
The Formation of Islamic Character in Students Through the Habit of Duha Prayer and Quran Recitation at Nurul Islam Islamic Senior High School

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.62824/5wbbkd65>

Received: 1 November 2025

Accepted: 29 November 2025

Published: 2 December 2025

Abstract

Islamic education, within formal educational institutions such as madrasas, plays a crucial role beyond the mere transfer of cognitive knowledge. This education inherently aims to shape complete individuals who are not only intellectually intelligent but also morally and spiritually strong. The primary focus of this effort is the formation of students' Islamic character, grounded in the fundamental values of the Qur'an and Sunnah. This reality emphasizes that the success of Islamic education cannot be measured solely by academic achievement, but also by the integration of religious values into students' daily behavior. This study stems from the need to test the effectiveness of a character education strategy based on the habituation of worship (internalization of values through routine religious practices) in the school environment. Specifically, this study aims to explain in depth how the structured and consistent implementation of the habituation of Duha prayer and Quranic recitation at Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Nurul Islam plays a significant role in shaping and internalizing Islamic character in students. This study firmly confirms that the habituation of Duha prayer and Quran recitation is not merely a supplementary activity, but rather an effective and proven pedagogical strategy in shaping the Islamic character of students in madrasas. This strategy successfully bridges the ritual (worship) and moral (moral) aspects, making madrasas educational centers that produce generations with spiritual and moral integrity. The implication of this study is a recommendation for other Islamic educational institutions to adopt a similar habituation model with full support from the entire school ecosystem.

Keywords: Islamic character, habituation of worship, Duha prayer, tadarus Al-Qur'an, Islamic education.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a fundamental and essential role in determining the direction of civilization and shaping the quality of a nation's human resources. More than simply a process of knowledge transfer, education is a crucial vehicle for shaping the personality and morality of students. Within the context of the national education system, education is directed at developing students' potential to become individuals who believe in and fear God Almighty, possess noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

From an Islamic perspective, the role of education has expanded significantly. Islamic education is not solely oriented toward mastering knowledge, but rather serves as a means to shape the perfect human being (*insan kamil*), namely an individual who achieves a harmonious balance between intellectual intelligence (*al-'aql*), emotional intelligence (*al-nafs*), and spiritual intelligence (*al-ruh*) (Rowikarim, Mansyur, & Natsir, 2021). This concept emphasizes that the ultimate goal of education is the realization of noble morals (*al-akhlaq al-karimah*), which is a manifestation of the integration of knowledge and good deeds. Therefore, Islamic education

inherently places a very high emphasis on the importance of character formation as an integral and inseparable part of the entire educational process (Cahyadi & Della, 2021).

Character formation in Islam, often referred to as Islamic character, refers to a set of values, attitudes, and behaviors derived from and based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah. These values encompass the dimensions of divinity (ilahiyah), humanity (insaniyah), and the universe (kauniyah). The failure of the modern education system, in some respects, is believed to be due to an overemphasis on cognitive aspects, neglecting affective and psychomotor aspects, leading to a moral and character crisis among the younger generation. Therefore, revitalizing character education based on religious values is a necessity.

Madrasah As a formal educational institution based on Islam, the Madrasah has a much greater and more specific responsibility in carrying out this mandate of character formation. Madrasahs are not only places for general and religious studies, but also serve as moral and spiritual laboratories. This responsibility is implemented through efforts to continuously instill religious and ethical values through various applied and habit-forming activities (Alfarisy & Iswandi, 2025). The Madrasah environment must be designed in such a way as to create a conducive ecosystem for the development of positive character.

Building Islamic character requires a systematic, planned, and sustainable approach. The most effective approach is through habituation, the repetition of good practices that gradually foster positive habits until they are internalized and become part of the student's personality. Real-life, routine activities, often referred to as habituation of worship, are a powerful strategy because they link moral and social values with spiritual dimensions. Prayer and Quran recitation are two main pillars of worship in Islam that have significant educational potential.

One approach to habituating worship that is now widely implemented in various madrasahs is through the routine practice of Duha prayer and Quran recitation before the start of core learning activities (Cahyadi & Della, 2021). The habit of congregational Duha prayer, for example, not only functions as a voluntary ritual but also pedagogically serves as a medium to cultivate time discipline, adherence to rules (sharia), and foster a sense of individual responsibility for their spiritual obligations. Meanwhile, Quran recitation (reading and understanding the Quran) collectively instills fundamental values such as honesty (in reading correctly), patience (in learning and repetition), and also fosters social awareness (correcting each other's reading).

