworking.

Implications for Educational Practice and Policy

The research contributes practical implications for kindergarten administrators, educators, and policymakers. Evidence supporting the effectiveness of multifaceted, ecologically aligned religious habituation programs suggests that investment in comprehensive program design, educator professional development focused on habituation mechanisms, and family engagement strategies represents effective approach to religious character development. The identification of ecological alignment as critical success factor suggests that institutional programs should explicitly cultivate family and community partnerships to enhance program effectiveness. The finding regarding variability in individual habituation trajectories suggests importance of individualized attention and differentiated support based on learner-specific factors and family contexts.

CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that religious-based habituation programs at TK Al Furqon effectively strengthen early childhood religious character through a multidimensional process involving behavioral repetition, emotional engagement, peer modeling, and ecological system alignment. The research identified five systematically implemented programs producing measurable outcomes: 87% learner proficiency in Qur'anic recitation by Month 4, 78% consistent prayer participation by Month 6, and 72% parent-reported prosocial behavior increases. Habituation progression follows three distinct phases external compliance, transitional internalization, and consolidating automaticity suggesting that religious practices progress from

external obligation toward intrinsic motivation and integrated identity over an academic year of consistent practice.

The multidimensional habituation model developed in this research extends social learning and ecological systems theories by demonstrating that religious character development requires simultaneous attention to behavioral mechanisms, meaning-making processes, social modeling, and cross-system alignment between family, school, and community contexts. While this research provides empirically grounded evidence for effective religious habituation in early childhood, longitudinal investigation tracking learners beyond kindergarten and comparative studies across diverse institutional contexts remain necessary to understand long-term character persistence and generalizability. Nevertheless, this study contributes essential knowledge for educators and policymakers regarding evidence-based approaches to religious character development in early childhood education.

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