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AN INTEGRATED MODEL OF AKHLAK FORMATION: A CASE STUDY OF SD MUHAMMADIYAH 6 PEKANBARU

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ABSTRAK

Penurunan karakter di kalangan generasi muda Indonesia memunculkan pertanyaan tentang bagaimana sekolah menumbuhkan akhlak mulia. Penelitian ini mendeskripsikan model pembentukan akhlak yang dijalankan di SD Muhammadiyah 6 Pekanbaru dan menelaah bagaimana informan mengaitkannya dengan perilaku keseharian murid. Dengan desain studi kasus kualitatif tunggal, penulis pertama melakukan kerja lapangan sekitar sepuluh minggu melalui wawancara dengan delapan informan, observasi partisipan, dan dokumentasi, lalu menganalisis data memakai model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña. Enam komponen yang ditetapkan sebelum turun lapangan dipakai sebagai kategori analisis: pembiasaan keagamaan, keteladanan guru dan tenaga kependidikan, penyisipan nilai ke dalam pembelajaran, budaya kolektif sekolah, penguatan lewat ekstrakurikuler, dan pemantauan berkesinambungan. Observasi dan dokumen mencatat praktik-praktik itu sebagai kegiatan rutin sekolah, dan dua informan menguraikan empat keterkaitan langsung di antaranya. Pada tiga dimensi perilaku yang ditetapkan sebelumnya (spiritual, moral-pribadi, dan sosial), informan menggambarkan perbaikan dalam disiplin, tanggung jawab, dan kesantunan, sedangkan ibadah rutin tampak terutama sebagai keikutsertaan dalam jadwal yang diarahkan guru. Klaim perubahan itu hanya bertumpu pada wawancara, dan tanpa data awal maupun longitudinal, penelitian ini menunjukkan perbaikan perilaku yang dilaporkan dan pola yang mulai tampak, bukan akhlak yang terinternalisasi dan bertahan. Dibaca lewat Al-Ghazali dan Ibn Miskawayh, keenam komponen itu mengisyaratkan bahwa sekolah perlu menyediakan praktik berulang, lingkungan yang mendukung, dan pertanggungjawaban. Pembacaan ini membedakan perilaku yang ditegakkan orang dewasa dari watak yang dimiliki murid, hal yang tidak dieksplisitkan dalam kajian sekolah menyeluruh yang ditelaah di sini; pembacaan itu diajukan sebagai proposisi untuk diuji di sekolah lain dan dalam kurun yang lebih panjang.

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Keywords:
Akhlak Formation; Character Education; Islamic Elementary School; Habituation; Teacher Exemplarity

ABSTRACT
Concern over declining character among Indonesian youth raises the question of how schools cultivate akhlak (noble character). This study describes the model of akhlak formation enacted at SD Muhammadiyah 6 Pekanbaru and examines how informants relate it to students' everyday conduct. Using a qualitative single-case design, the first author conducted about ten weeks of fieldwork comprising interviews with eight informants, participant observation, and documentation, and analyzed the data with the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. Six components specified before fieldwork served as analytic categories: religious habituation, teacher and staff exemplarity, integration of values into instruction, collective school culture, extracurricular reinforcement, and continuous monitoring. Observation and documents recorded these practices as routine school activities, and two informants described four direct links among them. Across three pre-specified dimensions of conduct (spiritual, moral-personal, and social), informants described improvement in discipline, responsibility, and courtesy, while regular worship appeared mainly as participation in a prompted schedule. These accounts rest on interviews alone, and without baseline or longitudinal data the study shows reported behavioral improvement and emerging patterns, not internalized, sustained akhlak. Read through Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawayh, the components suggest that a school should provide repeated practice, a supportive environment, and answerability. This reading distinguishes behavior that adults secure from a disposition that students hold, which the whole-school studies reviewed here do not make explicit; it is offered as propositions to be tested in other schools and over longer periods.

A. INTRODUCTION

Concern over character decline among Indonesian youth—bullying, disrespect toward teachers, and slipping discipline among school-age children, among other reported symptoms (Mayus & Samudra, 2024)—has pushed the question of how well schools cultivate akhlak, or noble moral character, back onto the national agenda alongside academic achievement. In Islamic schools, religiosity and akhlak are not easily separated, since a student's honesty, discipline, and respect for others are read as outward signs of an inwardly cultivated faith rather than as stand-alone behavioral targets. Religiosity has also been weakly associated with more prosocial and less antisocial behavior among Romanian high-school students(Coman et al., 2024). This concern takes on particular weight within Islamic education, where the Prophet Muhammad's mission is understood as the perfection of human character making akhlak formation not a by-product of schooling but its central purpose. Elementary schools under Muhammadiyah, an Islamic social organization founded in 1912 that runs a large national network of schools, follow a holistic–integrative approach that links Islamic teaching with general subjects, school activities, habits, and school culture rather than confining it to religious-education lessons (Hamami & Nuryana, 2022). This matters because moral development in childhood bears on prosocial behavior and on individual and societal well-being (Wilke & Goagoses, 2023).

Moral-education research is extensive, as a bibliometric analysis of 497 articles published between 2000 and 2022 shows (Chen et al., 2023), yet empirical work on how character is actually formed remains fragmented: an integrative review of Islamic religious education found that studies rely mostly on cognitive instruction and

habituation and rarely combine spiritual awareness, self-reflection, and self-regulation (Irawan et al., 2026). The studies reviewed here also usually examine a single mechanism or program rather than treating the school as a whole. Studies conducted in Indonesia tend to isolate one factor at a time: the contribution of religious-practice instruction to character strengthening, say (Faridi & Yogawati, 2022), or the role played by extracurricular programs (Munadi & Khuriyah, 2023). A recent systematic review of 222 character-education studies sorted them into six themes (Oldham & McLoughlin, 2026), none of which is labeled as the interplay of a school's practices. Studies of a single learning medium, such as a puppet application used in one grade-2 class (Nurasiah et al., 2022), likewise leave that question open.

