



Internalization of Islamic Values through SIRAJA School Culture in the Formation of Students' Religious Character

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Abstract: The moral degradation of Indonesian adolescents is a persistent problem that cannot be resolved solely through cognitive-based Islamic religious education (PAI). This study aims to analyze the internalization process of Islamic values through SIRAJA school culture, identify the values embedded within it, explain its role in forming students' religious character, and identify the factors influencing the process. Employing a qualitative single case study design, data were gathered through in-depth interviews with 14 informants comprising educators, students, and school administrators, as well as observation and documentation, analyzed using source triangulation. Results show that internalization proceeds through four successive stages: value transmission, habituation, exemplary modeling, and reinforcement. SIRAJA's six pillars (*Polite, Innovative, Resilient, Adaptive, Honest, and Trust*) are integrated across all subjects and school activities, contributing to the formation of a value ecosystem that extends the scope of the formal curriculum. Success is supported by structured institutional planning, teacher modeling, and a conducive school environment. This study contributes to Islamic education scholarship by demonstrating that value internalization becomes more systematic when school culture is institutionally constructed with a self-designed identity, named pillars, and a sustainable evaluation mechanism rather than relying solely on generic religious practices.

Keyword: Internalization of Islamic values; school culture; religious character; Integrated Islamic schools.

Abstract: Degradasi moral remaja Indonesia merupakan permasalahan yang terus-menerus terjadi, yang tidak dapat diatasi hanya melalui pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam (PAI) berbasis kognitif semata. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis proses internalisasi nilai-nilai Islami melalui budaya sekolah SIRAJA, mengidentifikasi nilai-nilai yang terkandung di dalamnya, menjelaskan perannya dalam pembentukan karakter religius siswa, serta mengidentifikasi faktor yang memengaruhi proses tersebut. Dengan menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif tunggal, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam terhadap 14 informan yang terdiri atas pendidik, siswa, dan tenaga kependidikan, serta observasi dan studi dokumentasi yang dianalisis menggunakan triangulasi sumber. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa proses internalisasi berlangsung melalui empat tahap berurutan: penanaman nilai, pembiasaan, keteladanan, dan penguatan. Keenam pilar SIRAJA (*Santun, Inovatif, Resiliensi, Adaptif, Jujur, dan Amanah*) diintegrasikan ke dalam seluruh mata pelajaran dan kegiatan sekolah, berkontribusi membentuk ekosistem nilai yang memperluas cakupan kurikulum formal. Keberhasilan internalisasi ditopang oleh perencanaan kelembagaan yang terstruktur, keteladanan guru, dan lingkungan sekolah yang kondusif. Penelitian ini berkontribusi

pada kajian pendidikan Islam dengan menunjukkan bahwa internalisasi nilai menjadi lebih sistematis ketika budaya sekolah dikonstruksi secara institusional dengan identitas, pilar, dan mekanisme evaluasi yang dirancang mandiri dan berkelanjutan, bukan sekadar bertumpu pada pembiasaan religius generik.

Keywords : : Internalisasi nilai islami; budaya sekolah; karakter religius; sekolah Islam terpadu.

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Introduction

The Indonesian education system currently faces serious challenges, particularly regarding the decline in student morality (Aisyah & Fitriatin, 2025). Whereas normatively the government has mandated the strengthening of religious values as one of the national character values that must be integrated into every formal education unit through Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2017 concerning Strengthening Character Education, Articles 3-4. The gap between the policy mandate and the reality on the ground is evident from the increasing frequency of violations in schools, ranging from minor violations to more complex cases (Revalina et al., 2023). Issues such as lack of honesty, low responsibility, and weakening of manners are still often found among students (Juliza et al., 2024). As an illustration of this problem, the Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI, 2025) in its annual report, the Ministry of Education and Culture recorded 2,057 complaints regarding children's cases throughout 2024, with 241 cases related to the fulfillment of children's rights to education, leisure time, culture, and religion. This indicates that the issue of character and moral development in school-age children remains a national issue (Ainiyah et al., 2025; Ali et al., 2026; Arif et al., 2025). This situation demonstrates that adolescent moral issues are not merely incidental but have become a trend that requires serious attention (Rustandi et al., 2025). Therefore, a paradigm shift in the way education is implemented is essential. The goal is for schools to function as a place for the transfer of information and a socio-emotional environment that fosters students' moral development (Setiyadi et al., 2025).

In response to this crisis, various Islamic schools in Indonesia have begun to develop approaches that go beyond the classroom (Agustina et al., 2025). School culture, seen as the totality of an institution's values and everyday habits, is considered more effective in shaping character than a rigid formal curriculum (Anwar et al., 2025). This is reinforced by Rahmat & Yahya (2021), which found that conventional Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning models only temporarily improved students' honesty. This finding suggests that cognitive and lecture-based approaches to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) are insufficient to foster sustainable character. Therefore, internalizing religious values within the school culture is considered an appropriate effort to help shape students' character (Rony, 2021).

