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THE INFLUENCE OF EXAMPLE AND HABITS METHODS ON ISLAMIC CHARACTER A COMPARATIVE STUDY IN MIN 3 GARUT AND SDTQ AL IKHLAS

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: This study aims to examine the influence of the role model and habituation methods on the formation of Islamic character in students at two elementary educational institutions, namely MIN 3 Garut and SDTQ Al Ikhlas. **Background:** Against the background of the importance of Islamic character education as an antidote to moral challenges in the era of globalization, this study explores the effectiveness of both methods comparatively and simultaneously in forming character based on Islamic values. **Method:** A quantitative approach with multiple linear regression analysis method was used to examine the relationship between the role model and habituation variables with Islamic character. The study population included all sixth-grade students at both schools with a saturated sample of 29 people. **Result:** The results of the analysis indicate that both the role model and habituation methods have a positive and significant influence on the formation of Islamic character, with habituation showing a slightly more dominant contribution. The regression model also indicates that the combination of both methods is able to optimally improve the Islamic character of students. The differences in the application context of the two methods in each institution suggest that the integration of contextual and synergistic methods is more effective. This study confirms that teacher role models as role models and the habituation of Islamic values through routine activities play a strategic role in the formation of Islamic character. **Conclusion:** The practical implications emphasize the need to strengthen both approaches in the curriculum and school management. Further research examining external variables that influence the effectiveness of the method, as well as long-term studies to measure the sustainability of the character development, is recommended.

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A. INTRODUCTION

In an era of globalization and dynamic social change, developing Islamic character in students has become a fundamental need in education. The increasingly rapid development of science, technology, and the flow of information has had a positive impact in the form of easier access to knowledge, but also presents serious challenges in the form of shifting moral values, the erosion of cultural identity, and a weakening commitment to religious teachings. In this context, strengthening Islamic character plays a crucial role in creating a generation that is not only intellectually superior but also possesses integrity, responsibility, and noble morals (Arianti et al., 2023; Rahmadani & Al Hamdany, 2023). Islamic character education serves as a moral bulwark and a guideline for life, guiding students to adhere to the values of the Qur'an and Sunnah amidst the rapid flow of modernization. Thus, the existence of Islamic character education is not merely a normative discourse, but a strategic necessity for shaping students' personalities that are spiritually healthy, socially strong, and capable of serving as role models in their communities.

The social cognitive theory proposed by Bandura (1977) emphasizes that the learning process through observation or role modeling has a significant influence on the formation of positive behavioral patterns, particularly in the internalization of moral values in students. Through daily interactions in the school environment, students not only acquire cognitive knowledge but also learn to imitate the attitudes, behaviors, and habits displayed by those around them. In this regard, teachers, as central figures and role models, play a crucial role in instilling the values of honesty, discipline, responsibility, and noble character through concrete examples, both in speech, attitudes, and actions. (Mahdiyah et al., 2024). This view aligns with the Islamic perspective, which places character education as an integral part of faith. Al-Ghazali's thinking emphasizes that moral formation is the core of education, while the Qur'an provides a normative basis that moral education must be instilled from an early age so that it becomes firmly embedded in one's personality. (Khairunnisa, 2024). Thus, the consistent application of exemplary behavior combined with continuous habituation not only strengthens students' Islamic character but also makes the school a conducive, harmonious learning environment oriented toward the development of noble morals.

The methods of exemplary behavior and habituation are specifically strengthened by sources of Islamic teachings. In QS. Al-Ahzab verse 21:

لَقَدْ كَانَ لَكُمْ فِي رَسُولِ اللَّهِ أُسْوَةٌ حَسَنَةٌ لِّمَن كَانَ يَرْجُوا اللَّهَ وَالْيَوْمَ الْآخِرَ وَذَكَرَ اللَّهَ كَثِيرًا

It means:

Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah there is a good example for you, for those who hope in Allah and the Last Day and remember Allah often.

