Edukasi Islami: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam, VOL: 14/No: 02 **P-ISSN: 2252-8970**
DOI: 10.30868/ei.v14i02.10898 **E-ISSN: 2581-1754**

Date Received	**:**	**May 2025**
Date Revised	**:**	**May 2025**
Date Accepted	**:**	**May 2025**
Date Published	**:**	**May 2025**

ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LEARNING MANAGEMENT FOR BUILDING RELIGIOUS CULTURE: A MULTI-CASE STUDY IN METRO, INDONESIA

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Kata Kunci:
Pendidikan Agama Islam; Manajemen Pembelajaran; Budaya Religius; Budaya Sekolah; Studi Multikasus

ABSTRAK

Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) di sekolah menengah atas diharapkan tidak hanya mentransmisikan pengetahuan keagamaan, tetapi juga membentuk perilaku sehari-hari dan budaya religius. Disertasi yang menjadi dasar artikel ini menemukan persoalan praktis: keterbatasan waktu pembelajaran dan partisipasi yang belum merata dapat melemahkan penerjemahan nilai PAI ke dalam rutinitas sekolah. Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana perencanaan, pengorganisasian, pelaksanaan, dan evaluasi manajemen pembelajaran PAI mendukung budaya religius di SMAN 1 Metro dan SMAN 2 Metro, Indonesia. Penelitian menggunakan desain kualitatif deskriptif, berorientasi ex-post-facto, dengan studi multikasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan kepala sekolah, wakil kepala sekolah, guru PAI, guru BK, guru lain, tenaga kependidikan, dan siswa. Data dianalisis dalam kasus dan lintas kasus melalui reduksi, penyajian, perbandingan, verifikasi, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Temuan menunjukkan kedua sekolah mengintegrasikan PAI dengan pembiasaan, keteladanan, kegiatan ekstrakurikuler, keterlibatan teman sebaya, dan pengawasan. SMAN 1 menekankan praktik 3S, literasi dan hafalan Al-Qur'an, salat berjamaah, serta kontrol sebaya, sedangkan SMAN 2 melembagakan praktik 5S, komitmen tertulis siswa-orang tua, program keagamaan, dan kolaborasi lintas personel. Budaya religius efektif tumbuh ketika PAI dikelola sebagai proses seluruh sekolah, bukan hanya mata pelajaran. Sekolah perlu memperkuat perencanaan, keterlibatan keluarga, sumber belajar, kreativitas guru, dan evaluasi sistematis untuk mempertahankan praktik keagamaan yang inklusif.

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Keywords:
Islamic Religious Education; Learning Management; Religious Culture; School Culture; Multi-Case Study

ABSTRACTS

Islamic Religious Education (IRE) in senior high schools is expected not only to transmit religious knowledge but also to shape daily conduct and religious culture. The dissertation underlying this article identified a practical problem: limited classroom time and uneven participation can weaken the translation of IRE values into school routines. This study examines how planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation of IRE learning management support religious culture at SMAN 1 Metro and SMAN 2 Metro, Indonesia. The study used a qualitative descriptive, ex-post-facto-oriented multi-case design. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving principals, vice principals, IRE teachers, counseling teachers, teachers, staff, and students. Data were analyzed within and across cases through reduction, display, comparison, verification, and conclusion drawing. Findings show that both schools integrate IRE with habituation, role modeling, extracurricular activities, peer involvement, and monitoring. SMAN 1 emphasizes 3S practices, Qur'anic literacy and memorization, congregational prayer, and peer control, whereas SMAN 2 institutionalizes 5S practices, written student-parent commitments, religious programs, and cross-staff collaboration. Effective religious culture emerges when IRE is managed as a whole-school process rather than a classroom subject alone. Schools should strengthen planning, family engagement, learning resources, teacher creativity, and systematic evaluation to sustain inclusive religious practices.