While theoretically, this practice of worship is believed to be able to shape character, in-depth empirical studies are needed to explain how implementation mechanisms and supporting factors in the field can effectively produce significant character changes in students. This research focuses on Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Islam, which is known for its consistent implementation of this practice program.

Based on this background, this research is relevant and important to be carried out with the main objective to analyze and explain comprehensively the role and effectiveness of the habit of Duha Prayer and Tadarrus Al-Qur'an in fostering Islamic character values, such as discipline, responsibility, honesty, and social concern, in students at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Islam. The results of this study are expected to provide academic contributions and practical recommendations for the development of character education models based on the habit of worship in other Islamic educational institutions.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type. The qualitative approach was chosen because the researcher aims to understand and interpret social phenomena in depth and holistically, namely the role of habitual worship in the formation of students' Islamic character, in its natural context (natural setting). By using this approach, the researcher

can dig up rich, descriptive, and interpretative data regarding the process, meaning, and perceptions of participants towards the implementation of religious programs at Madrasah Aliyah (MA) Nurul Islam. This type of descriptive research aims to describe, record, analyze, and interpret the current conditions. The main focus of this descriptive research is to comprehensively describe how the routine activities of Duha Prayer and Tadarus Al-Qur'an at MA Nurul Islam are implemented and operate as structured instruments in the formation and strengthening of students' Islamic character values. This research is not oriented towards hypothesis testing, but rather on an in-depth understanding of a specific socio-religious reality. The location of this research is at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Islam, an educational institution chosen based on the consideration that the madrasa has consistently and integratedly implemented a daily habitual worship program. The research subjects (informants) were selected purposively (purposive sampling) to ensure in-depth representation of the parties directly involved and who have a comprehensive understanding of the program.

DISCUSSION

The Concept of Islamic Character Formation from an Educational Perspective

Islamic character is a fundamental construct in Islamic civilization, representing the actual manifestation of deeply internalized faith (iman) and piety (taqwa), then reflected through consistent behavior (akhlak) in daily life. This character, often referred to as al-akhlāq al-karīmah (noble morals), is not an attribute that is formed instantly, but rather is the end product of a systematic social and spiritual engineering process, involving the main pillars of formal education, environmental role models (uswah hasanah), and ongoing behavioral habits (mu'āmalāh) (Langgulong, 2003, p. 150).

Within the philosophical framework of Islamic education, moral formation occupies a central position, identified as the *raison d'être* (core) of all educational activities. This emphasis has strong theological justification, as stated in a hadith of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ: "Indeed, I was sent to perfect noble morals" (Narrated by Malik). This hadith not only confirms his prophetic mission as the perfecter of universal morality, but also implicitly underscores that the ultimate goal of the Islamic message is the formation of *insan kamil* (perfect human beings) who possess impeccable moral integrity. Thus, Islamic education is oriented towards creating students who are able to balance the dimensions of *habluminallah* (vertical relationship with God) and *habluminannas* (horizontal relationship with fellow human beings) through the implementation of Qur'anic ethical values.

Islamic character formation goes beyond simply the cognitive process of teaching ethical values. It is the result of repeated and consistent spiritual training (*riyādhah ruhiyyah*) (al-Ghazālī, 2011, p. 45). This process requires an internal transformation, in which values such as honesty (*shidq*), trustworthiness (*amanah*), justice (*'adalah*), and patience (*shabr*) are elevated from the realm of theoretical understanding to the realm of inner experience and empirical practice. Al-Attas (1995, p. 121) explains that Islam is a process of *ta'dib*, namely education aimed at instilling spiritual, intellectual, and physical discipline, in order to produce civilized human beings (*mutta'addib*).

Furthermore, this character building methodology encompasses three holistic approaches: correction of faith (*ta'qīd*), to ensure the correct basis of belief; purification of the soul (*tazkiyatun nafs*), through worship and *mujahadah*; and social practice (*mu'āsyarah*), which tests and strengthens morals in social interactions (Nizar, 2008, p. 95). Therefore, Islamic character can be defined as the fruit of the harmony between knowledge, deeds, and faith, which collectively produce a person with a complete personality, in accordance with the guidance of sharia and sunnah.