This same fragmentation shows up on the theoretical side. Many of the empirical studies reviewed here lean on generic character-education frameworks, and those that turn to classical Islamic ethics tend to take up a single thinker, as in a learning model built on Al-Ghazali's human concepts (Jenuri et al., 2025) or a reading of Ibn Miskawayh through behaviorist learning theory (Darojat & Muhid, 2024). Yet Al-Ghazali's account of akhlak as a stable disposition of the soul, one that produces action without deliberation (Al-Ghazali, 1952), together with Ibn Miskawayh's complementary emphasis on habituation (ta'wid), rational self-governance, and a supportive social environment (Ibn Miskawayh, 2015), already supplies a ready-made analytical lens for reading contemporary school practice. Contemporary scholarship on moral education likewise treats emulation as part of learners' own effort at moral self-cultivation (Sanderse, 2024), which keeps the classical emphasis on habituation and example relevant to how schools today cultivate virtue. A case study of an elementary school in Yogyakarta has begun applying Al-Ghazali's framework to an Islamic-studies teacher's practice (Aulia et al., 2024), but it looks at classroom practice rather than asking how a school's separate initiatives interlock as a single system, leaving the link between classical theory and whole-institution practice largely unexplored. Read together, the two accounts are complementary: Al-Ghazali describes the end state, a disposition stable enough to issue in action without deliberation, while Ibn Miskawayh describes the conditions under which such a disposition forms, namely repeated habituation within a supportive social environment, guided by the learner's own rational self-governance (Al-Ghazali, 1952; Ibn Miskawayh, 2015). For a school, this suggests three things to look for: what repeated practice it provides, what social environment surrounds that practice, and what keeps students answerable for it over time. Read this way, habituation and extracurricular practice correspond to repeated practice; exemplarity, curricular integration, and school culture to the social environment; and continuous monitoring to answerability over time.

Taken together, the literature reviewed here, a narrative review rather than a systematic one, points to a gap rather than a settled absence: it contains few field-based accounts of how habituation, exemplarity, curricular integration, school culture, extracurricular practice, and monitoring work together inside a single Islamic elementary school, and it did not yield an account that reads such practice through the combined lenses of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawayh. Integrative approaches to moral education are beginning to appear elsewhere—a recent head-heart-hands framework used in Chinese higher education, for example, deliberately tried to unify the cognitive, affective, and behavioral strands of moral learning (Wang et al., 2026)—but the reviewed sources offer no comparable account at the elementary level of Islamic

education, or one read through classical Islamic ethical theory. Whole-school approaches to character education are not new, and the present study does not claim the idea as its own: established examples organize reform around school leadership and culture (Dabdoub et al., 2024)or around school climate and participation across a school community (Rojas-Andrade et al., 2024), and several of the six practices examined here will look familiar from them. The contribution therefore does not lie in the list of practices. It lies in asking how these practices work together to make a disposition stable, a question the classical Islamic account of akhlak places at its center, and in documenting, from one Muhammadiyah school, how the people who carry out these practices describe the links among them. Closing this gap matters in practice as well as in theory: without an empirically grounded, integrative account, schools are left with little concrete guidance on how to combine their separate initiatives into a coherent whole. A survey of 569 Spanish teachers, most of whom considered character education essential and wanted it built into the curriculum and school culture, nonetheless reported structural barriers, especially insufficient training (Fernández-Espinosa et al., 2025).

Beyond its theoretical importance, this gap has practical consequences. Elementary school is often treated as a formative stage for moral development (Wilke & Goagoses, 2023), so how a school organizes its character-formation practices at this stage matters. A school may record habituation, exemplarity, and monitoring as separate items on an administrative checklist instead of as parts of one design, which makes it hard to explain why a given practice underperforms: a habituation program that fails to produce lasting change might, for example, lack the exemplarity or monitoring that would sustain it, a possibility that only becomes visible when the components are examined together rather than one at a time, and that a single case can raise but not test. A field-based account of how one school's practices fit together could therefore give school leaders questions to ask of their own practice, though not a validated model.

The present study sets out to describe the model of akhlak formation enacted at SD Muhammadiyah 6 Pekanbaru and to examine how informants relate it to students' everyday conduct. It asks two specific questions: what model of akhlak formation operates at the school, and how informants describe students' spiritual, moral-personal, and social conduct in relation to that model, without testing whether the model causes that conduct. The six components were specified before fieldwork and served as analytic categories rather than as inductive findings; the study therefore asks how these pre-specified components are enacted and related in one school, not whether they emerge from the field. Its contribution is meant to run in two directions: empirically, through a field-based account of how one school organizes akhlak formation, which other Islamic elementary schools may examine against their own practice; and theoretically, through a reading of that practice against classical Islamic ethical theory, from which the links among the components are put forward as propositions to be tested rather than as established relations. Beyond its academic contribution, the study is also intended to give school leaders and teachers a field-based reference point, not a validated model, for organizing character-formation work rather than piecing together isolated programs. As will be shown, the school carries out all six pre-specified components as routine practice, and two informants described four direct links among them.

Informants reported improvement in students' discipline, responsibility, and courtesy, while regular worship appeared mainly as participation in a prompted schedule.

B. METHOD

The study used a qualitative single-case design, suited to examining how akhlak formation is organized within one institution rather than how often it occurs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moleong, 2019; Yin, 2017). Following the logic of theoretical propositions in case-study research (Yin, 2017), the six components examined here were specified before fieldwork, drawing on the character-education literature, the classical Islamic sources discussed above, and the school's existing programs, and served as analytic categories; the question was how they are enacted and related, not whether they emerge inductively. The study was conducted at SD Muhammadiyah 6 Pekanbaru, a private Islamic elementary school accredited "A", chosen purposively for combining religious-habituation programs, an explicit code of conduct, and a structured monitoring system. A single site let the authors trace how practices interlock, though the findings make no claim that the pattern recurs elsewhere.