Rasulullah SAW also emphasized in his hadith narrated by Bukhari in Al-Adabul Mufrad No. 273:

مَكَارِمُ الْأَخْلَاقِ God bless you

It means:

Indeed, I was sent to perfect good morals. (HR Bukhari)

Quraish Shihab emphasized that consistency in applying the values of good example is the main key in the process of internalizing Islamic values, because examples that are displayed in real terms will be more easily understood and imitated by students than mere verbal advice. (Sanusi et al., 2024). This is in line with Al-Ghazali's thinking, which emphasizes the importance of cultivating moral values from an early age, because

character that is continuously trained will take root in children and form good, strong, and sustainable morals throughout their lives (Amalia et al., 2022) . In daily educational practice, consistent teaching with teacher examples, combined with the habit of daily worship such as reciting prayers together, maintaining manners while studying, and performing congregational prayers at school, is an effective means of instilling spiritual and social values. (Astutik et al., 2023; Marlinawati et al., 2022) . This principle shows that the methods of role modeling and habituation are inseparable in forming a complete Islamic character.

Various previous studies have examined the exemplary and habituation methods in the context of Islamic education, although most still place them as a stand-alone focus of study. For example , research by Zahra et al. (2024) discusses the advantages of the exemplary and habituation methodology in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) (Zahra et al., 2024) . Meanwhile, Halimatussa'diah & Napitupulu (2023) emphasizes habituation to encourage independence in early childhood (Halimatussa'diah & Napitupulu, 2023) . Shodiq & Kuswanto (2024) integrate the exemplary and habituation methods in the formation of religious character at the junior high school level, but are limited to only one educational context (Shodiq & Kuswanto, 2024) . AhsanulKhaq's (2019) research reviewed habituation in religious character formation using a qualitative descriptive approach at SMPN 2 Bae Kudus (AhsanulKhaq, 2019) . Shunhaji et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of combining habituation and role modeling in kindergarten-aged children (Shunhaji et al., 2021) .

Unlike those studies, this study focuses on the simultaneous and comprehensive integration of both methods in two different Islamic educational institutions: MIN 3 Garut and SD TQ Al Ikhlas. Therefore, this research does not merely describe the effectiveness of role models or habituation in a partial manner, but rather seeks to develop a more holistic model of Islamic character education. This model emphasizes the synergy between the teacher's role model as a central figure and the habituation of religious practices and positive behaviors internalized in school routines. This innovative approach is expected to bridge the existing research gap and provide a more applicable contribution, both in the development of Islamic character education theory and its practice in the field.

In general, the main objective of this study is to examine and compare the influence of exemplary and habituation methods on the formation of Islamic character in students at two elementary educational institutions, namely MIN 3 Garut and SD TQ Al Ikhlas. This study seeks not only to identify the effectiveness of each method separately, but also to examine how both can synergize in forming students with noble character, discipline, and integrity in accordance with Islamic values. Thus, this study is expected to provide an empirical picture of the strategic role of teachers as role models and the application of habituation in creating an Islamic educational environment.

The expected findings of this study are not only limited to strengthening students' Islamic character through real-life practices in the school environment, but also serve as a reference in formulating learning strategies and Islamic character education policies at the elementary school level. With the empirical foundation of this research, educators and policymakers are expected to be able to design more focused, applicable, and sustainable programs to build a generation with noble character and moral resilience amidst the rapid flow of globalization.

Furthermore, a deeper understanding of the integration of role models and habituation methods is expected to produce a learning model that is conducive, systematic, and relevant to the needs of the times. Through the synergy between teacher role models and students' habituation of religious behavior, schools can become environments that not only support academic achievement but also serve as centers for Islamic character development. Therefore, this research is expected to make a tangible contribution to the development of Islamic education theory and the practice of character education in elementary schools that can meet the challenges of the modern era.

B. METHOD

This research employed a quantitative approach with multiple linear regression analysis. This approach was chosen because it was deemed most appropriate for addressing the research problem formulation, which emphasizes numerical measurements and statistical analysis of relationships between variables. With this approach, researchers were able to objectively test hypotheses regarding the influence of role model and habituation methods on the development of students' Islamic character. (Nasehudin & Gozali, 2015) . The quantitative approach has the advantage of producing generalizable data because the data collection and analysis process follows measurable scientific procedures. This aligns with the research objective of obtaining an empirical and measurable picture of the contribution of each method to the formation of Islamic character.