Several studies have examined the relationship between school culture and the formation of students' religious character, but with still partial coverage. Maghfiroh & Aisyah (2023) found that routine religious activities can shape students' character in a meaningful way, but their study only covered one type of habituation and therefore did not fully represent the complexity of the school's cultural system. Hidayah et al. (2025) In *At Turots: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, researchers found that daily religious practices significantly influence students' religious character, although they did not examine how these values are institutionally constructed into a structured and identifiable character profile. From the perspective of Islamic schools with a stronger institutional identity, Nasution & Nafi' (2026) found that Islamic value-based school culture operates as an integrated institutional system. While the study is relevant because it examines non-Islamic boarding school public high schools, its analytical focus remains on the functional, mechanistic aspects of school culture.

A theoretical gap that has not been widely explored is how non-pesantren Islamic high schools design a structured, independent value system, rather than simply implementing generic worship rituals. Most previous studies have focused on the effectiveness of general habits such as the Dhuha prayer or the tadarus prayer, or on the internalization of values within a context with total control, such as the pesantren ecosystem, as in this study Iman et al. (2026). Focus on how non-Islamic boarding school public high schools construct formally integrated institutional values as a distinctive cultural identity is still limited. This research aims to fill this gap by taking place at SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah. This school provides a unique context because it explicitly constructs six distinctive values through the acronym SIRAJA (*Santun, Inovatif, Resiliensi, Adaptif, Jujur, and Amanah*) through their structured school culture.

From an academic perspective, this research is expected to enrich Islamic Religious Education (PAI) literature by presenting a model of value internalization based on a unique school culture, not just a stand-alone practice of religious practices. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for other Islamic schools seeking to build a structured, measurable character culture that has the potential to lead to positive and sustainable changes in student behavior. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the process of internalizing Islamic values through the SIRAJA school culture, identify the values contained therein, explain their role in shaping students' religious character, and analyze the factors influencing this internalization process.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive single case study design. According to Robert K. Yin (2018), case studies are conducted through

empirical inquiry focused on contemporary phenomena within a real-life context with little researcher control over the events (Nur'aini, 2020). The case study was used to examine in depth the process of internalizing Islamic values through the SIRAJA school culture at SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah as a specific case.

In the initial stage, the researcher developed a research instrument in the form of a semi-structured interview guide as the primary data collection tool. Qualitative research instruments include interview guides, observation checklists, and documentation guidelines designed according to the research focus and objectives (Ardiansyah et al., 2023). The interview guide was developed based on the research focus, which encompasses four main aspects: SIRAJA values, the internalization process, the role of school culture in religious character formation, and supporting and inhibiting factors.

Research participants were selected using purposive sampling, which involves selecting informants based on specific considerations and criteria relevant to the research objectives (Lenaini, 2021). Field data collection was conducted for one week in January 2026 at SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah Cilegon.

Table 1. Research Informant Data

No.	Code	Information
1	S-01	10th Grade Student (Male)
2	S-02	10th Grade Student (Female)
3	S-03	Grade 11 Student (Male)
4	S-04	11th Grade Student (Female)
5	S-05	Grade 12 Student (Male)
6	S-06	Grade 12 Student (Female)
7	G-01	Headmaster
8	G-02	Islamic Religious Education (PAI) Teacher
9	G-03	Guidance and Counseling (BK) Teacher 1
10	G-04	Guidance and Counseling (BK) Teacher 2
11	G-05	Sociology Teacher
12	G-06	Biology Teacher
13	G-07	Deputy Head of Curriculum
14	G-08	Cultural Affairs

Source: Researcher's Primary Data (2026)

The table above presents brief data on the informants interviewed by the researcher, including 14 structured interview sessions with the principal, Islamic Religious Education teacher, two guidance counselors, a sociology teacher, a biology teacher, the curriculum vice principal, the person in charge of school culture, and six student representatives from grades X-XII, which were conducted sequentially over several days of the visit. Field observations were conducted simultaneously with the interview sessions, including direct observation of morning greeting activities,

infaq, tadarus, liqo, murajaah, and obligatory congregational prayers, getting used to sunnah prayers, reciting asmaul husna, al ma'tsurat in the evening, as well as classroom observations during the learning process, and recorded in the form of descriptive field notes. Documentation studies were conducted on institutional documents such as annual work programs, SIRAJA cultural guidelines, and examples of SIRAJA student profile reports.