Practicing Duha Prayer as a Means of Character Education

The Dhuha prayer is a sunnah prayer that holds a significant place in the Islamic spiritual tradition. As a sunnah mu'akkadah (recommended sunnah prayer), this practice is not only understood as a ritual activity, but also as an effective medium for moral and character development. From an Islamic educational perspective, ritual worship has a transformative dimension that can transform abstract values into concrete behavior through a process of habituation or *ta'wīd* (Djurnansjah, 2010). In other words, consistent performance of the Dhuha prayer can be a means of character development oriented toward the integration of spiritual, moral, and social values.

The practice of the Dhuha prayer in schools or madrasas is not merely carried out to fulfill Islamic requirements, but rather serves as a vehicle for character building in students through the internalization of the values of discipline, order, perseverance, and sincerity. This process occurs through the repetition of worship behaviors carried out at a specific time, namely the Dhuha prayer time, which requires regular schedules and self-discipline (*nidzām al-waqt*). Furthermore, the value of *istikamah* (*istiqāmah fī al-'ibādah*) also helps shape students' steadfastness in maintaining their spiritual routines. This aspect contributes significantly to the development of a sense of responsibility and personal commitment (Zakaria, 2018).

In a broader context, the Dhuha prayer also strengthens students' spiritual awareness. Through this prayer, students learn to cultivate spiritual sensitivity (*sensitivitas ruhaniyah*), emotional calm (*tuma'ninah*), and gratitude (*syukr*) to Allah SWT as Creator. Various empirical studies have shown that collective prayer activities in schools have a positive impact on the development of discipline, emotional management, and social relationships in students (Hasbullah, 2020). The inner peace achieved after performing this prayer is believed to be an important psychological asset in facing the subsequent learning process.

Furthermore, the practice of the Dhuha prayer also has significant sociological and pedagogical functions. Congregational worship at school strengthens interpersonal relationships between students and teachers. In this regard, teachers no longer serve merely as transmitters of knowledge but also as role models (*uswah ḥasanah*) who demonstrate consistent religious behavior (Al-Attas, 1999). The presence of teachers in collective worship activities is a determining factor in building students' intrinsic spiritual motivation. Through direct involvement, teachers reinforce the meaning of worship as a valuable activity, not simply a formal routine.

This habit of worship can also serve as an integrative medium that balances curricular, co-curricular, and spiritual aspects. Incorporating the Dhuha prayer into the school's routine—either before the start of teaching and learning activities or during a special schedule—can foster a harmonious religious climate. A healthy religious climate has been shown to foster a conducive school culture, improve order, and reduce deviant behavior among students (Siregar, 2021).

Furthermore, collective worship activities such as the Dhuha prayer can also strengthen students' emotional and spiritual intelligence. This intelligence influences resilience, stress management, and ethical decision-making. In modern character education, these aspects are essential competencies for students to face the challenges of the 21st century. Therefore, practicing the Dhuha prayer serves as a holistic and sustainable character-building mechanism.

From an educational psychology perspective, the habituation of religious behaviors such as the Dhuha prayer can be understood through habit formation theory and Bandura's social learning theory. Habituation theory emphasizes that habits are formed through consistent repetition, while Bandura (1986) asserts that individuals learn through observation, imitation, and modeling. When students observe teachers and peers consistently performing religious practices, they are encouraged to do the same. This process then strengthens the internalization of values.

Ultimately, cultivating the habit of Dhuha prayer is not merely a ritual activity, but also an integrative character education strategy. By combining spiritual, moral, psychological, and social aspects, Dhuha prayer can be an effective instrument in developing students with noble character, discipline, high empathy, and profound spiritual awareness. This is highly relevant to the goal of Islamic education, which is to produce complete human beings (*al-insān al-kāmil*) who are able to live according to divine values while simultaneously facing the dynamics of modern life.