The population in this study were all sixth-grade students of MIN 3 Garut and SDTQ Al Ikhlas in the 2024/2025 academic year. This population selection was based on the consideration that sixth-grade students are in the final stage of development in elementary school, so that the Islamic character formed in them can be observed more maturely. The sample of this study amounted to 29 students who represent the entire population, so the sampling technique used was the saturated or census sampling technique. This technique is appropriate to use when the population is relatively small, allowing researchers to make all members of the population as research respondents. Thus, the data obtained is expected to be more representative and reflect real conditions in the field. (Sugiyono, 2024; Arikunto, 2014) . Supporting secondary data was obtained from various literature, journals, and documentation related to Islamic character education.

The data types used in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from respondents through research instruments in the form of questionnaires, observations, and documentation. The questionnaire was designed using a three-point Likert scale, ranging from "disagree" to "agree," to measure students' attitudes, perceptions, and experiences regarding the implementation of the exemplary method, habituation, and the formation of Islamic character. Each variable was measured with 10 questions that had been compiled based on theoretical indicators. For example, the exemplary variable includes indicators of teacher behavior in providing examples of discipline, honesty, and responsibility, while the habituation variable includes routines of joint prayer, congregational prayer, and maintaining cleanliness. The Islamic character variable was measured from the aspects of honesty, discipline, responsibility, and social concern.

In addition to questionnaires, researchers also conducted direct observations of classroom learning activities, particularly interactions between teachers and students, as well as the implementation of habituation activities taking place at the school. Documentation studies were conducted to supplement primary data, including reviewing school documents such as religious activity schedules, school regulations, and reports of religious activities. This combination of data collection techniques is essential to ensure richer, more valid, and more complementary data (Arikunto, 2014; Haris, 2010).

The research instrument, a questionnaire, was tested for validity and reliability before being used in the main study. Validity testing was conducted using Pearson's product-moment correlation to ensure that each question accurately measured the intended variable indicators. Meanwhile, instrument reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha technique, with the stipulation that an instrument is considered reliable if the Alpha value is greater than 0.7 (Sugiyono, 2024; Yusuf & Daris, 2018). This step was taken to ensure the instrument was truly reliable in measuring the research variables.

The collected data were then analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis. Prior to the main analysis, classical assumption tests were conducted, including normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests. These assumption tests aim to ensure that the data meet statistical criteria so that the analysis results can be interpreted correctly (Ghozali, 2016). After the assumption tests were met, multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine the magnitude of the simultaneous and partial influence of the independent variables, namely the exemplary and habituation methods, on the dependent variable, namely the Islamic character of students.

Next, a t-statistical test was used to examine the partial effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable. This test was conducted at a 5% significance level to determine whether the exemplary and habituation methods had a significant effect individually. Furthermore, an F-statistical test was used to assess the simultaneous influence of both independent variables on Islamic character formation. The results of this analysis were then used as the basis for testing the research hypothesis, thus determining whether the hypothesis was accepted or rejected.

With this methodological design, the research is expected to be able to provide a clear and scientific quantitative picture of the relationship between the two learning methods and student character, which is expected to make a significant contribution to the development of Islamic character education based on empirical evidence.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on research data and comparative analysis data testing results on the exemplary and habituation methods for Islamic character of students at MIN 3 Garut and SDTQ Al Ikhlas, the following discussion results were obtained:

1. The Influence of Islamic Character Education with the Exemplary and Habitual Methods at MIN 3 Garut and SDTQ Al Ikhlas

The results of multiple linear regression analysis show that the exemplary method (X_1) and the habituation method (X_2) have a positive and significant influence on the formation of Islamic character in students in both schools, namely MIN 3 Garut

and SDTQ Al Ikhlas. From the results of data processing, the following regression equation was obtained:

Table 1. Summary of Regression Analysis Results

School	Regression Equation	R ²	F _{Count}	Sig.
MIN 3 Garut	$Y = 0.974 + 0.299X_1 + 0.389X_2$	0.968	387,327	< 0.001
SDTQ Al Ikhlas	$Y = 1.938 + 0.286X_1 + 0.375X_2$	0.959	301,893	< 0.001

Value (R^2) which is above 0.95 indicates that this regression model has very high predictive power, where more than 95% of the variability of students' Islamic character can be explained by the exemplary and habituation method variables simultaneously. The significant F-test results at the $p < 0.001$ level confirm that the two methods together make a strong contribution to the formation of students' Islamic character.