Eight informants were purposively selected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018) for their direct involvement in the school's character-formation practices: the principal (KS), a PAI (Pendidikan Agama Islam, Islamic religious education) teacher (GPAI), a classroom teacher (GK), a subject teacher (GMP), an extracurricular instructor (PE), an education staff member (TK), and two grade-6 students (MD1 and MD2). Each adult had more than eight years of teaching or service experience. Their involvement ranged from leading the weekly Imtaq (iman dan takwa, faith and piety) program (KS), teaching PAI and managing monitoring journals (GPAI), and running an extracurricular rebana (Islamic percussion) group (PE) to daily instruction and habituation (GK, GMP) and everyday contact with students (TK). Informants were chosen as key holders of each functional role bearing on the six components, not as a representative sample (Yin, 2017). The two students were included as a check on how recipients experienced the practices; as the oldest students, they could describe them as recurring routines, and because both come from the same class, their accounts corroborate or qualify the adults' accounts but are only illustrative, a limitation of the study.

Fieldwork ran from 28 February to 8 May 2026, about ten weeks including a roughly three-week Eid al-Fitr break, and began during Ramadan, when routines may be more intensive. The first author observed one session each school week, roughly seven in all, covering morning arrival routines, congregational prayer, classroom teaching, and extracurricular sessions, as a moderate participant (Spradley, 2016) who did not direct routines, and wrote narrative field notes during or immediately after each session. To separate routine compliance from internalized character, conduct occurring only when a teacher prompted or monitored it was recorded as compliance, and unprompted conduct as possible internalization, though the design cannot establish internalization. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in Indonesian around five core questions adapted to each role, covering the practices the informant carries out, how the informant guides or models conduct, and the changes in students' conduct observed. For the two students, questions were shortened and put in everyday words, and interviews took place in a familiar place without teachers present. Interviews lasted 10–15 minutes on average and were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim; quotations were translated into English for reporting. Documentation

comprised school regulations, activity records, photographs, and two students' daily monitoring journals covering March and April 2026, each recording worship, exercise, studying at home, and community activities. Because only these two journals were examined, they were read as illustrative corroboration rather than analyzed systematically; both were checked for completeness and consistency and found complete for both months, with plausible and consistent entries.

Transcripts, field notes, and documents were analyzed with the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2019). Because the six components were fixed beforehand, coding began from a start list of those six categories, with sub-codes then developed from the data within each category; segments outside them were not coded separately. The condensed data were displayed in matrices cross-tabulating each component against interview, observation, and documentary evidence, and conclusions were drawn iteratively and revisited whenever new data pointed to a competing interpretation. The first author coded all data, and a supervisor reviewed the coding and the interpretations.

Change in students' everyday conduct was examined through three qualitative dimensions set before fieldwork, like the six components: spiritual conduct (self-initiated worship), moral-personal conduct (discipline and responsibility in daily routines), and social conduct (courtesy and cooperation in peer interaction). Because no baseline measures were collected, change over time was assessed only through informants' retrospective comparisons with earlier periods, checked against observation and journals where available. A claim of change counted as credible only when at least two of the three sources (interviews, observation, documents) converged, a conservative rule; a claim resting on one account was checked against another source before it was reported. For example, a teacher's remark that the signatures in students' journals looked like their parents' was treated as a suspicion, not a finding. Because teachers cross-check journal entries with parents to confirm what students did at home (PAI teacher), the journals were read as evidence of parental involvement, not of students' self-monitoring.

Credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) rested on about ten weeks of fieldwork, triangulation across roles and techniques, and member checking (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), in which all six adult informants confirmed a summary of the findings face to face; confirmability rested on tracing every interpretive claim to transcripts, field notes, or school records. Adult informants gave informed consent; for the two students, parents or guardians gave verbal consent and the students verbal assent, without written forms. Informants are identified by role codes rather than by name, although their roles may make some of them identifiable in a named school. The school reviewed and permitted the research, and the first author's university issued a research permit letter; no separate ethics committee review was conducted.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Interview, observation, and documentary data, condensed and displayed following the procedure described above, were organized under the six pre-specified components, summarized in Table 1 and illustrated in Figure 1, and the three pre-specified dimensions of students' conduct, summarized in Table 2 and illustrated in Figure 2. What follows presents the findings descriptively, stating for each claim

whether it rests on interview, observation, or documents; theoretical interpretation is taken up in the Discussion. The first component was religious habituation. The school day is built around congregational prayer, the voluntary Duha prayer, and Qur'anic recitation, which the principal (KS) positioned as the starting point of the school's practice: “We begin from habituation—from congregational prayer, *kultum* (a short religious talk), to reciting the Qur'an”.

A student (MD1) framed these practices as routine rather than exceptional, saying she always prays in congregation, always performs the Duha prayer, and recites the Qur'an. In the observed sessions, congregational prayer and Duha prayer followed a fixed daily schedule rather than being treated as optional extras, and Qur'anic recitation was folded into the morning routine before lessons. TK and GK described students' punctuality, orderliness, and worship side by side, but no informant said that one produced the others. Documentary evidence backed this pattern: the activity schedule formally set aside fixed time slots for all three practices, building them into the institutional timetable rather than leaving them to individual teachers' discretion. In the sessions the first author observed, no case was recorded in which any of the three practices was skipped or treated as optional. These sources show that the practices are scheduled and carried out; they do not show that students perform them without adult direction. Participation in timetabled worship is therefore reported here as compliance with a routine, not as evidence of an internalized habit.