Tadarus Al-Qur'an as an Effort to Internalize Islamic Values

Tadarus Al-Qur'an in the context of contemporary Islamic education must be repositioned from merely a reading ritual into a holistic pedagogical activity aimed at internalizing Islamic values comprehensively. Tadarus goes beyond the cognitive dimension (*tilāwah*), encompassing reflective understanding (*tafakkur*) of the meaning of the verses, and most importantly, a concrete effort to actualize the moral message (*risālah akhlāqiyyah*) written in the mushaf (Shihab, 2007, p. 210). Through a planned habituation process (*ta'wīd*) to Tadarus Al-Qur'an, students are not only trained to improve their Qur'anic literacy competency, but also to foster an intrinsic love (*mahabbah*) for the holy book, which then functions as a normative orientation and primary guideline in living daily life (Al-Attas, 1999, p. 125). This activity has been proven to have the capacity to stimulate the development of students' psychological tri-dimensions simultaneously: the spiritual dimension (through closeness to God's Word), the social dimension (through group interaction), and the emotional dimension (through achieving inner peace or *ṭuma'nīnah*).

The implementation of Quranic recitation as a mandatory daily program is an effective strategy in Islamic education management. In institutions such as Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Islam, the recitation activity scheduled every morning before the start of the Teaching and Learning Activities (KBM) serves as a spiritual gateway to academic activities. This timing is very strategic because it creates an intense religious atmosphere (*bī'ah dīniyyah*) in the school environment from the beginning of the day. This atmosphere not only serves as a background but also fosters a spirit of learning rooted in transcendental awareness, where the pursuit of knowledge (*thalab al-ilm*) is seen as an integral part of worship (*'ibādah*) and Islamic responsibility (Langgulong, 2003, p. 155). Thus, epistemological integration occurs, where general knowledge and religious knowledge are united under the umbrella of Islamic values.

Furthermore, congregational Quran recitation (Tadarus Al-Qur'an) has significant sociological value. This activity inherently requires cooperation (*ta'āwun*) and mutual assistance among students, especially when they take turns leading the recitation, listening to, and correcting each other (*tashīh*) the recitation. This interaction strengthens social relationships (*mu'āsyarah*) and instills a sense of collective responsibility. When students interact in an atmosphere focused on the sacred text, they indirectly practice Islamic social values, such as the etiquette of listening, mutual respect, and sharing tasks, so that Tadarus becomes a laboratory for moral practice on a micro-social scale (Nizar, 2008, p. 98). The sustainability of this program ultimately aims to create a school culture where the values of the Quran are not only memorized, but are lived out in every behavior and interaction of school members.

The Synergy of Duha Prayer and Quran Recitation in Character Building

The formation of Islamic character (*al-akhlāq al-karīmah*) in educational institutions requires an integrated and sustainable strategy. One method that has proven effective is through a structured synergy between the Duha prayer and Quranic recitation. This approach is fundamentally different from separate religious rituals, as it focuses on an ideal combination that forms a holistic learning ecosystem (Langgulong, 2003).

The synergy between these two spiritual-educational practices is essential because it reflects the balance between the dimensions of *habluminallah* (vertical/spiritual relationships) and *habluminannas* (horizontal/social relationships), ensuring that the internalization of Qur'anic values is carried out comprehensively and multidimensionally (Langgulung, 2003). This article aims to analyze the synergistic mechanisms of these two practices and their implications for the formation of students' character within the framework of scientific writing.

The synergy of Duha Prayer and Quranic Recitation creates two complementary focuses of character development: individual development through Duha Prayer, and collective/social development through Quranic Recitation. Duha Prayer is an individual worship activity at the beginning of the day, focusing on developing self-discipline and strengthening personal spirituality (*riyāḍah ruḥiyyah*). This practice trains students to manage time effectively, develop consistency (*istimrāh*), and form attitudes of gratitude (*syukr*) and patience (*ṣabr*) through regular behavior. The discipline that is formed into adherence to prayer times and procedures then becomes the cognitive foundation for the formation of discipline in academic aspects, such as adherence to study schedules and completion of academic assignments (Djumrana, 2010).

In contrast to the individual focus of Duha prayer, Quranic recitation serves as a collective instrument for instilling moral and social values. This activity involves interaction, listening, mutual correction, and ensuring collective responsibility (Nizar, 2008). Quranic recitation explicitly instills values such as *ta'āwun* (cooperation), *ṣiddīq* (honesty), *'adālah* (justice), and compassion (*rahmah*). Through the process of reading and discussing the ethical messages contained therein, Quranic recitation develops a strong moral awareness (*al-wa'yu al-khulūqī*), making these values theoretical knowledge and a primary reference in daily decision-making (Nizar, 2008).