It can be seen that the magnitude of the influence of the habituation method (with a coefficient of 0.389 at MIN 3 Garut and 0.375 at SDT Al Ikhlas) tends to be slightly more dominant than the exemplary method (coefficients of 0.299 and 0.286) in shaping Islamic character. This indicates that in addition to the role of teachers as role models, consistency in repeating behavior and forming positive habits in the school environment is crucial in internalizing Islamic values in students.

These findings align with Lickona's theory of character education, which emphasizes the importance of synergy between role modeling and habituation in building strong character through social learning. When children not only observe the example of their teachers but are also consistently accustomed to engaging in activities and behaviors that reflect Islamic values, noble character will be more firmly embedded and continue throughout life (Zulqarnain et al., 2022).

In addition, the difference in the strength of the regression model is slightly greater in MIN 3 Garut compared to SDT Al Ikhlas, indicating that the effectiveness of the implementation of the exemplary and habituation methods in MIN 3 Garut is slightly more optimal, possibly due to more structured and consistent program management and implementation.

Overall, the results of this analysis confirm that the application of the exemplary and habituation method is an effective and strategic approach to developing Islamic character in elementary school environments and can be used as a reference in designing sustainable Islamic character education policies.

2. Results of Islamic Character Education with the Exemplary Method at MIN 3 Garut and SDTQ Al Ikhlas

Partially, the exemplary variable (X_1) has a significant influence in both schools. The coefficient summary is shown in:

Table 2. The Influence of Role Models on Islamic Character

School	Coefficient (B)	t _{Count}	Sig.
MIN 3 Garut	0.299	9,643	< 0.001
SDTQ Al Ikhlas	0.286	7,490	< 0.001

Source: Data processed by researchers (2025)

This indicates that increased implementation of the role model method has a positive and significant correlation with the improvement of students' Islamic character in both educational institutions. The slightly larger effect in MIN 3 Garut, as seen from the coefficient (B) of 0.299, while in SDTQ Al Ikhlas it was 0.286, may indicate the success of the process of internalizing values through consistent and optimal role models in the school environment. However, in its implementation, the role model

method in both schools faces several practical challenges. Limited teacher resources and high administrative burdens sometimes make it difficult to maintain consistency in providing positive role models over time. Furthermore, some students are still less responsive to teacher role models due to the influence of the environment outside the school, such as social media and family parenting styles that are not in line with the Islamic values taught.

To address these issues, both schools implemented regular teacher development strategies through teacher sermons, spiritual reflections, and role model evaluation forums. Furthermore, collaboration with parents was strengthened to ensure the values exemplified at school could be continued at home. The schools also regularly monitored student behavior to ensure the process of internalizing Islamic values was comprehensive and continuous. These efforts made the implementation of role model methods not only the responsibility of individual teachers but also part of the school's collective culture, fostering a holistic and effective Islamic learning environment.

From a conceptual perspective, according to Ahmad Tafsir, role models in Islamic education are a very important method because teachers or educators do not only function as conveyors of material, but more importantly as role models for students in practicing Islamic values every day. (Santi & Yazid, 2020; Wardi, 2017) . Role models are an effective means of character building because through the teacher, students obtain concrete examples of behavior that can be directly observed and imitated. Linguistically, the term "exemplary" in the Big Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI) comes from the word "contoh" (model), which means something worthy of imitation or good to emulate, whether in terms of actions, behavior, or character. In Arabic, the term often used for role models is *uswah* (الأسوة) or *qudwah* (القدوة). The word *uswah* is formed from the letters hamzah, sin, and wau, which in Arabic each word formed from these letters has the same meaning, namely treatment and improvement (Taklimudin & Saputra, 2018) . Thus, exemplary behavior in the Islamic perspective is not only behavior that is worthy of emulation, but also a process of moral formation that is healing and improving morals.