The second component was exemplary conduct on the part of teachers and other school personnel. A PAI teacher (GPAI) described the teacher's role in these terms: “Because the teacher here is the role model, the teacher must show first—show first what good behavior looks like”.

MD2 corroborated this from her own vantage point, saying that "teachers give a very good example to their students," such as "dressing neatly, speaking politely, and respecting one another." Other informants described how adult conduct is meant to reach students. PE said she first practices the behavior herself and that, in *rebana* sessions, students watch how she treats and responds to each classmate. GK said she models polite speech, listening while others talk, praying Duha in congregation, and reciting the Qur'an before lessons, and GMP said he models politeness, discipline, and honesty and advises students when they err. TK said staff reinforce courteous language by reminding students to say "please" and "thank you" when they ask for help at the office. KS described teachers lining up before 7:00 a.m. to greet students, who in turn are expected to shake hands. GPAI added that children are still imitators, which states the mechanism informants assume. These are accounts of influence; the study did not observe students' conduct before and after exposure to a model, so the influence is reported, not demonstrated. Observation showed this expectation reaching beyond PAI teachers: in the corridor and school canteen, education staff were seen greeting students by name and correcting minor lapses in manners on the spot, consistent with how

teachers described their own practice. The school's written code of conduct framed courteous speech and a respectful demeanor as an obligation binding every adult on campus, but it records a formal expectation; the observed corrections and the informants' examples are the evidence of practice.

The third component was weaving moral values into classroom instruction. One distinctive practice, described by GPAI, was the One Day One Story program, in which a brief narrative, often drawn from the lives of the Prophet's companions, was shared each day and tied to the lesson material. As GPAI put it: “We usually use One Day One Story—each day there is always one story, whether about a companion or about people of the past, which we tell the children in connection with the material”.

GPAI said the story is followed by a prompt: children are asked to look around them and consider whether they have come across such behavior, and the journal is then used to apply it. This is how the story is meant to reach conduct, but the data do not show whether students bring the stories to bear on actual decisions. GMP, a subject teacher, reported doing something similar, deliberately linking lesson material to akhlak values so that students grasp why applying them in daily life matters. Classroom observation across mathematics, science, and language lessons backed these reports: in the observed lessons, teachers routinely closed with a brief reflective remark tying the day's material to an akhlak value—honesty, patience, gratitude. Lesson plans reviewed as part of the documentation likewise carried a dedicated column for the moral value to be reinforced each session, indicating that this integration was planned ahead of time rather than improvised. This cross-curricular habit meant that moral reflection was not confined to religious-education periods alone, although the observation recorded teachers stating the link, not students acting on it.

The fourth component was a school-wide culture of courtesy, cleanliness, and collective responsibility. TK described students as already in the habit of disposing of litter properly, tidying the toilet and closing the tap after use, and greeting guests, teachers, and anyone passing. Informants stressed that responsibility for students' conduct was shared across the whole school community, as GPAI put it: “There is no my child or your child—every child in this school is our shared responsibility. Every teacher is responsible; whoever notices a lapse is the one who addresses it”.

Observation recorded adults other than a student's own teacher stepping in when a lapse in courtesy or discipline occurred. The school's written code of conduct made the expectation explicit, stating that any staff member who witnessed a lapse in student behavior was expected to address it directly rather than pass the matter on to the student's homeroom teacher. TK said staff do correct students, for instance when students pick up fashionable but rude speech, and KS said teachers are rostered to supervise and that persistent problems go first to the homeroom teacher and then to her. The expectation is formal; its implementation is attested only for the sessions observed and the accounts given, and consistency across the school year was not

measured. Informants also described limits: KS said children promise today and forget tomorrow, so teachers must keep reminding them, and that students of the vocational high school sharing the compound expose students to rough language; TK noted that some students were still not disciplined. Conduct was thus described as everyone's responsibility, though the correction was repeated and incomplete.

The fifth component was reinforcement through extracurricular activity, here illustrated by the school's *rebana* (Islamic percussion ensemble) program. *Rebana* is an illustrative case, not a claim that it is the school's main or only activity relevant to character: it is the one extracurricular activity whose instructor was interviewed, and KS also described other student performances, such as recitation and nasyid or kasidah at the Friday Imtaq session, that were not examined as extracurricular activities. PE, who leads the ensemble, explained that the moral point of the activity cannot be separated from its group structure, in her words: “So there must be no blaming each other—sportsmanship, supporting each other, basically the point is to be united”.

She illustrated this with a concrete routine: before a rehearsal began, members would ask permission to go look for a teammate who had not yet arrived rather than starting without them, which for her showed that "the cooperation has already been established." No one blamed the absent teammate for the delay; as she put it, "there is no blaming of friends." She added that reaching this standard took very little intervention on her part, requiring only two sessions before the group worked well together, because her grade-6 students had already often been given such examples at the school. In her account, the ensemble therefore built on a norm students already brought with them. This rests on PE's own report of one group of grade-6 students.

The sixth component was continuous monitoring, most concretely realized through a daily journal in which students logged worship practices and behavior for teachers, and often parents, to review. GPAI explained that monitoring is essential, which is why a journal is provided to track the child's progress, and described periodically cross-checking journal entries against parents' own accounts to verify their accuracy: “Sometimes there is a signature there, but it looks like the parent's own signature rather than the child's”.

The journal is where the findings most clearly show dependence on the home. TK said habits practiced at school may revert when parents give the school no feedback, and that parents must support the school's programs. KS said the learning contract is communicated to parents because discipline requires collaboration among teachers, students, and parents. GPAI added that students in the upper grades had begun to game the system a little, so teachers cross-check entries with parents. The journals were accordingly read as evidence of parental involvement, not of students' self-monitoring. The two sample journals reviewed were complete for March and April and internally consistent, which shows regular completion but cannot show whether a child or a parent made the entries, or whether completion reflects reflection. In this sense, the

journal's contribution to the wider system depended as much on parental cooperation and on how teachers review it as on the document itself, a dependency taken up in the Discussion.