A. INTRODUCTION

Islamic Religious Education (IRE, Pendidikan Agama Islam/PAI) occupies a strategic position in Indonesian secondary schooling because its educational mandate extends beyond cognitive mastery toward faith, ethical conduct, responsibility, and the ability to live constructively with others. The dissertation on which this article is based starts from the same concern: formal instruction can provide religious concepts, yet the educational objective is incomplete when those concepts do not become observable habits in the daily life of a school. Recent studies similarly frame IRE as a formative process in which learning design, teacher example, institutional routines, and the wider school environment jointly influence religious character. Research in public senior high schools in Bandung found that IRE learning management becomes more effective when planning, implementation, school policy, parent communication, and the use of learning resources work together (Muhtarom et al., 2021). Related studies emphasize that religious character is strengthened when religious education is linked to habituation and exemplary conduct rather than treated only as classroom content (Jauhari, 2022; Munawir et al., 2024).

The concept of religious culture is therefore useful for examining how religious values move from lessons into shared institutional practice. A religious culture can be understood as a pattern of values, meanings, routines, symbols, and interactions that school members repeatedly enact until they become part of the school's everyday identity. Haq et al. (2024) show that religious culture in plural educational settings can combine worship routines, Qur'anic practices, discipline, tolerance, and social respect. Rachman (2022) places religious culture within curriculum development and character formation. Empirical work in state Islamic senior high schools likewise shows that a religious culture is sustained through repeated programs, visible norms, and the participation of school communities rather than through isolated ceremonial activities

(Jumahir et al., 2023). More recently, Azizah et al. (2025) reported that religious atmosphere, teacher modeling, habituation, and innovative extracurricular programs can simultaneously support religious character and IRE learning outcomes. These studies suggest that the unit of analysis should be broader than a single lesson: management must connect classroom learning with the organization of school life.

Habituation is one of the mechanisms through which that connection becomes visible. Congregational prayer, greetings, Qur'anic reading, daily prayer, discipline, and polite interaction are recurrent examples in the literature. Achadah and Faizah (2021) found that the culture of congregational prayer can reinforce discipline, tolerance, and togetherness. Muhammad and Septiawan (2021) showed that repeated Islamic educational routines can support orderly behavior, greetings, prayer, memorization, and worship discipline. Yusuf et al. (2022) identified a relationship between Dhuha prayer and istighosah activities and students' religious character, while Febriyanti and Supriyadi (2023) documented a set of school habituations ranging from prayers before learning to congregational worship and Qur'anic memorization. At the senior high school level, Ma'arif et al. (2024) describe habituation as a process that moves through moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. Taken together, these findings provide a contemporary basis for interpreting the routines observed at SMAN 1 Metro and SMAN 2 Metro as a managed educational process rather than as incidental devotional activity.

However, habituation does not sustain itself automatically. It requires leadership, division of responsibility, monitoring, and a shared sense of ownership. Sumiran et al. (2022) show that school leaders shape culture through their roles, actions, personal qualities, and control functions. Suryana et al. (2023) similarly find that character-strengthening programs depend on planning, implementation, school-community involvement, and attention to obstacles. In the field of IRE, Syukur et al. (2023) demonstrate that learning management must connect objectives, learning experiences, and the characteristics of learners, while Solihah et al. (2024) emphasize that teachers' active modeling and habituation remain central to religious character education. These findings are consistent with the dissertation's managerial focus on planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation. They also indicate why the roles of principals, vice principals, IRE teachers, counseling teachers, other teachers, administrative personnel, and students need to be read as an interdependent management system.

The policy and curriculum environment creates an additional layer. The dissertation was completed while Indonesian schools were adapting to curriculum changes and to a growing expectation that character formation be integrated across curricular and extracurricular experiences. Azhar (2022) argues that an IRE curriculum oriented toward religious culture should condition the school atmosphere through values, leadership example, religious activities, and character development. Ruswandi et al. (2023) similarly describe school-culture-based integration as a systematic bridge between IRE and character education. Studies of the Independent Curriculum report that greater flexibility can strengthen contextual learning but also places substantial responsibility on teachers to plan strategies, methods, media, and assessment appropriately (Qur'ani et al., 2023; Romdhoni et al., 2023). A multisite study by Yani et al. (2025) confirms that planning, implementation, and evaluation remain core dimensions of IRE and character education under the Merdeka Curriculum. Thus,

examining school-level management functions remains relevant even when curriculum policy changes.