This example comes from the principle of good example as stated in the Qur'an, Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 21, which states "... Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah there is a good example for anyone who hopes for (the mercy of) Allah and the Last Day...". Quraish Shihab interpreted the verse that good example in this verse is not just imitating outward behavior, but also emulating inner attitudes in the form of sincerity, patience, and courage in upholding the truth and avoiding Allah's prohibitions (Shihab, 2002) . This concept underlines the position of the Prophet Muhammad as a central and absolute figure in character formation through example. Teachers as the image of the Prophet in the educational environment play a role in providing examples of Islamic values directly through attitudes and actions.

Furthermore, the exemplary values taught through the Prophet Muhammad's *uswah hasanah* (good character), consisting of: *Shiddiq* (honesty), *Amanah* (trustworthiness), *Tabligh* (delivering messages well), and *Fathonah* (intelligence and wisdom), serve as the primary foundation for developing Islamic character in students. Exemplary practices that reflect these four values have a strong psychological and social impact, motivating students to adopt similar behaviors in a more consistent and authentic manner (Zulherma et al., 2021) .

The implementation of role models is carried out through a combination of direct modeling, where teachers actually exemplify positive behavior, and indirect modeling, through narratives or examples of Islamic figures exemplified in learning (Syahidin, 2020) . This is important so that these commendable behaviors are not only understood cognitively but also internalized emotionally and spiritually.

These significant empirical findings strengthen the argument that the role of teachers as behavioral models is vital in the formation of Islamic character. Consistent role modeling is not merely a teaching tool, but a core principle that must be upheld to create a generation with noble and responsible morals in this modern era.

3. The Results of Islamic Character Education with the Habituation and Habituation Method at MIN 3 Garut and SDTQ AL Ikhlas

The habituation variable (X₂) also showed a significant influence on the formation of Islamic character in students in both schools. The coefficient summary shows that:

Table 3. The Influence of Habituation on Islamic Character

School	Coefficient (B)	t _{Count}	Sig.
MIN 3 Garut	0.389	10,843	< 0.001
SDTQ Al Ikhlas	0.375	9,594	< 0.001

Source: Data processed by researchers (2025)

This high coefficient clearly indicates that habituation contributes more significantly than role models in shaping the Islamic character of students at both institutions. This confirms that consistent and repeated activities, such as morning Quran recitation, congregational prayer, and the practice of etiquette and cleanliness, can strengthen the internalization of Islamic values in students through a deep habituation process.

However, implementing the habituation method in the field is not without several practical challenges. One obstacle is limited teacher supervision of all students when routine activities are taking place simultaneously, resulting in varying levels of student commitment to the habituation. Furthermore, consistent implementation of the habituation values at home is also a challenge, as the family environment does not always support the continuation of positive behaviors established at school.

To address these challenges, both schools implemented several adaptive strategies. Teachers rotated supervision and implemented a simple reward system, such as praise or symbolic awards for students who consistently demonstrated good behavior, to increase participation and motivation. The schools integrated habituation activities with a more varied approach, such as contextual learning and fun, interactive activities to reduce student overwhelm. Regarding family involvement, both schools implemented intensive communication, including daily reports on children's behavior and religious activities with parents.

These results align with Imam Al-Ghazali's classic view, which asserts that early habits play a key role in shaping strong morals that are ingrained in children (Rahman, 2019) . By consistently practicing positive habits repeatedly, Islamic values such as discipline, honesty, and responsibility will naturally become part of students' character.

Theoretically, the habituation method is an approach that emphasizes the process of repeating good behavior in a structured and continuous manner so that it becomes a habit that shapes a person's character and traits (Istarani, 2014) . In elementary schools, habituation is manifested in routine activities such as reciting

prayers together, praying in congregation, maintaining cleanliness, and adhering to school rules. These activities not only strengthen spiritual values but also foster social responsibility in students from an early age (Mulyasa, 2022) .

Furthermore, Ki Hajar Dewantara emphasized that habituation is an effective means of developing students' independence and human character when carried out consistently and sustainably, with educators acting as role models who actively oversee the process (Rahmah & Hudaidah, 2021) . Therefore, habituation is not a mechanical process of repetition, but rather the integration of moral values experienced directly and consciously applied in children's daily lives.