The consistent synergy between Duha Prayer and Quranic recitation creates two crucial effects in character education: 1. This synergy ensures that the transfer of values is not merely incidental, but results in solid moral competence. Without consistent habituation, the transfer of values that occurs will be weak and easily disrupted (Langgulung, 2003). This synergy ensures that the resulting character education output is sustainable and internalized. This integration positions Duha Prayer as a practice to train self-discipline, which is then used to support consistency in collective Tadarus activities. 2. The effectiveness of this synergistic habituation model is highly dependent on a supportive educational ecosystem. A crucial factor determining success is the role of teachers and school leaders as role models or *uswah ḥasanah* (Al-Attas, 1995).

If teachers, the principal, and the entire school community demonstrate authentic exemplary behavior in performing the Duha prayer, this can intrinsically boost students' spiritual motivation. This exemplary behavior acts as a vertical motivation for students, triggering the practice of obligations into spiritual aspirations. Conversely, if there is a disconnect between the teachings conveyed (Tadarus) and the behavior demonstrated by educators, the process of internalizing values will be reduced to a ritual formality without achieving maximum depth of meaning and effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

This comprehensive study confirms that the habit of Duha prayer and Quran recitation are effective, proven, and vital pedagogical strategies within the framework of internalizing Islamic character values in students at Madrasah Aliyah Nurul Islam. This reality underscores the crucial role of Islamic education, which goes beyond the cognitive dimension (transfer of knowledge), towards the formation of a complete person—a complete person who achieves a harmonious balance between intellectual, emotional, and spiritual intelligence (Rowikarim, Mansyur, & Natsir, 2021). The success of Islamic educational institutions, especially madrasas,

can no longer be measured solely by academic achievement, but by the extent to which the fundamental values of the Quran and As-Sunnah are successfully integrated and manifested in students' daily behavior (al-akhlāq al-karīmah).

The synergy between these two worship practices produces a complementary character-building model. Duha prayer serves as the primary instrument in fostering the dimensions of personal discipline and vertical spirituality (habluminallah). Through adherence to the times and procedures of worship (sharia), students are trained to develop self-discipline and istiqāmah (consistency), which then become the psychological foundation for developing a disciplined character in all academic and social activities (Djumransjah, 2010, p. 90). Furthermore, Duha prayer instills ṭuma'nīnah (inner peace), which is an essential emotional capital to facilitate a focused and effective learning process.

Meanwhile, Tadarus Al-Qur'an serves as a mechanism for instilling moral and social values oriented towards the horizontal dimension (habluminannas). This collective activity not only improves Qur'anic literacy (tilāwah), but also facilitates reflective understanding (tafakkur) of ethical messages, which trains students to develop moral awareness (al-wa'yu al-khuluqī) based on the sacred text. Furthermore, the implementation of Tadarus in congregation functions as a laboratory for social practice on a micro scale, fostering collective values such as ta'āwun (cooperation), gotong royong (mutual assistance), and mu'āsarah (good social relations) through mutual correction and listening interactions (Nizar, 2008, p. 98). This strategy effectively creates a religious school culture (bī'ah dīniyyah) where the pursuit of knowledge is seen as 'ibādah, thereby fostering a spirit of learning based on transcendental values.

The conclusion of this study firmly emphasizes that the sustainability and success of this synergistic model are highly dependent on external systemic factors, especially authentic role models from all elements of the school. The role of teachers and madrasah principals as good role models is a determining independent variable, because riyādhah ruhiyyah (spiritual practice) in students will only transform into intrinsic moral aspirations if supported by consistent behavior and moral commitment from educators (Al-Attas, 1995, p. 130). If there is a discrepancy between religious practices and teacher behavior, the character building program risks being relegated to mere formality.

The theoretical implication of this research is to enrich the treasure trove of character education methodologies based on habituation of worship, proving that routine religious practices can bridge the gap between ritual aspects (worship) and behavioral aspects (morals). The practical implication is a strong recommendation for other Islamic educational institutions to adopt and integrate this model of habituation of Duha Prayer and Tadarus Al-Qur'an in a structured manner, supported by a commitment of moral leadership from the entire madrasah ecosystem, in order to produce the next generation with strong spiritual and moral integrity.

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