Religious culture is also relational. Peers, families, and the social environment can reinforce or weaken what schools seek to develop. Abidin et al. (2022) found that peer groups can be deliberately empowered to support religious culture among high-school students, which is particularly relevant to the use of student organizations and peer monitoring in the two Metro schools. Haidir et al. (2023) and Siregar et al. (2023) both report that family religious education and school religious culture are associated with students' religious discipline or observance, underscoring the importance of continuity between school and home. At the same time, values education in a plural society must remain inclusive. Hidayatulloh et al. (2024) argue for values-based Islamic education that connects religious commitments with wider ethical and social values, while Mukhtar et al. (2024) show that IRE can contribute to honesty, discipline, responsibility, and politeness through interaction between learning and social institutions. This perspective is important in the present study because the two public schools include students from varied religious and ethnic backgrounds, and the dissertation records practices of mutual respect for students of different faiths.

Existing scholarship therefore provides strong evidence on religious habituation, character formation, school leadership, curriculum integration, and family or peer support. Yet much of that literature examines a single program, one school, or one dimension of religious character. Studies that explicitly compare how the four management functions operate across two public senior high schools and how those functions are translated into school-wide religious culture remain less common. Character education studies in pesantren and other Islamic institutions show the value of integrated learning and institution-wide practice (Miftahuddin et al., 2024), while research in general schools confirms the contribution of IRE to students' character formation (Maulana & Purba, 2024). Ilham et al. (2024) further demonstrate the potential of integrating Islamic education with other subjects and extracurricular activities, and Sarip et al. (2023) highlight management based on religious culture as a pathway for moral development. Building on this literature and on the dissertation's cross-case evidence, this article asks: How are planning, organizing, implementation, and evaluation of IRE learning management carried out at SMAN 1 Metro and SMAN 2 Metro, and how do these management functions contribute to the creation of religious culture? The study aims to describe the distinctive practices of each school, identify their shared managerial pattern, analyze constraints and responses, and formulate implications for public secondary schools seeking to make IRE values part of everyday institutional life.

B. METHOD

This study used a qualitative descriptive approach with an ex-post-facto orientation and a multi-case study design. The source dissertation explains that the inquiry was intended to obtain an in-depth and holistic account of Islamic Religious Education learning management as a means of creating religious culture at SMAN 1 Metro and SMAN 2 Metro. The two sites were selected because they are public senior high schools with different institutional characteristics, regulations, and activities, while both serve academically competitive student populations in Metro City. The dissertation also notes diversity in students' religious and ethnic backgrounds. The

multi-case design was therefore used not to generalize statistically, but to compare patterns, meanings, and management processes across two bounded school settings.

The researcher served as the primary research instrument. Sources of information were selected purposively and included school principals, vice principals, IRE teachers, counseling teachers, other teachers, education personnel, students, and other members of the school community as needed by the research focus. This configuration allowed the study to examine management from multiple organizational positions: policy and direction from school leadership, curricular coordination, IRE teaching practice, counseling and student discipline, administrative support, and student participation. The dissertation describes a funnel-like sampling process in which information was initially gathered broadly and was progressively narrowed and sharpened around the research focus.

Data collection combined observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was used to verify whether reported practices were visible in the natural school setting. The researcher observed school routines and religious activities, including interactions at the school gate, classroom practices, and worship-related activities. The methodological chapter refers to both participant and non-participant forms of observation and explains that, in practice, the researcher used direct field observation in the two schools, sometimes openly and, where appropriate, less intrusively. Interviews were largely unstructured or in-depth but remained guided by the research focus. They were used to obtain participants' explanations of the development of religious culture, the implementation pattern of IRE learning management, its implications, constraints, and responses. Documentary data included photographs, school archives, written rules, wall messages, field notes, and other records related to IRE management and religious culture.