Thus, this significant finding reinforces the conclusion that habituation as a method of Islamic character education plays a central role in internalizing noble values into students' behavior. This underscores the importance of implementing habituation activities in a structured and consistent manner within the school environment, in line with widely studied modern and classical Islamic character education theories.

4. Analysis of the Difference in Average Islamic Character Scores between MIN 3 Garut and SDTQ Al Ikhlas

Based on descriptive statistical analysis, the average Islamic character score (Y) of students at MIN 3 Garut reached 40.45, while at SDTQ Al Ikhlas it was 38.31. This difference indicates that the achievement of Islamic character of students at MIN 3 Garut is relatively higher than at SDTQ Al Ikhlas.

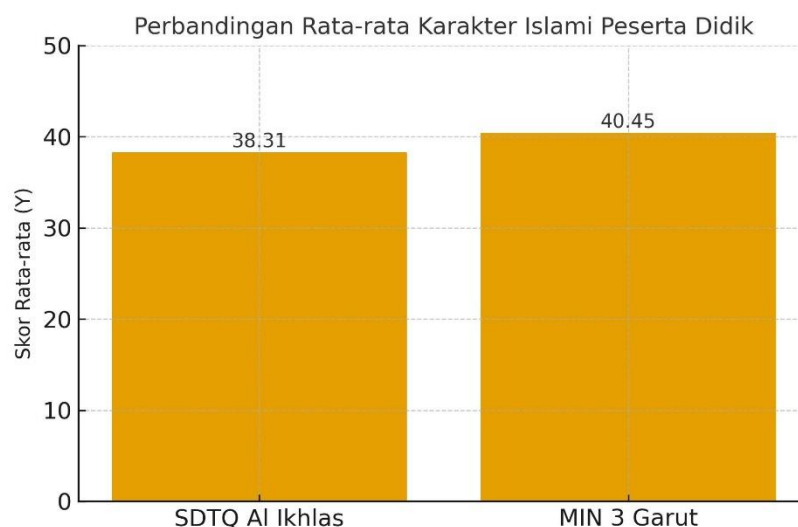


Figure 1. Comparison of Average Islamic Character of Students

Quantitatively, this average difference indicates that internalizing Islamic values through role models and habituation is more successful at MIN 3 Garut. Qualitatively, this confirms that the consistency of the habituation program has a significant impact on student behavior.

This difference can be understood through the different approaches and implementation of Islamic character development in each school, as revealed in interviews with teachers at both institutions.

Based on interviews with teachers and officials at MIN 3 Garut, the Islamic character development approach is implemented through the implementation of the Independent Curriculum (Curriculum Merdeka) combined with the Love-Based Curriculum (KBC) concept. This approach emphasizes strengthening spiritual, emotional, and social aspects in an integrated manner with academic achievement.

Teachers act as good role models, consistently demonstrating discipline, honesty, courtesy, and responsibility, while also participating in various collective worship activities. The school also implements a routine habit-building program involving the entire school community and parents through the Madrasah Parents and Students Association (POSMAD), creating an environment that supports the internalization of Islamic values in students' daily lives. Character values such as honesty, discipline, and empathy are clearly evident in the behavior of students in this environment.

In contrast, SDTQ Al Ikhlas emphasizes the development of Islamic character through a focus on habituation and role models integrated into a systematic Quran memorization program. The program, which involves intensive, tiered Quran memorization with clear achievement targets, supported by *tadarus* (Islamic recitation), morning *dhikr* (remembrance of God), and segmented Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning, provides a strong foundation of faith. Teachers at SDTQ Al Ikhlas also actively serve as role models for students both in learning and in spiritual and social aspects. The active and enjoyable learning approach places students at the center of activity, developing character based on core values clearly defined in the Islamic character habituation manual.