The components were not reported in isolation, and informants linked some of them directly. First, monitoring was tied to habituation: GPAI said that because children are involved, habituation requires monitoring, hence the journal, and that without continued checking of a child's progress there would be no change. Second, exemplarity and monitoring were attributed to the same actors: GPAI described teachers as showing good conduct first and also as monitoring children's journals. Third, instruction was connected to monitoring: after the daily story, students are asked to look for the behavior around them, and the journal is the means of applying it (GPAI). Fourth, habituation elsewhere in the school was said to feed the extracurricular group (PE). Two conditions cut across these links. School leadership appeared in KS's weekly Imtaq session, her advice to students after performances, the teachers' duty roster, and the learning contract; school-home collaboration appeared in the learning contract, in the journal, and in informants' reliance on parents' feedback. Figure 1 marks the relations informants described with solid arrows and the authors' interpretation with dashed arrows: exemplarity giving habituation its credibility, for instance, or culture reinforcing both, is developed in the Discussion and was not stated by informants, and no informant ranked the components or compared their weight.

Table 1. The Six Components of Akhlak Formation and Their Key Practices, Observed or Reported

Component	Key Practice Observed or Reported
Religious habituation	Congregational prayer, Duha prayer, Qur'anic recitation on a fixed daily schedule
Teacher and staff exemplarity	Teachers and education staff modeling courteous speech and conduct
Curricular integration	"One Day One Story" program; akhlak values linked across non-religious subjects
Collective school culture	Distributed responsibility for correction; greeting and courtesy norms
Extracurricular reinforcement	*Rebana* ensemble (illustrative case) requiring cooperative, blame-free group performance
Continuous monitoring	Daily student journal cross-checked by teachers with parents

Source: Field data (interview, observation, and documentation), processed by the authors (2026).

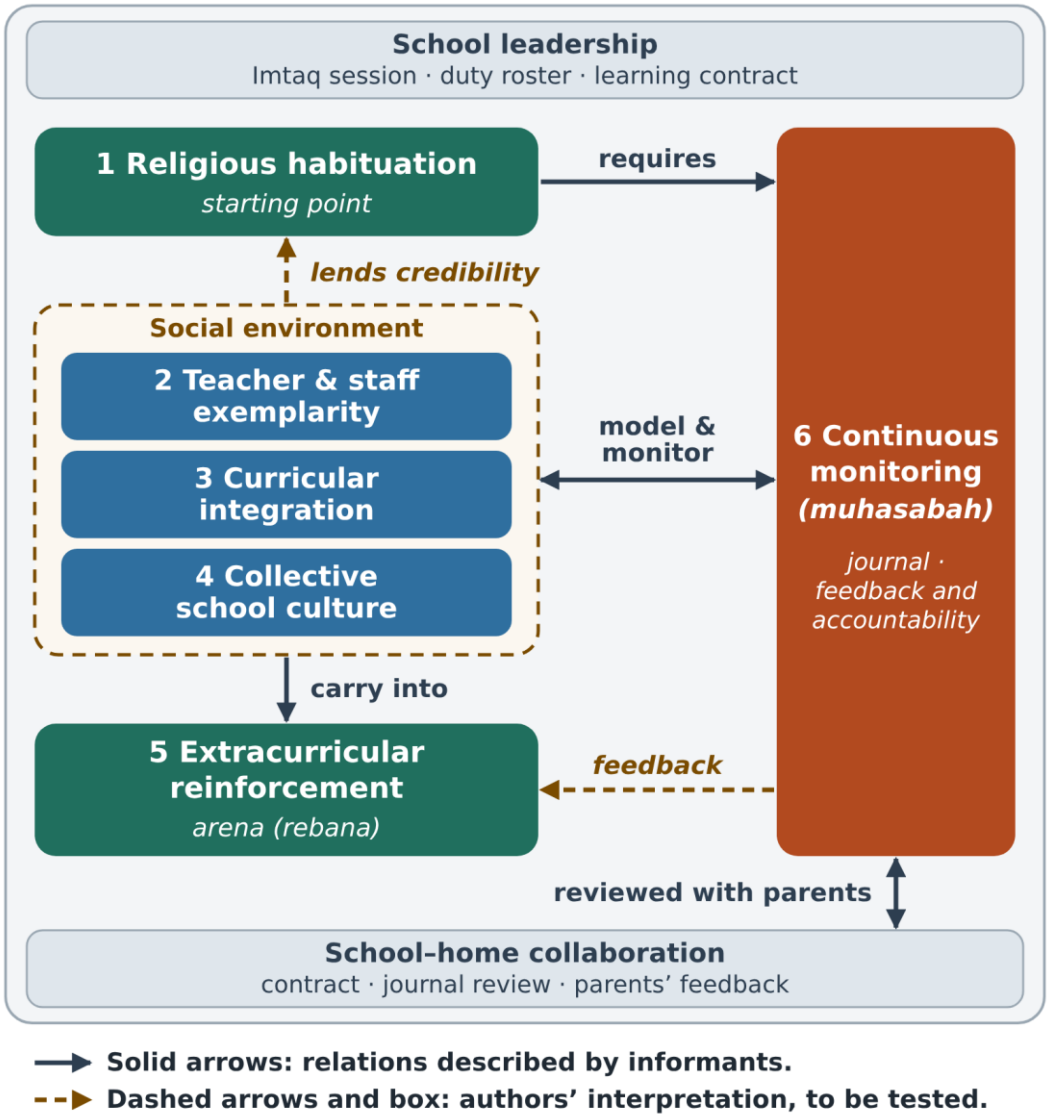


Figure 1. Relations among the Six Components of Akhlak Formation at SD Muhammadiyah 6 Pekanbaru