Analysis was conducted in two levels. First, each school was analyzed as an individual case. Interview, observation, and documentary data were organized, reduced, displayed in narrative or categorical form, and interpreted through an iterative process of conclusion drawing and verification. Second, the findings from the two cases were compared and integrated through cross-case analysis. The dissertation adapts this stage from a multi-case logic in which concepts and propositions from each site are compared, revised against the evidence, and combined until a sufficiently stable cross-case explanation is obtained. The analytic process was inductive and continued alongside verification of field evidence rather than being treated as a one-time activity after data collection.

Trustworthiness was addressed through the use of multiple data sources and techniques, repeated verification of provisional conclusions, and the dissertation's dependability and confirmability procedures. The combination of interviews, observation, and documentation enabled claims made by participants to be checked against practices and records. For example, reported religious routines were examined through direct observation rather than accepted solely as interview statements. The study's evidentiary logic therefore rests on convergence among sources and on comparison between the two sites. Because the design is qualitative and context-bound, the findings are intended as an analytic account of how management functions operate in these two schools, not as a statistical estimate for all Indonesian senior high schools.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

The cross-case evidence shows that religious culture at both schools was produced through a management cycle that linked formal IRE learning to institutional routines. The four management functions were visible, but they did not operate as separate administrative steps. Planning established religious and character priorities; organizing distributed responsibility; implementation converted plans into repeated practices; and evaluation created feedback through teacher duty, student participation, meetings, and monitoring. The result was a whole-school pattern in which IRE teachers remained important but were not the only actors responsible for religious culture.

Planning: From Classroom Objectives to School Programs

Planning at SMAN 1 Metro was closely connected to the school's aspiration to strengthen students' morals and religious conduct. Before a new academic year, school leaders and curriculum personnel prepared programs that included Qur'anic memorization, congregational prayer, respectful interaction, and activities outside regular lesson hours. The dissertation reports that additional time for IRE-related activities and supporting facilities were considered as part of this preparation. Planning was therefore not limited to preparing a classroom lesson plan; it also involved aligning religious activities with the school vision and strategic direction. A distinctive practice at this site was the emphasis on Qur'anic literacy and memorization, including a special orientation toward students with memorization achievements. The management logic was to create continuity between what students learned in IRE and what they repeatedly practiced in the school environment.

Planning at SMAN 2 Metro followed a similar whole-school logic but placed greater emphasis on formal institutionalization. Programs for religious culture were discussed with school components and connected to the school's rules, student orientation, and routine activities. New students were introduced to expected conduct, and the school used a written guide and a commitment signed by students and parents. The agreement communicated that religious culture and school discipline were not optional extracurricular preferences but part of the behavioral framework of the institution. The involvement of parents at the point of entry also gave the school a formal mechanism for communicating expectations beyond the campus. Across the two cases, planning can therefore be characterized as value-based program planning: desired religious and ethical behaviors were translated into schedules, routines, rules, activities, and resource needs.

Organizing: Distributed Responsibility for Religious Culture

Organizing involved a distributed structure rather than delegation to the IRE teacher alone. At both schools, principals provided direction and legitimacy; vice principals coordinated curriculum, student affairs, and other operational areas; IRE teachers functioned as the leading educational actors for religious content and activities; counseling teachers contributed to student guidance and discipline; other teachers provided modeling and supervision; administrative personnel supported implementation; and students, particularly those involved in the student organization, participated in peer-level reinforcement. This distribution of roles addressed a practical limitation identified in the dissertation: IRE classroom time was insufficient to carry the entire burden of religious character formation. By involving multiple school actors,

religious learning was extended into arrival routines, extracurricular activities, worship practices, school events, and informal interactions.

The organizing pattern was especially visible in mechanisms of shared responsibility. At SMAN 1 Metro, student organization representatives were encouraged to become examples for peers and to help monitor classroom religious routines. Teachers at the school gate welcomed students, exchanged handshakes, and simultaneously observed discipline and student attributes. At SMAN 2 Metro, guidance and counseling personnel kept records associated with student commitments, while school leaders and curriculum personnel involved teachers and student representatives in discussions of religious programs. These arrangements created vertical coordination between leadership and staff and horizontal coordination among teachers, students, and school units. The dissertation's findings indicate that the success of religious culture depended on this sense that the program belonged to the school community rather than to a single subject teacher.