The collected data were then analyzed using the interactive analysis model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. This model advocates interactive and continuous data analysis until data saturation is achieved, through three interrelated stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014). In the reduction stage, all interview transcripts from the 14 informants were coded by the researchers to identify recurring patterns related to the four stages of value internalization (instillation, habituation, role modeling, reinforcement) and the six pillars of SIRAJA. Source triangulation was applied to increase data validity by comparing information obtained from interviews, field observations, and documentation studies (Sari et al., 2026). Source triangulation was carried out systematically through three stages of comparison. First, informant statements from interviews were verified with observational field notes to confirm whether the practices mentioned actually took place in the field. Second, findings from interviews and observations were corroborated with institutional documents such as the SIRAJA cultural guide, school curriculum, and the SIRAJA Graduate Profile document to ensure that the mechanisms described by informants had a formal institutional basis. Third, consistent patterns emerging from these three sources served as the basis for drawing research themes and conclusions.

Results And Discussion

Result

The Process of Internalizing Islamic Values through SIRAJA School Culture

The research results show that the internalization of Islamic values can be understood as a process of integrating Islamic values through the habituation of religious activities. The process of internalizing Islamic values at SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah is carried out in stages. This process involves instilling values, habituating them, modeling them, and reinforcing them.

In the value instillation stage, teachers integrate values from the school culture into the learning process. The integration of Islamic values and school culture into learning is carried out systematically by teachers by linking the material to the teachings of the Quran and Hadith. This is evident in the statement that:

"All the teachers here and SIRAJA have indeed been emphasized at the beginning. Not just PAI teachers. We also mentioned other teachers, even though PAI teachers are already PAI. Every beginning of learning the material has a dalil. Whether in the form of the Qur'an, Hadith, the words of scholars, or in the form of exemplary stories for

children. And so that it can be integrated into learning. So that it is more meaningful. That is among them. So that we do not forget the values of religion in every learning." (Interview, G-02, 2026).

This statement is in accordance with what the researcher found when conducting class observations, that not only Islamic Religious Education teachers are tasked with integrating Islamic values and school culture before the learning process begins, but all subject teachers are also required to integrate this into the learning process, balanced with explanations of verses from the Qur'an that are relevant to the material to be taught.

Meanwhile, students felt the same way. Students stated that:

"The teachers always remind us that in the material there is an application of SIRAJA values, so we don't just learn the material but also how to apply the values..." (Interview, S-05, 2026).

Similar statements came from S-01 to S-06. They agreed that in every learning activity, the SIRAJA profile values are always linked, not simply memorized, but truly integrated into the teaching and learning process.

Instilling values certainly cannot stand alone. For these values to truly sink in, they require routine and planned practice. At SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah, practice is realized through various activities such as morning greetings, almsgiving (*infaq*), *tadarus* (recitation of the Qur'an), *liqo'*, *murajaah* (religious prayer), congregational obligatory prayers, *sunnah* prayers, and reciting the *Asmaul Husna* (the Beautiful Names of Allah) and the evening recitation of *al-Ma'tsurat*.



Figure 1. *Habitual Activities at SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah*

These activities are not solely designed to strengthen religious observance. They also serve as a space for students to learn to socialize and build character organically. *Liqa* activities are conducted with members from different grades, allowing students from grades 10, 11, and 12 to interact and share religious guidance. In addition to *liqa*, there are also group *tadarus* (Islamic recitation) activities in the morning. Usually, one student is assigned to lead the *tadarus* on the school loudspeaker, followed by the entire school community reciting the same verses. Not only students, but all teachers play an active role, patrolling the

classrooms to accompany students and join in the recitation. Then there are morning greetings and donations when new students arrive at school.



Figure 2. Morning Greetings, Almsgiving, and Formal Learning Activities

G-06 emphasized that behavior formation requires a repetitive process. He stated that behavior is formed through habituation. It's not enough to just do it once or twice. From a curriculum perspective, the school emphasizes that repetition is key, a statement reinforced by G-07, which states,

"Because it's called habituation, it can't be done once or twice, if it continues, the child will definitely get used to it and it will become part of the culture.." (Interview, G-07, 2026).

Besides being taught and practiced, SIRAJA values are also instilled through direct role models from teachers. The principal explained that reinforcing polite behavior is done by leading by example, not simply by instruction: *"One thing, for example, we give an example. So if a child is passing by, we're the first to greet them, 'Assalamualaikum,' or something like that.."* (Interview, G-01, 2026). Another form of exemplary behavior is seen in the teacher's habit of patrolling and participating in morning Quran recitation with students, instead of just supervising from a distance. This is also done through other habituation activities so that students also feel the impact of this exemplary behavior. S-01 stated that the presence of teachers as role models made him feel that the SIRAJA culture was not just a school rule, but something that was truly carried out together: *"So that teachers also feel more appreciated by students."* (Interview, S-01, 2026), which he said made the application of values feel more equal, rather than one-way from teacher to student.