Beyond the six components, informants described students' conduct in the three pre-specified dimensions. These are reported as informants' accounts and observed participation, not as demonstrated internalization. On the spiritual dimension, MD1 and MD2 each said they always pray in congregation and perform the Duha prayer, and GK described students as arriving on time, performing the Duha prayer in an orderly way, and praying before lessons, which she presented as compliance with class rules. No informant described worship that students begin without adult prompting. The nearest sign was GK's example that students who had already performed ablution at home do not repeat it at school, while those who had not do so before Duha, a single report. Because the timetable itself prompts prayer, observed attendance at prayer is classed as

compliance. On the moral-personal dimension, MD1 and MD2 reported becoming more disciplined, GK described students as more disciplined, responsible, and honest, and KS described change as gradual—"it does not change from A to Z at once; it is gradual, a process"—citing grade-6 students with earlier problems whose change she called significant but not total. GPAI added that behavioral change following correction typically only became visible after roughly one or two weeks of sustained monitoring with parents. On the social dimension, GK said that before values were instilled students were rather indifferent when meeting teachers, whereas now they greet them, kiss their hands, and behave the same way toward friends and even younger siblings; MD1 and MD2 described respecting friends and teachers, and TK described students as habituated to greeting, although some students were still not disciplined. These claims of change rest on interviews alone, so under the convergence rule in the Method they remain perceptions: observation and documents support scheduled participation, not change over time. No account compares conduct across observation periods, no baseline exists, and the two sample journals show regular completion, not change. The evidence therefore supports reported behavioral improvement and emerging patterns, but not self-sustained akhlak.

Table 2. Reported and Observed Conduct across Three Dimensions of Student Conduct

Dimension	**Indicator**	**Illustrative Finding and Evidence Type**
Spiritual	Self-initiated worship	Regular worship self-reported (MD1, MD2); orderly Duha reported (GK); attendance at scheduled prayer observed, read as compliance
Moral-personal	Discipline and responsibility	Improvement in discipline and responsibility reported (GK, KS, MD1, MD2), called gradual (KS, GPAI); no baseline
Social	Courtesy and cooperation	Greetings and courtesy reported, more than before (GK) and as habitual (TK); blame-free teamwork reported (PE)

Source: Field data (interview, observation, and documentation), processed by the authors (2026).

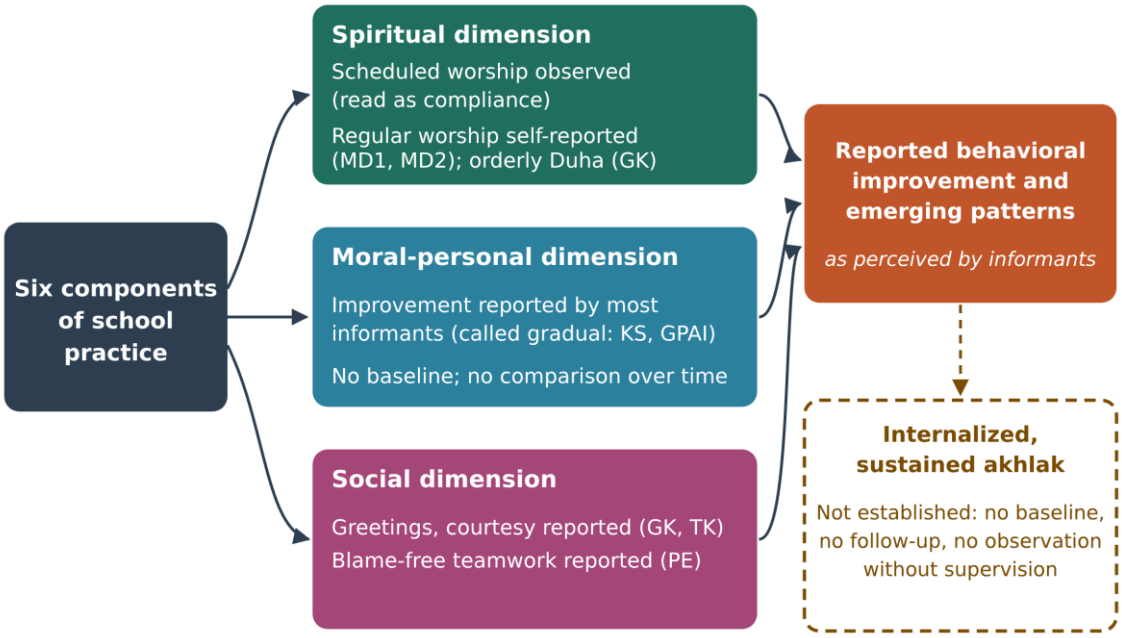


Figure 2. Reported and Observed Conduct across Three Dimensions (Internalized, Sustained Akhlak Not Established)

Analysis/Discussion

The findings are discussed against two frames: the classical Islamic ethical theories of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawayh, and prior empirical research on character and moral education. Because the six components and three dimensions were specified before fieldwork, the discussion asks how these frames help interpret them, not how they were derived, and it separates links that informants described from the authors' interpretation. That akhlak sits at the center of the school's practice accords with the following Prophetic tradition:

إِنَّمَا بُعِثْتُ لِأُتَمِّمَ صَالِحَ الْأَخْلَاقِ

I was sent only to perfect noble character.