The difference in these scores reflects the richness and diversity of approaches implemented in both institutions, and not merely the superiority of one model over another. The integration of the Love-Based Curriculum at MIN 3 Garut, which emphasizes aspects of compassion and social-emotional involvement, is one of the factors strengthening holistic character in accordance with Ibn Khaldun's character education theory which emphasizes repetition and compassion in the stages of student development (Pasiska, 2019). On the other hand, the sharpness of instilling religious values through a focus on memorization at SDTQ Al Ikhlas is a strength in itself that is no less important in forming a strong and religious Qur'anic character.

Consistent teacher role models and the creation of a conducive learning environment support the internalization of Islamic values (Santi & Yazid, 2020). Furthermore, the active involvement of parents at MIN 3 Garut through POSMAD is a strategic factor in strengthening the foundation of Islamic character, as synergy between school and family is key to sustainable Islamic character education (Rahmadani & Al Hamdany, 2023).

Thus, it can be concluded that the difference in average Islamic character scores between MIN 3 Garut and SDTQ Al Ikhlas is the result of variations in the focus and approach to Islamic character education, implemented contextually and integrately according to the vision, mission, and needs of each madrasah. Both contribute positively to the overall character development of students.

Analysis/Discussion

This study aims to examine and compare the influence of exemplary and habituation methods on the development of Islamic character in students at MIN 3 Garut and SD TQ Al-Ikhlas. The results indicate that both methods have a significant positive effect, both simultaneously and partially, on the development of Islamic character in students. This aligns with the research objectives, which from the outset emphasized the importance of empirical understanding of the role of exemplary (*uswah*) and habituation methods in developing noble character (Zulherma et al., 2021; Rahman, 2019). This finding strengthens the belief that effective Islamic character education cannot be separated from the integration of these two main approaches.

Since the introduction, this study has emphasized that Islamic character education requires a proven and systematic strategy to enable students to deeply internalize Islamic moral values. The proposed hypothesis is that exemplary behavior and habituation, both individually and collectively, have a significant influence on the formation of Islamic character. The results successfully confirmed this hypothesis. Thus, this study not only confirms the validity of previous theoretical assumptions but also provides concrete empirical evidence from the local context at MIN 3 Garut and SDTQ Al-Ikhlas.

Role modelling has been shown to have a positive influence with a regression coefficient of 0.299 at MIN 3 Garut and 0.286 at SD TQ Al-Ikhlas, both significant at $p < 0.001$. These figures indicate that when teachers, parents, and the educational environment are able to present figures who display the morals of shiddiq, amanah, tabligh, and fathonah, students are encouraged to imitate and internalize similar behavior. Meanwhile, habituation shows a more dominant influence with a coefficient of 0.389 at MIN 3 Garut and 0.375 at SD TQ Al-Ikhlas. This strengthens the hypothesis that habits carried out consistently over the long term are stronger in forming Islamic behavioral patterns in children.

These results can be scientifically explained through Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which asserts that behavior is learned through observation, imitation, and reinforcement. Role models serve as social models, while habituation reinforces behavior through repetition until it becomes an ingrained characteristic. From an educational psychology perspective, habits have greater internalization power because they form a network of automatic behaviors within students. Therefore, it is not surprising that habituation demonstrates a slightly greater influence than role models.

Furthermore, this finding can be understood through Al-Ghazali's perspective, which states that morality is formed through the repetition of good deeds (*al-akhlaq bitalib al-'adat*) (Rahman, 2019) . Thus, habituation is the primary mechanism that allows Islamic values to move from the cognitive to the affective and psychomotor domains, thus forming a stable character. Exemplary behavior remains important as a gateway and inspiration, but habituation is a determining factor in maintaining the sustainability of these values.

The results of this study are consistent with various previous findings. Research by Safitri (2023) and Supaini (2023) found that the combination of role models and habituation in elementary education strengthens students' Islamic character development. Similarly, a study by Tri Winarsih (2016) demonstrated the synergistic effectiveness of these two methods in fostering students' faith and piety. Therefore, this study expands existing empirical evidence to a more specific context, namely Islamic elementary schools in Garut.