Implementation: Habituation, Religious Practice, and School Identity

Implementation at SMAN 1 Metro took the form of recurring religious and ethical habits. The dissertation records the culture of 3S - smile, greeting, and salutation - along with the routine language of asking permission, apologizing, and expressing thanks. Religious practices included Qur'anic reading and writing, Qur'anic memorization, Dhuha prayer, congregational Dhuhr prayer, istighasah and joint prayer, commemoration of Islamic holidays, short-term Ramadan religious programs, tadarus, prayer before and after lessons, and handshaking among school members. These practices combined ritual, literacy, interpersonal etiquette, and school identity. Importantly, they were introduced from student orientation and continued across grade levels, making repetition a deliberate strategy for turning prescribed values into familiar conduct.

SMAN 2 Metro displayed a comparable but somewhat more formally codified pattern. The dissertation identifies the 5S culture - smile, greeting, salutation, politeness, and courtesy - together with Qur'anic literacy, Dhuha prayer, congregational Dhuhr and Asr prayers, imtaq activities, Islamic holiday programs, istighasah, joint prayer, Qur'anic recitation activities, and Ramadan programs. Muslim dress was also described as part of the visible religious environment. During Islamic holidays, the school organized activities such as Qur'anic recitation arts, religious quizzes, prayer practice, and other student programs. A notable feature was the integration of religious expectations into written school rules and the student-parent commitment. This formalization complemented teacher example and repeated practice.

The two cases also show that religious culture was not interpreted as permission to disregard religious diversity. The dissertation records that students of different faiths were respected and, during religious learning, could receive instruction appropriate to their own religion. Participants described mutual respect during Ramadan and other religious activities. This finding is significant because the study sites are public schools rather than religiously homogeneous madrasas. The managerial challenge was therefore to make Islamic religious learning meaningful for Muslim students while maintaining respectful coexistence within the wider school community. In practice, this was reflected in norms of courtesy, discipline, respect, and non-interference in other students' beliefs.

Control and Evaluation: Layered Monitoring and Feedback

Control and evaluation operated through layered, routine mechanisms. At SMAN 1 Metro, peer monitoring by student organization members was combined with adult supervision. Teachers on duty were present when students arrived, and school leaders used meetings and periodic evaluations to assess whether programs were functioning. The dissertation describes evaluations that could occur weekly, at the end of a month, in the middle or at the end of the academic year, as well as ad hoc meetings when problems required immediate attention. This indicates that evaluation was both scheduled and responsive. It covered religious culture as part of the school's wider program, not as an isolated evaluation domain.

At SMAN 2 Metro, control was reinforced by written rules, counseling records, teacher supervision, leadership direction, and regular communication. The principal used meetings and motivational direction to encourage staff participation in imtaq and other religious activities. Teachers and school leaders monitored participation in congregational prayer, prayer before learning, Qur'anic activities, and other programs. Student attitudes were reported as generally positive, but not uniform. Some students participated enthusiastically and consistently, while a smaller group arrived late or required additional guidance and motivation. The evidence therefore does not support a claim that religious culture produced identical responses in all students; rather, it shows a managed environment in which participation was encouraged, observed, and corrected when necessary.

Constraints and Managerial Responses

Several constraints emerged across the cases. At SMAN 1 Metro, participants identified variation in student motivation, insufficient supporting facilities, a prayer space that could not accommodate all students, and limited family attention to religious habituation outside school. At SMAN 2 Metro, the most explicit constraint was the limited allocation of IRE instruction, described in the dissertation as two lesson hours per week. Participants also mentioned limited IRE modules, uneven participation among some teachers and students, and insufficient parental reinforcement of worship and religious habits at home. These constraints reveal a structural tension: schools expect IRE to contribute to lasting character and culture, yet formal instructional time and material resources are finite and students spend substantial time outside school.

The responses to these constraints were collaborative rather than purely instructional. School leaders encouraged other Muslim teachers to participate in religious programs so that IRE teachers were not working alone. Staff sought to optimize existing facilities, expand extracurricular activities, motivate students, and propose support for worship facilities and IRE learning materials through relevant institutions and partners. At SMAN 2 Metro, leadership also discussed partnerships for providing learning modules. These responses show that problem solving was treated as a management issue involving people, resources, networks, and scheduling. The central cross-case finding is thus not merely that both schools had religious activities, but that those activities were planned, assigned, routinized, monitored, and revised through an organizational process.