(Narrated by Abu Hurayrah; al-Bukhari, *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, no. 273; Ahmad ibn Hanbal, *Musnad*, no. 8952)

This tradition casts akhlak as the purpose around which the school's practices are organized. Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawayh approach that purpose in complementary ways. For Al-Ghazali, akhlak is a stable disposition of the soul from which actions issue easily and without deliberation, formed through *riyadhah* al-nafs, the disciplining of the soul by repetition, and checked through *muhasabah*, regular self-reckoning (Al-Ghazali, 1924, 1952). Ibn Miskawayh shares the aim but stresses the conditions of formation: *ta'wid*, repeated right action that settles into character, within a social environment of virtuous companions and under the learner's own rational self-governance (Ibn Miskawayh, 2015). Read together, they suggest that a school should provide repeated

practice, a supportive environment, and a means of answerability over time. Table 3 sets out this reading, which is the authors' analytical synthesis, not a classification found in the classical texts.

Table 3. Analytical Synthesis of the Six Components, Classical Foundations, Mechanisms, and Expected Behavioral Dimensions

Component	**Classical Islamic ethical foundation**	**Institutional mechanism**	**Expected behavioral dimension**
Religious habituation	*Ta'wid*; *riyadhah al-nafs* (Al-Ghazali, 1952; Ibn Miskawayh, 2015)	Repeated worship routines	Spiritual conduct
Teacher and staff exemplarity	*Uswah hasanah* (Al-Ghazali, 1952)	Adult moral modeling	Moral-personal and social conduct
Curricular integration	*'Ilm* (Al-Ghazali, 2014)	Moral reflection in lessons	Moral understanding and conduct
Collective school culture	Virtuous social environment (Ibn Miskawayh, 2015)	Shared responsibility for correction	Social conduct
Extracurricular reinforcement	Habituation and social practice (Ibn Miskawayh, 2015)	Cooperative activities	Social conduct
Continuous monitoring	*Muhasabah* (Al-Ghazali, 1924, 1952)	Journals and school-home review	Responsibility and self-reflection

Source: Authors' analytical synthesis; not a classification found in the classical texts.

Religious habituation corresponds to *ta'wid* and *riyadhah* al-nafs, but only partly (Al-Ghazali, 1924, 1952; Ibn Miskawayh, 2015). Both concepts concern repetition that eventually settles into disposition, whereas what the school data show is the repetition: scheduled, adult-prompted participation. The study cannot show that it has become the inward disposition Al-Ghazali describes (Al-Ghazali, 1952); the nearest evidence, MD1's and MD2's self-reports and GK's ablution example, is self- and informant report. KS's remark that the school begins from habituation fits a behaviorist reading of Ibn Miskawayh in which continuous practice and habituation, positive reinforcement, and a supportive environment shape conduct (Darojat & Muhid, 2024). The gap between repeated behavior and inward disposition is one this study cannot close.

Teacher and staff exemplarity reflects *uswah hasanah*, the good example the Prophet embodies for believers, which teachers as ethical models carry forward, and Ibn Miskawayh's claim that a social environment of virtuous exemplars teaches more than instruction alone (Ibn Miskawayh, 2015). Research on adolescents suggests that emulation is part of learners' own moral self-cultivation and that they do not always take teachers as their models (Sanderse, 2024), so the effect of adult example should not be assumed. The data bear on this only partly: informants described adults modeling courteous speech, worship, and cooperation, but the study did not observe whether students' conduct changed after exposure to a model. That the expectation extends beyond PAI teachers to all staff resembles findings that teachers act as moral agents for Muslim students in Singapore (Syafri et al., 2026).

Weaving moral values into instruction reflects Al-Ghazali's principle that knowledge ('ilm) cannot be separated from practice ('amal) (Al-Ghazali, 2014) and Ibn Miskawayh's view that morally instructive narrative reinforces rational judgment (Ibn Miskawayh, 2015). The daily story followed by a prompt to look for such behavior around oneself is a modest bridge from 'ilm to 'amal, but the data do not show whether students carry the stories into actual decisions. Extending values across subjects raises a question that religious-education teachers themselves debate, whether moral virtues are an explicit aim of lessons or an incidental by-product (Metcalfe et al., 2024); recording a moral value in lesson plans sits on the explicit side. It also accords with Muhammadiyah's effort to combine religious and general knowledge, which Khozin (2019) judges still incomplete.

Collective school culture aligns with Ibn Miskawayh's view that moral formation depends on a virtuous surrounding environment (Ibn Miskawayh, 2015) and with the whole-school approaches to leadership and climate noted above (Dabdoub et al., 2024; Rojas-Andrade et al., 2024). Shared responsibility for correction was both a written expectation and an observed practice here, yet KS's remarks about daily repeated reminders and outside influences show that the environment must be actively maintained and is never complete. A comparable logic appears in West Sumatra's Khatam Qur'an tradition, where ceremony, dress, and procession carry Islamic educational values (Tobroni et al., 2024).

Read through Ibn Miskawayh's (2015) framework, extracurricular reinforcement is an arena for habituation and social learning, turning cooperation into rehearsed practice under real social stakes, as when a *rebana* member's absence was felt by the whole group. PE's grade-6 group had already absorbed these norms elsewhere in the school, so this component appears to draw on the others rather than generate the norms itself.

Continuous monitoring corresponds to Al-Ghazali's *muhasabah*, the disciplined daily review that keeps the soul's competing faculties of reason, anger, and desire in balance (Al-Ghazali, 1924, 1952), situated within a wider cycle of *muraqabah*,

muhasabah, *mujahadah*, and *riyadhah* (Irawan et al., 2026). The correspondence is partial. *Muhasabah* is reflection that a person performs on their own acts (Al-Ghazali, 1952), whereas here the journal is first an instrument of adult supervision, reviewed by teachers and cross-checked with parents (GPAI). Whether students use it to evaluate themselves was not shown, and GPAI's remarks that some signatures look like a parent's and that older students begin to game the journal suggest it can be completed without reflection. The journal could become *muhasabah* only if students record and review their own conduct.