Figure 3. "Student Appreciation" Program on School Walls

Character building is achieved through appreciation, personalized advice, and consistent repetition of habits. This appreciation extends beyond verbal praise. The Student Council (OSIS) also participates by collaborating with teachers to select and display the names and photos of students who best reflect the SIRAJA character on the school wall magazine. In addition to positive reinforcement, the school also implements logical consequences for violations, with the goal of helping students understand the connection between behavior and its consequences, rather than simply receiving punishment.

Islamic Values in SIRAJA School Culture

SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah implements a school culture known as the SIRAJA culture. SIRAJA is an abbreviation of Polite (*Santun*), Innovative (*Inovatif*), Resilient (*Resiliensi*), Adaptive (*Adaptif*), Honest (*Jujur*), and Trust (*Amanah*). This school culture serves as the primary foundation for developing students' religious character, aligned with the school's goal of producing graduates with Islamic character based on the principles of the Quran and Hadith. A mapping of these values is presented in the following table:

1. Good Manners

The values of politeness in the SIRAJA school culture are related to the Islamic values of *akhlaqul karimah*. As stated by a student,

"If it is related to politeness, for example... we are used to it when we meet a teacher, we are used to smiling, applying 5S, being polite, smiling, greeting..." (Interview, S-06, 2026)

This statement is in line with the official formulation in the SIRAJA Graduate Profile Document (2025), which stipulates that the Achievement of the Politeness Value Profile at the high school level is that students can "implement the culture of smiling, greeting, being polite, and courteous in the community with full confidence" and can interact effectively with communities from various cultural backgrounds.

2. Innovative Values

The innovative values within the SIRAJA school culture are closely linked to the concept of 'aql, the optimal use of reason in Islam. Students are encouraged to think critically and develop ideas independently during their learning. This is reflected in the statement of one teacher, who stated,

"Innovative means that children must be critical, think analytically, not only understand but also be able to create..." (Interview, G-07, 2026).

3. Resilience Value

The value of resilience within the SIRAJA school culture reflects the Islamic teachings of patience and steadfastness. This character is developed so that students can persevere when faced with difficulties. G-07 explained in an

interview that students are expected to grow into individuals who are persistent, persistent, and persistent in their efforts, not easily discouraged by the situations they face.

4. Adaptive Values

Adaptive values in SIRAJA school culture are in line with the concept of *tasamuh* in Islam. One of the manifestations can be seen from the liqo activity that brings together students across generations. G-08 observed that,

"Students are also starting to get used to liqo activities, they are quite adaptive, can adjust to the environment even though they are different ages, and can still mix with others.."

This finding is corroborated by the curriculum document of SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah (2025) which explicitly places liqo activities in the weekly habituation table with information on the targeted pillars of Amanah and Adaptive, carried out every third Monday of the week. Practicing a skill that is very relevant to the value of *tasamuh* in Islam, which teaches that adapting to the context without losing principle is a form of true wisdom.

5. Honest Value

The value of honesty in the SIRAJA culture teaches students to practice honest behavior in any situation, even in urgent situations. Honesty is instilled through telling the truth and not taking others' rights, as exemplified by the response of a guidance and counseling teacher during an interview:

"If, for example, money falls... many children tell their teacher... so it is not to be taken or becomes their property.." (Interview, G-04, 2026).

There is also an interview quote from the curriculum deputy who said,

"Our main thing is honesty first... children are asked to be honest about what they do, then we follow up.." (Interview, G-07, 2026).

Based on this statement, students are encouraged to be honest, even when committing violations. Teachers provide counseling to students who commit violations without judgment before providing consequences and guidance for their actions. This aligns with the researcher's field observations of teachers handling violations.

6. Trust Value

The value of trust and responsibility is instilled by training students to fulfill their responsibilities in accordance with assigned tasks, both in learning and outside of class. This value is also developed through various activities that require trust and responsibility, such as group work, collaborative projects, and community service activities. The value of trustworthiness is directly observed when students are responsible for their obligation to pray on time at school and carry out tasks assigned by teachers during the teaching and learning process.

The Role of SIRAJA School Culture in the Formation of Students' Religious Character

During interviews, students acknowledged that school routines, such as prayer and other religious activities, gradually instill discipline and polite behavior. One student stated:

"When we practice this routine every day, it will indirectly influence our discipline. And our manners will also be affected." (Interview, S-06, 2026).

S-03 strongly highlighted the discipline of punctuality as an aspect he felt had changed. S-02 acknowledged that what initially were religious values practiced out of obligation, over time, transformed into something deliberately chosen. S-01 added that school culture is not only about being quiet when speaking, but also about choosing polite words in everyday life. S-04 described how being around friends and teachers who are consistently kind makes her feel compelled to behave well too, coupled with the school's consistent supervision and rules regarding religious practices such as prayer.

Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers also confirmed the effectiveness of the SIRAJA culture in terms of day-to-day student management. G-03 stated, *"Very effective. Thank God, it's effective. Before SIRAJA, it was effective, but now with SIRAJA, it's even more effective. It's more organized because there are guidelines."* (Interview, G-03, 2026), which according to him was formed from the density of habituation activities throughout the day at school. Handling of student behavior is also documented in stages, G-04 explained that violation cases are handled through scheduled collaboration between BK teachers and PAI teachers, each providing guidance during an agreed time depending on the needs and decisions of the school with the final results being synchronized and signed by the PAI teacher as evidence of follow-up. The results of the interview are in accordance with field observations conducted by researchers, when researchers observed habituation activities and examples of report notes regarding students who violated.

On the other hand, teachers also acknowledged that students' responses to the habituation were varied. G-05 stated that internalizing the SIRAJA values *"still in process"* and cannot happen all at once, while G-03 noted that some students require more intensive and repeated guidance than others. G-01 stated that students' standards of politeness can vary depending on the customs in each family. This occurs due to factors that influence the internalization process.

In addition to student and teacher perceptions, schools also have supporting documents related to character assessment. The SIRAJA Graduate Profile Document (2025) establishes specific indicators that serve as a reference for character assessment for each pillar at the high school level, ranging from the ability to implement a culture of politeness to the ability to lead change based on adaptive values. The SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah Curriculum Document (2025) further

stipulates that character assessments be conducted by all subject teachers in every intracurricular activity, not just Islamic Religious Education teachers. Researchers were also shown examples of student SIRAJA profile development reports as an illustration of this assessment mechanism, although a comprehensive review of all student report cards is beyond the scope of this study. The assessment indicators in the report cards refer to the indicator table compiled by the foundation curriculum for each SIRAJA pillar. Furthermore, teachers include teacher-specific assessment formats within the teaching modules they have prepared so that assessments are not carried out subjectively by each teacher.

Factors Influencing the Internalization of Islamic Values

The successful internalization of Islamic values through the SIRAJA school culture didn't just happen. Several factors were at work, some supportive, some challenging. The most fundamental was the support of the school system itself. Habitualization wasn't left to happen spontaneously, but was collaboratively designed, structured, and synchronized with the curriculum from the beginning of the school year. The deputy head of curriculum explained:

"At the beginning of the new school year, we had a coordination meeting regarding the planning of what the SIRAJA habit would be like for the next year... then we together designed what the habit would be like so that it would be in sync with SIRAJA.."
(Interview, G-07, 2026)

In addition, teachers actively participate in school activities, especially Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers, who serve as role models for other teachers. All of the teachers' politeness and kindness are easily imitated by students, such as participating in Quran reading (*tadarus*), modeling good behavior, or enthusiastically taking turns practicing religious customs at school.

Equally important is the systematic evaluation mechanism. Each student at this school receives not only an academic report card but also a SIRAJA grade report card, which includes a separate character assessment. With this system, teachers can not only monitor students' academic progress but also see the extent to which values such as politeness, honesty, and trustworthiness are truly internalized in their daily behavior. Of course, this process doesn't always run smoothly. G-01 and G-07 explained that differences in family backgrounds also vary students' readiness and response to habituation. Meanwhile, G-03 explained that the dynamics of the times also bring their own influences that sometimes clash with the values the school aims to instill. These challenges don't make the school back down. Instead, the school believes that this is where a consistent, patient, and sustainable approach is crucial, as internalization of values is ultimately a long-term process that cannot be forced to be completed overnight.

Discussion

The Process of Internalizing Islamic Values through SIRAJA School Culture

Research findings indicate that the process of internalizing Islamic values at SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah occurs systematically through an integrative approach across subjects. This aligns with Hidayat (2021) research, which showed that eliminating the divide between religious and general knowledge helps students understand religious values holistically. However, unlike the curriculum integration context studied by Hidayat, at SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah, this integration does not stop at learning content but is implemented as part of a pillar system called (SIRAJA) that serves as a shared reference across subjects so that the integrated values have uniform labels and indicators, rather than simply being inserted incidentally by each teacher. This collaboration between school components aims to ensure that the religious values that are taught are ingrained in students, not limited to Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning alone, so that these values feel more meaningful (Biantoro & Rahmatullah, 2025).

However, instilling values through cross-subject integration alone is not enough. For these values to truly ingrain themselves in students' personalities, routine and planned practices are necessary (Maknun & Annisa, 2024). As is the case, Infaq plays a role in instilling the values of social awareness, sincerity, and a spirit of sharing, while morning greetings foster politeness, friendliness, and respect for teachers. These two activities demonstrate that internalizing Islamic values occurs not only through formal learning but also through consistent and repeated daily practice. This is reinforced by the statements of sources G-06 and G-08, who emphasized that character is not formed in a short time.

This view aligns with Syaroh_ & Mizani_ (2020), who discussed how habituation takes a long time and that it is very difficult to change deeply ingrained habits. Akhyar & Sutrawati (2021) also explained that students will more easily understand what is taught through continuous practice and experience, and this will be maintained and embedded as internal experience. Internalization of values will be immediately stimulated by habituation.