Cross-Case Pattern

Across cases, the most consistent mechanism was the combination of habituation and role modeling. School leaders and teachers were expected to demonstrate the conduct they asked students to practice, while students were given opportunities to reinforce the same conduct among peers. Religious culture was therefore built through repeated exposure to a coherent set of expectations in several settings: the gate, classroom, prayer space, extracurricular program, student orientation, school meeting, and religious event. The evidence suggests that this ecological repetition is what allowed IRE learning management to extend beyond the cognitive domain. The dissertation's stated novelty - that religious culture can be created through the implementation of IRE learning management - is supported in these cases when implementation is understood as a whole-school cycle rather than only the management of lesson delivery.

Table 1. Cross-case synthesis of IRE learning management and religious culture

Dimension	SMAN 1 Metro	SMAN 2 Metro
Planning	Strategic preparation for moral and religious development; extra IRE-related activities; Qur'anic literacy/memorization; congregational prayer; supporting facilities.	Programs discussed across school components; religious culture linked to orientation, school rules, written guidance, and student-parent commitment.
Organizing	Principal, vice principals, IRE and counseling teachers, other teachers, staff, and student organization share roles; peer monitoring is used.	Leadership, curriculum/student-affairs units, IRE and counseling teachers, other staff, and student representatives coordinate programs and records.
Implementation	3S; permission-apology-thanks routines; Qur'anic reading/writing and memorization; Dhuha/Dhuhr prayer; tadarus; istighasah; PHBI; Ramadan programs; handshakes.	5S; Muslim dress; Qur'anic literacy; Dhuha, Dhuhr and Asr prayers; imtaq; PHBI; istighasah; Qur'anic arts/competitions; Ramadan programs.
Control/Evaluation	Teacher gate duty, OSIS/class peer control, periodic meetings and evaluations, plus ad hoc review when problems arise.	Written rules, counseling records, teacher supervision, leadership direction, meetings, and participation monitoring.
Main constraints	Variation in student motivation; limited supporting facilities and prayer-space capacity; weak family habituation.	Two IRE lesson hours per week; limited modules; uneven participation; limited parental reinforcement at home.
Responses	Broaden teacher involvement, motivate students, optimize	Cross-teacher collaboration, extracurricular extension,

facilities, and seek institutional support for worship/learning resources.	partnerships/resource proposals, learning-module support, and regular motivation.

Source: Synthesized from cross-case findings of the dissertation field data (2024).

Discussion

The findings extend recent discussions of IRE by showing that the decisive management unit is the school ecology, not the classroom in isolation. Muhtarom et al. (2021) reported that IRE learning management for religious character depends on strategic planning, school policy, teacher competence, parent communication, and supporting resources. The two Metro cases show a comparable pattern, but add a cross-case explanation of how those elements are connected through four management functions. Planning translates religious and character goals into programs and routines; organizing distributes responsibility; implementation embeds values in daily practice; and evaluation creates corrective feedback. This supports the argument that school culture should be treated as an educational infrastructure through which curricular values are enacted (Sumiran et al., 2022; Ruswandi et al., 2023).

The planning findings are also relevant to contemporary curriculum implementation. At both sites, school actors did more than schedule IRE classes: they planned additional activities, student orientation, religious routines, responsibilities, and, in SMAN 2 Metro, written commitments. Such arrangements are compatible with Azhar's (2022) view that religious culture can be developed through curriculum orientation, leadership example, a religious atmosphere, and ritual practice. They also resonate with evidence that flexible curriculum implementation requires teachers and schools to make deliberate choices about learning strategies, media, assessment, and contextualization (Qur'ani et al., 2023; Romdhoni et al., 2023). Yani et al. (2025), in another multisite senior-high-school study, similarly identify planning, implementation, and evaluation as central to IRE and character education. The contribution of the present cases is to show that those curriculum functions gain cultural force when they are extended to school rules, extracurricular programs, and repeated interpersonal routines.