The reported change across the three dimensions accords with Al-Ghazali's insistence that akhlak is a stable inward disposition, not rule-conformity (Al-Ghazali, 1952), but does not demonstrate it. Informants described improvement, which KS and GPAI called gradual, yet the study has no baseline, no follow-up, and no observation of conduct after supervision is withdrawn. Some informants pointed to fragility: KS said children promise today and forget tomorrow, and TK said habits practiced at school may revert when parents give no feedback. These remarks suggest that the conduct observed depends on continued adult attention, as the distinction between compliance and internalization would predict, but they do not show that conduct lapses once supervision is removed, because the study did not observe that. A recent review likewise notes the lack of a comprehensive model explaining how values become lasting behavior (Irawan et al., 2026), and a study of Malaysian secondary students found that the social environment had only a moderate effect on their character internalization (Dakir et al., 2015), a reminder that environment alone does not secure it.

Taken as a whole, the data directly support four links among the components: GPAI tied monitoring to habituation, described teachers as both models and monitors, and connected the daily story to the journal, and PE reported that habituation elsewhere in the school fed the *rebana* group. Leadership (KS) and school-home collaboration (KS, GPAI, TK) cut across these links as conditions of implementation. Other relations are interpretation, not finding: that exemplarity gives habituated practice its credibility, that culture reinforces both, that habituation is foundational, that monitoring supplies feedback and accountability, and that the remaining components form the social environment. These readings draw on Ibn Miskawayh's (2015) account of environment and Al-Ghazali's (1924, 1952) of discipline and answerability, and Figure 1 marks them as conceptual.

The contribution therefore does not lie in the list of practices. Whole-school approaches already organize character education around leadership and school culture (Dabdoub et al., 2024) and around school climate (Rojas-Andrade et al., 2024). What this study adds is a reading of one school's practices through two classical accounts that together specify what a school must provide for akhlak to form: repeated practice, a supportive environment, and answerability. It also brings from those accounts a distinction that the whole-school studies reviewed here do not make explicit, between

behavior that adults secure and a disposition that students hold. The resulting framework is a set of propositions, namely that each condition is needed and that disposition forms only when external practice is paired with environment and answerability. For school leaders, the implication is to ask what is repeated, who models it, and how students answer for it.

D. CONCLUSION

This study asked what model of akhlak formation operates at SD Muhammadiyah 6 Pekanbaru and how informants describe students' spiritual, moral-personal, and social conduct in relation to it. On the first question, the interview, observation, and documentary data show a school that carries out six pre-specified components as routine practice: daily religious habituation, exemplary conduct by teachers and staff, moral values woven into lessons, a school-wide culture of shared responsibility, extracurricular reinforcement (illustrated here by the *rebana* group), and continuous monitoring through a student journal checked with parents. Informants themselves linked four of these (three by GPAI and one by PE), tying monitoring to habituation, attributing exemplarity and monitoring to the same adults, connecting the daily story to the journal, and saying that habituation elsewhere in the school fed the *rebana* group, while leadership programs and school-home collaboration appeared across them as conditions of implementation. These four links rest on two informants' accounts. The integrated model of the title goes further: its claims that exemplarity gives habituated practice its credibility, that culture reinforces both, and that the components sustain one another are the authors' interpretation through Al-Ghazali and Ibn Miskawayh, offered as propositions rather than as findings.

On the second question, informants described students' conduct on all three pre-specified dimensions. Regular worship was reported by MD1 and MD2 and presented by GK as compliance with class rules, with no account of worship begun without prompting; greater discipline and responsibility were reported by GK, KS, MD1, and MD2; and more courteous greeting of teachers and peers than before by GK, while TK described greeting as habitual. KS and GPAI called the change gradual. These claims of change rest on interviews alone, no baseline was collected, and observation and documents supported scheduled participation, not change over time. The evidence therefore supports reported behavioral improvement and emerging patterns, but not internalized, self-sustained akhlak, and it does not show that the practices produce that improvement. KS's remark that children promise today and forget tomorrow, and TK's that school habits may revert when parents give no feedback, suggest that the conduct described still depends on adult attention, although the study did not observe conduct once supervision was withdrawn.

The data do not show whether the six components are equally important, sequential, or interdependent. No informant ranked or compared them, and a single case with all six in place cannot show what happens when one is missing. Read through

the two classical accounts, the components suggest that a school should provide repeated practice, a supportive environment, and a means of answerability over time. Because whole-school approaches already organize character education around leadership, school culture, and climate, the study's contribution lies not in the list of practices but in this reading, and in the distinction it carries between behavior that adults secure and a disposition that students hold.

Several limitations bound these claims. The study is a single, purposively chosen case and does not claim that the pattern recurs elsewhere. Student voice is limited to two grade-6 students from the same class, and parents, whose role informants stressed, were not interviewed, so the home appears only through school staff's accounts and two sample journals. Change was assessed through retrospective comparison, without baseline or longitudinal data, and rests on interviews alone, so it cannot be separated from compliance with a school day that itself prompts the practices. Fieldwork lasted about ten weeks, began in Ramadan, when routines may be more intensive, and comprised roughly seven observation sessions and interviews of 10–15 minutes. Member checking involved only the six adult informants, the students took part on verbal parental consent and their own verbal assent, and no separate ethics committee reviewed the study.

For school leaders, the case offers questions to ask, not a validated model. Leaders in comparable schools might examine, for each habituated practice, who models it, who follows it up, and how students themselves answer for it; consider whether a journal now checked by teachers and parents could also have students review their own conduct, which is where it would come closer to *muhasabah*; and keep monitoring and school-home feedback in place over time, since informants described the conduct as needing continued attention. These are suggestions drawn from one school, to be tried and evaluated locally. Future research could test the framework's transferability through comparative studies across Muhammadiyah and other Islamic elementary schools, follow cohorts longitudinally with baseline measures and observation after supervision is relaxed, include a wider range of students and parents, and examine whether repeated practice, environment, and answerability are each needed for a disposition to form.

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