Previous findings indicate that the process of internalizing Islamic values at SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah occurs in stages and in a structured manner, from instilling values to strengthening character. This pattern aligns with Muhaimin's theory of value internalization, as explained in Jamaluddin (2021) research, namely value transformation, value transaction, and value trans-internalization. Referring to the research findings, the value transformation stage is evident when teachers convey positive values by linking material to Quranic and Hadith verses, while also manifesting in personal advice delivered directly to students in the context of reinforcement. The value transaction stage is manifested in two-way communication between teachers and students during learning and is deepened through the

application of logical consequences for violations, linking student behavior directly to its consequences, creating a reciprocal cycle between actions and institutional responses.

The trans-internalization stage, the most profound, is indicated by the tendency for changes in attitudes reported by students. Through interviews, several students acknowledged that these habits began to be felt as part of self-awareness, indicating the potential for internalization of values beyond formal compliance (M. S. Hasan, 2019; M. S. Hasan et al., 2025). This is driven by the teacher's role model as a non-verbal channel that aligns with the character at this stage. Namely, the formation of personality and mental attitudes that go beyond mere verbal communication. The role model process at SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah serves as a bridge between routinely instilled values and more personal reinforcement, as students are not only asked to practice the values but also to see them practiced by those around them.

Nazmah et al. (2025) in their study found a similar pattern: the internalization of religious values through school religious programs proceeds through the same three stages, where the trans-internalization stage is characterized by habits that are already rooted in student behavior until they are manifested in increased discipline in worship, manners, responsibility, and social concern. This cross-contextual suitability confirms that the three-stage internalization model is universal and reliable as an analytical framework for character education in Islamic schools. This finding indicates that the SIRAJA school culture allows the stages of internalization to occur continuously because the same values are continuously presented through various school activities. Thus, the internalization process does not stop at the delivery of values, but can develop into habits and ultimately are expected to become part of the student's character.

Islamic Values in SIRAJA School Culture

In Islamic education, the formation of morals includes two main human relationships: the relationship with Allah (*hablun minallah*) and relationships with others (*hablun minannas*), both of which are rooted in personal qualities as morals that guide a person in both relationships (Shalahuddin et al., 2024).

The value of politeness is closely related to the concept of good morals. According to Al-Ghazali, students' morality and spiritual attitudes are crucial in their pursuit of knowledge. Students should always respect their teachers' roles as mentors and providers of information. Learning is facilitated and blessings are realized when teachers are respected. Al-Ghazali also emphasized the importance of collaboration between students (Mahmudi & Bungsu, 2025). A peaceful and supportive learning environment enhances student understanding and fosters strong social bonds (Putri & Hibana, 2024). These values are closely related to the values of politeness taught.

In an Islamic perspective, innovation is not only interpreted as creativity (Majid et al., 2025). G-07's statement that students are expected not only to understand but also "*can create*" reflects the operationalization of this value at the practical level of learning. The innovative value in SIRAJA is not positioned as a stand-alone spiritual priority, but is deliberately juxtaposed with academic demands (critical thinking, creating) as a single unit, placing '*aql*' as a competency that is assessed, not just a value that is internalized. As Agustina et al. (2025) research describes Innovation as a form of utilizing reason ('*aql*') bestowed by Allah to develop knowledge and provide benefits. This aligns with the spirit of Islam, which encourages its followers to constantly think and use reason as an instrument for understanding Allah's verses, both explicit and implicit (Ikhwan, 2025).

The value of resilience reflects the profound teachings of *istiqamah* and patience in Islam. Rohmatin et al. (2025) found that the value of steadfastness (*Istiqamah*) in Islamic educational practice, it manifests itself in punctuality, consistent work, and discipline in carrying out responsibilities, all of which collectively form the foundation of character resilience. This finding aligns with Hasan (2022) research, which examined the resilience aspects of Yusuf a.s. He explains the three main pillars of the resilience teachings in Surah Yusuf, namely piety (*I have*), patience (*I am*), and doing good or kindness (*I can*). The value of patience is one of the factors that can be applied to the value of resilience in life. These three pillars are relevant to understanding how students at SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah are trained to persevere in the face of adversity.

Adaptive values are understood through the concept of *tasamuh* in Islam. Adaptive Values, which are operationalized through cross-generational liqo, work through a more active mechanism: placing students in structured interactions with individuals of different ages and backgrounds directly forces them to develop *tasamuh*. G-08's statement that students become "*sufficiently adaptive... despite the age difference*" confirms that liqo has succeeded in transforming the theological construct of *tasamuh* into an interpersonal capacity that is measurable in behavior. *Tasamuh* is the ability to adjust and be open to differences without losing principle. *Tasamuh* encourages individuals to respect differences in backgrounds, ages, and ways of interacting so that harmonious social relationships can be realized (Kurniawan & Kuswanto, 2026).