Habituation explains how planned values become observable practices, but the findings suggest that repetition works best when paired with meaning, example, and social reinforcement. The 3S and 5S cultures, Qur'anic literacy, prayer, tadarus, and prayers before or after learning parallel patterns reported in previous studies. Congregational prayer has been associated with discipline and togetherness (Achadah & Faizah, 2021), while school habituation has been found to support greetings, prayer, memorization, worship discipline, and other prosocial behaviors (Muhammad & Septiawan, 2021). Yusuf et al. (2022) similarly link recurring Dhuha and istighosah activities with religious character, and Febriyanti and Supriyadi (2023) identify multiple religious routines as a pathway for character formation. The Metro evidence adds an organizational dimension: habituation was sustained by schedules, staff roles, peer monitoring, facilities, orientation, and evaluation. In this sense, habituation is not simply a pedagogical technique; it is an institutional routine that must be managed.

Role modeling provided the second mechanism. Participants repeatedly emphasized that principals, teachers, staff, and student leaders should practice the

conduct expected of students. This is consistent with Solihah et al. (2024), who highlight teacher participation in habituation, and with Ma'arif et al. (2024), who describe character internalization as progressing from knowledge and feeling toward action. The findings also complement Maulana and Purba (2024) and Munawir et al. (2024), both of whom place IRE learning within broader character development. In the two cases, modeling reduced the distance between formal instruction and social experience: students encountered religious and ethical expectations in the behavior of adults at the gate, in classrooms, in worship, and during extracurricular activities. Repetition by credible social models likely helped stabilize school norms, although the qualitative design does not allow the size of that effect to be measured.

Distributed responsibility was particularly important because the dissertation repeatedly identifies limited IRE lesson time. When principals, vice principals, counseling teachers, other teachers, administrative personnel, and students joined the process, religious culture became less dependent on the availability of the IRE teacher. This finding aligns with Suryana et al. (2023), whose study of habituation-based character development emphasizes the participation of teachers, institutions, school boards, and parents, and with Syukur et al. (2023), who describe IRE learning management as a coordinated design rather than a single teaching technique. Ilham et al. (2024) further show that integration across subjects and extracurricular activities can support character formation. The implication is that schools facing limited instructional hours can extend educational exposure through coordinated routines, provided that such extension remains educationally meaningful and does not become mere compliance.

Peer involvement is another distinctive feature of the cross-case pattern. At SMAN 1 Metro, student organization members were positioned as examples and peer monitors, while orientation activities helped introduce norms to new students. This is consistent with Abidin et al. (2022), who argue that peer groups can be optimized to develop religious culture among senior-high-school students. Peer participation potentially increases the density of reinforcement because norms are communicated not only from adults to students but also among students themselves. Yet peer control requires careful supervision: the purpose should be mutual encouragement and exemplary behavior rather than punitive surveillance. The dissertation's evidence is strongest when peer involvement operates alongside teacher guidance, counseling, and formal school evaluation.

Leadership provides the coordinating frame for all of these mechanisms. The principals in both sites legitimized programs, encouraged staff, involved school components in planning, and used meetings to review implementation. This corresponds with Sumiran et al. (2022), who locate school culture within the principal's roles, actions, characteristics, and control, and with Jumahir et al. (2023), who show that religious culture is maintained through institutional strategies and community participation. Sarip et al. (2023) similarly connect character education management based on religious culture with student moral development. The present study adds that leadership effectiveness is visible not only in initiating programs but also in distributing ownership. A religious culture becomes more resilient when teachers and students perceive the program as shared work rather than an instruction issued by one authority figure.

The findings on family support show the boundary of school management. Both cases reported that religious habits at school could be weakened when family monitoring and habituation were limited. Haidir et al. (2023) found that both family Islamic religious education and school religious culture contribute to religious discipline, while Siregar et al. (2023) reported a joint relationship between family religious education, school religious culture, and religious observance. SMAN 2 Metro's student-parent commitment can be interpreted as one attempt to bridge this boundary by making parents aware of school expectations from the beginning. Nevertheless, a signed document cannot substitute for sustained home-school communication. A stronger model would combine initial commitments with periodic communication, constructive feedback, and family-oriented guidance that respects differences in household circumstances.