However, there are some interesting differences in the influence coefficients between MIN 3 Garut and SD TQ Al-Ikhlas. MIN 3 Garut showed a higher influence value, particularly for the habituation variable. This may be related to the implementation of the Love-based Independent Curriculum, which places greater emphasis on the holistic aspects of education, encompassing the spiritual, emotional, and social dimensions. Meanwhile, SDTQ Al-Ikhlas prioritizes the tahfidz program and strengthening Quran memorization. This focus is excellent for forming a religious foundation, but the social-emotional habituation aspect may be more limited, thus affecting the final results. This difference suggests that the school's managerial model

and curriculum play a moderating role in the effectiveness of role models and habituation.

The findings of this study have broad implications, both theoretically and practically. From a theoretical perspective, this research reinforces the view that Islamic character education cannot rely solely on delivering material but must be fostered through concrete practices, exemplary behavior, and ongoing habituation. (Astutik et al., 2023) . The synergy of these two methods proves its effectiveness in addressing the challenges of character education in the era of globalization, where students are faced with a complex flow of values.

Practically, teachers are required to be not only transmitters of knowledge but also consistent role models. Teachers with noble character will be effective role models for students. Meanwhile, schools must design systematic habit-building programs, for example through congregational prayer schedules, classroom cleanliness programs, social activities, and other activities oriented towards Islamic values. Parental and community participation is also crucial, as demonstrated in the POSMAD model at MIN 3 Garut, to ensure that good habits don't stop at school but continue at home and in the social environment.

Although this study provides robust findings, several limitations are worth noting. First, the sample size was relatively small, comprising only 29 students, thus limiting the generalizability of the findings. Second, measurements were conducted at a single point in time (cross-sectional), thus preventing the long-term dynamics of Islamic character formation. Third, the study only measured the influence of role models and habits, without including other factors such as family support, media influence, or the social environment.

For future research, there are several important directions that can be pursued. First, conduct longitudinal studies to monitor the long-term sustainability of students' Islamic character. Second, expand the research population to schools with diverse backgrounds, both public and private, urban and rural, to obtain more representative results. Third, examine the role of external variables such as the influence of digital media, family support, and community as mediators or moderators in the relationship between role models, habituation, and Islamic character formation. Fourth, develop adaptive learning models that integrate role models and habituation with contemporary approaches such as project-based learning, digital learning, and experiential learning, making them relevant to the needs of Generation Z and Alpha.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully demonstrated that the exemplary and habituation methods play a significant role in shaping the Islamic character of students at MIN 3 Garut and SDTQ Al -I Khas. Both simultaneously make a significant contribution to character development, with habituation playing a slightly more dominant role. This finding clearly addresses the primary objective of the study regarding the influence of these methods and strengthens the theoretical framework in Chapter II, which emphasizes the need for synergy between exemplary and habituation in Islamic character education.

The success of implementing the exemplary method based on the values of *uswah hasanah* honesty, trust, *tabligh*, and *fatonah* demonstrates the vital role of

teachers as concrete role models who motivate students to directly emulate Islamic values. Meanwhile, habituation, as a process of forming positive habits that is carried out consistently and continuously, can make Islamic values firmly embedded in students' daily behavior.

While there are differences in effectiveness between the two institutions, this is more due to the adaptation of approaches to the specific contexts of each school, which enriches the learning model rather than negating each other. The holistic approach of the Independent Curriculum and Strengthening Love-Based Character Education at MIN 3 Garut provides high leverage in comprehensive character formation, while the tahfidz (memorization of the Quran) strategy and learning segmentation at SDTQ Alikhass maintain a focused strengthening of the spiritual and religious dimensions.

As a recommendation, future research can examine the role of external variables that moderate or mediate this relationship, such as the role of family, social influences, and learning media in strengthening the internalization of Islamic character. Longitudinal studies are also highly recommended to determine the sustainability of the impact of implementing exemplary and habituation methods on long-term character development.

In addition, future research can deepen the development of innovative learning models that are adaptive to the psychosocial development of students at each age stage, accompanied by the integration of modern educational technology to support the formation of Islamic character effectively and efficiently.

Thus, this study provides significant academic and practical contributions to the development of Islamic education, particularly in the development of character based on Islamic values at the elementary education level which is the foundation of the future generation of civilization bearers.

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Data availability: The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon request and can be obtained from the authors through formal communication. All data were collected with due regard for the confidentiality and privacy rights of respondents.

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