Then, regarding the value of honesty, an analytically interesting finding from this study is the honesty-based strategy for handling violations: teachers encourage students to confess before facing consequences, a pedagogical choice that prioritizes the development of honesty over merely enforcing discipline. Anas & Iswantir (2024) wrote in their research that honesty is the foundation of all social and academic relationships. Honesty, as the most commendable trait in Islam, is required in every aspect of life. Honesty encourages various forms of academic

integrity, including not cheating, providing accurate information, and being open about research.

The value of Amanah is a responsibility that is trained through group work, collaborative projects, and community service, placing students in real situations where trust is at stake. Romenah & Yunus (2026) In their research found that Islamic Religious Education teachers' strategies in integrating religious culture into students' morals are only effective when accompanied by real assignments that train responsibility, not just verbal instructions, because it is at that moment that the value of amanah is truly tested and internalized.

The six SIRAJA values can be mapped into three interrelated dimensions: (1) the dimension of *hablun minannas*, which includes Politeness and Adaptiveness; (2) the dimension of personal morals, which includes Innovativeness and Resilience; and (3) the dimension of moral integrity, which includes Honesty and Trustworthiness. These six values do not stand alone, but complement each other in shaping students' religious character. Thus, the SIRAJA school culture builds religious character comprehensively, not only in the dimensions of worship but also in social behavior and personal responsibility.

The Role of SIRAJA School Culture in the Formation of Students' Religious Character

The changes experienced by S-02, which began from obedience based on obligations and habits to conscious choices, reflect the achievement of the trans-internalization stage in Muhaimin's framework, where values are no longer external to the student but have become an integral part of his identity. To read in depth how students' religious character is formed, Thomas Lickona's theoretical framework is relevant. Munawarsyah et al. (2024) explain that Lickona identified three main elements in character education that are interrelated and must be applied simultaneously in everyday life, namely *moral knowing* (knowing the good), *moral feeling* (loving goodness), and *moral action* (do good).

The element of moral knowing is manifested through the cultivation of values carried out by teachers by integrating the postulates of the Qur'an and hadith into each learning, so that students not only carry out habituation but also understand why these values are important cognitively. Darwanti et al. (2025) in their research wrote that the moral knowing approach has been proven to be effective in shaping students' disciplined character when implemented through regular morning and evening habituation, teacher examples, and the use of visual media of character values (Azizah et al., 2023; Nahdliyah & Naelasari, 2024). This is in continuity with the results of research found at SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah through tadarus activities, morning greetings, and wall magazine appreciation boards. The dimension of moral feeling can be seen from the changes experienced by S-02, who initially carried out habituation due to obligation, then gradually felt it as a need and a conscious choice.

Annisa et al. (2024) emphasized that the character education strategy from the Lickona perspective to cultivate Islamic character is carried out by understanding and living the steps in moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action in order, where the value of respect and responsibility as the universal value of Lickona is in harmony with the values of courtesy and trust in the SIRAJA culture. The dimension of moral action is realized when habituation has taken root into an automatic habit, as acknowledged by S-03 that the discipline of punctuality has now become part of him without the need to force it.

To explain how the school ecosystem is able to move the three elements of Lickona simultaneously, Albert Bandura's observational learning theory can provide an explanation to complement this. This transformation process can be explained through research written by Rochmat et al. (2025), Observational learning as a cognitive and social learning process in which people learn by seeing how others behave, remembering them, being able to imitate them, and being inspired to do so. Social engagement and observation outside of the classroom are two ways learning occurs. In this context, teachers who actively patrol during tadarus, participate in reciting together, and consistently exemplify SIRAJA values are not just teachers, but also life models that directly trigger the observation process in students.

The findings in S-04 show that a school's social environment that consistently displays positive behavior creates normative pressures that are inviting, not coercive. From the perspective of Islamic education, this concept is in line with Al-Ghazali's thinking about *ta'dib*, which is the formation of character through the cultivation of good habits. According to Al-Ghazali, practicing and repeating moral actions in daily life can build a harmonious soul and make morality a natural aspect of individual nature, not just theoretical knowledge (Apdifa et al., 2025).

Nevertheless, the findings of this study also present an important critical nuance: the effectiveness of SIRAJA culture in forming religious character is not uniform among all students. Teachers consistently admit that some students are still in the early stages of habituation and have not shown inherent internalization, while a small number of others have even shown repeated resistance despite being instructed many times. G-04 confirmed that there was a real spectrum of responses, some students changed after one coaching, but some required multiple interventions depending on their level of self-awareness. As has been observed by researchers when conducting observations in the field. This phenomenon can be understood through the perspective that the internalization of character values does not take place uniformly, but depends on the self-awareness of each individual and the support of the environment that surrounds it (Madyarini & Wijayanti, 2025). Thus, the varied student response is not a reflection of the failure of the SIRAJA system, but rather a marker that each student is at a different stage of internalization, so the school needs to continue to strive to consistently instill the same value in all students

even though their backgrounds are different. This condition is a reality that is discussed further in the next sub-chapter.

SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah works with a different logic, the internalized values are not only practiced through routine, but are institutionally constructed into an identity system with names, pillars, and indicators that are independently designed by the school and the foundation. In this case, SIRAJA is not just a collection of habits but a pedagogical framework that gives a name to grades, integrates them into all subjects, and makes it a standard of behavior that applies to all school residents, not just the realm of PAI teachers. This is in line with what Nasution & Nafi' (2026) call an integrated institutional system, but what distinguishes it is that SIRAJA has characteristics in the form of a typical school cultural identity that is explicitly constructed through the existence of a report card for the development of SIRAJA's profile that runs parallel to the academic report card. Conceptually, these findings show that character building in this school has gone beyond just daily habits. Religious values here are not only carried out as a routine ritual, but an official system has been created that is clear in form and accountability. This layer of the system is unique and has not been widely discussed in the study of the religious culture of Islamic schools, especially in non-pesantren Islamic high schools that build their own value system without following the pattern of pesantren (boarding school) in general.

Factors Influencing the Internalization of Islamic Values

The findings that have been presented in the previous sub-chapter regarding the importance of the role of teachers as role models are one of the factors that affect the process of internalizing values in this school culture, in line with the findings of Fahrudin et al. (2024). Explaining in the study of moral Sufism, which emphasizes that teachers in Islamic education are not enough to just convey material verbally, but must be examples of noble morals in real life. Coupled with the research conducted by Rodhiah & Wardan (2025) explained Al-Ghazali's thoughts on the ideal teacher's attitude. According to Al-Ghazali, teachers are *waratsatul anbiya'* (heirs of the prophets), their role goes beyond just providing formal knowledge. The primary responsibility of teachers is to help people discover the truth. Exemplary morality requires educators to set a sincere example in both words and behavior, not just convey moral principles, because students are essentially imitators.

A religious and conducive school environment also strengthens this because the values instilled feel coherent no matter where students are in the school environment (Cahyanto et al., 2024). As this has been built when researchers make direct observations in schools, teachers in schools collaborate to create a religious environment so that students follow the movement of the environment. Then regarding the statements of several G-01 and G-07 regarding the diverse backgrounds of students. As in the case that has been researched by Zaman (2025),

it is explained that the speed and depth of internalization of values is influenced by the variation in students' backgrounds. Highly religious families typically provide a stronger foundation for their children, which allows interactions at school to reinforce those beliefs. On the other hand, it often takes longer for children from families with a lower religious emphasis or who have never experienced Islamic discipline to internalize these values, and teachers must go the extra mile to help them. In addition to differences in family backgrounds, the dynamics of the times presented by G-03 regarding the characteristics of Generation Z as a target group are also factors that affect the speed of internalization. Sari et al. (2026) found that scroll culture encourages an instant mindset in Generation Z, which directly weakens the capacity for reflection and appreciation of religious values, resulting in the internalization process becoming uneven among different individuals regardless of the quality of the available habituation system.

Conclusion

This study shows that the internalization of Islamic values through the culture of the SIRAJA school at SMAIT Raudhatul Jannah takes place systematically through the transmission of values, habituation, example, and strengthening. The values summarized as Polite (*Santun*), Innovative (*Inovatif*), Resilience (*Resiliensi*), Adaptive (*Adaptif*), Honest (*Jujur*), and Trustworthy (*Amanah*) are instilled not only through formal religious learning, but also through daily routines, so that students live these values as part of their identity, not just an obligation. The effectiveness of this approach is reflected in the observable changes in student behavior, including discipline in worship, social manners, and honesty. This success is supported by three main factors: a structured institutional system, teacher examples, and a religiously conducive school environment.

These findings enrich the study of Islamic Religious Education by offering a more comprehensive and sustainable model of internalizing values through an institutionally integrated school ecosystem. In contrast to previous studies where the majority only focused on one form of religious habituation, this study proves that the combination of aspects of learning, example, and carefully planned special evaluation can indicate more sustainable character formation.

This study has limitations in the scope of locations where the type of single case study in one school is only. So this finding cannot be generalized directly to other Islamic schools. Then, this study has not explored the perspective of parents as an ecosystem outside of school. Further research is recommended to use a multi-case design to compare the effectiveness of various value-based school culture models in several other Islamic schools. To ensure character values are firmly embedded in students, the study recommends other schools to integrate school culture into institutional curricula across all subject lines. This implementation certainly needs to be strengthened by training for teachers in compiling teaching

modules that are adaptive to these cultural values, and supported by the preparation of periodic character achievement report cards as an evaluation instrument.

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