The plural public-school context also requires attention. The dissertation records respect for non-Muslim students and provision of religion-appropriate instruction, indicating that religious culture was not intended to erase religious difference. This is compatible with the values-based perspective of Hidayatulloh et al. (2024), which links Islamic education to broader ethical and social values, and with Mukhtar et al. (2024), who show that IRE can cultivate honesty, discipline, responsibility, and politeness as socially meaningful outcomes. Miftahuddin et al. (2024) demonstrate the strength of institution-wide Islamic character models in an Islamic boarding-school setting; the Metro cases extend the conversation by showing how a religious culture is negotiated in public schools where the population is more religiously diverse. The managerial principle is important: programs should deepen Muslim students' religious practice while maintaining respect, fairness, and educational space for students of other faiths.

Finally, the constraints caution against equating the existence of religious activities with complete success. Student responses were reported as varied; facilities and modules were sometimes insufficient; instructional time was limited; and family reinforcement was uneven. These findings agree with the broader literature that character formation is a long-term process requiring consistency across contexts. The contribution of the two cases lies in showing how schools respond through collaboration, resource mobilization, extracurricular extension, and periodic evaluation. The model that emerges can be summarized as managed religious acculturation: values are first agreed and planned, responsibilities are distributed, practices are repeated and modeled across settings, participation is monitored, and problems are fed back into planning. This model is consistent with contemporary evidence on school culture, habituation, and integrated IRE, but it remains context-sensitive and should be adapted rather than mechanically replicated.

CONCLUSION

This multi-case study concludes that Islamic Religious Education learning management contributes to religious culture when management is expanded from lesson administration into a coordinated whole-school process. In planning, SMAN 1 Metro and SMAN 2 Metro translated religious and character goals into programs, routines, additional activities, rules, and resource needs. In organizing, responsibility was shared among principals, vice principals, IRE teachers, counseling teachers, other teachers, staff, and students. In implementation, religious culture became visible through repeated practices such as greetings and courteous interaction, Qur'anic

literacy and memorization, prayer, tadarus, imtaq, Islamic holiday programs, and other curricular or extracurricular activities. In control and evaluation, the schools combined teacher duty, student participation, written rules or records, meetings, and periodic review.

The cross-case pattern indicates that habituation is most effective when supported by role modeling, distributed leadership, student participation, and continuous evaluation. At the same time, limited IRE lesson hours, learning resources, facilities, uneven student or staff participation, and weak continuity between school and home remain important constraints. The findings therefore support the dissertation's central proposition that religious culture can be created through the implementation of IRE learning management, while refining that proposition: the effect depends on how consistently management connects learning, organization, relationships, and daily routines.

Schools are recommended to strengthen collaborative annual planning, clarify roles across school units, expand meaningful IRE-related activities beyond limited classroom hours, improve prayer and learning facilities, develop adequate modules, and use evaluation results to revise programs. Principals should maintain visible commitment and model expected conduct; IRE teachers should collaborate with other teachers rather than carry the program alone; student organizations should be guided to provide positive peer support; and families should be engaged through regular communication rather than only formal agreements. Future research should test the model in more diverse public schools, examine student perspectives more deeply, and combine qualitative evidence with measurable indicators of religious character, participation, and school climate.

Acknowledgments: The author would like to thanks to the principals, vice principals, IRE teachers, counseling teachers, staff, students, and other school members at SMAN 1 Metro and SMAN 2 Metro who supported the field research.
Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest related to the preparation of this article.
Author contributions: Ririn Widyaningrum carried out the conceptualization, field investigation, data analysis, interpretation, and preparation of the article from the dissertation research.
Funding: Funding information was not specified in the dissertation materials and should be confirmed by the author before submission.
Data availability: The qualitative data consist of interview, observation, and documentary records from the two research sites. Access is subject to author, institutional, and participant permissions.
Disclaimer: The interpretations and conclusions in this article are those of the author and do not represent an official position of the affiliated institution or the participating schools.

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